

THE NEW YOU Sermon Series – Joseph to Barnabas

Are you known by any nicknames?

If you had the ability to choose your own nickname, based upon what you would want to be called, and known for, what nickname would you choose?

There was a follower of Jesus named Joseph, who was called by both Jesus, and the apostles, “Barnabas” (which means son of encouragement)!

What better name/characteristic would you rather be known for than “one who encourages”? Barnabas truly lived into this new name!

Acts 4:32-37 – Barnabas was an encouragement to those who first believed in Jesus, & started a movement that would become known as Christianity!

He did this by selling a field & giving the proceeds to the Apostles of Jesus.

The work of the church has always been, and still is, dependent upon the faithful & generous giving of its people!

How are you doing at being a “Barnabas”, an encouragement to the work of the church, by the faithful & generous giving... of your resources, time, gifts?

Barnabas invested in the very thing that was most important to him!

Matt. 6:21 – *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Acts 9:26-28 – Barnabas was an encouragement to Saul/Paul by convincing the apostles to give him a chance! Barnabas had Paul’s back when Paul was brought before them. He trusted God’s transformative work in Paul’s life!

Can you imagine the Church without the Apostle Paul... The one who would write the majority of the New Testament, be the Apostle to the Gentiles, & be the most predominant figure in Christianity, besides Jesus Himself?

Who might you be a Barnabas to... who has been discredited, disqualified, or rejected by many, but who may be a critical instrument in God’s plan?

Acts 15:36-38 - Barnabas was an encouragement to John Mark, despite what it would cost him! Barnabas’ choice caused Paul to separate from him!

John Mark had accompanied Barnabus and Paul, on their first missionary journey together, but for some reason John Mark left and returned home!

When Paul’s 2nd missionary journey came along, Barnabas wanted John Mark to come again, but Paul refused... But Barnabas didn’t give up on John Mark!

Just like he did with Paul previously, Barnabas had John Mark’s back! This led to a parting of ways, but Barnabas was being... well... Barnabas!

John Mark would go on to write the gospel of Mark! Reconciliation would take place between these 3, & fruitful ministry would result... God used Barnabas!

Do we define people by their mistakes, or their past... or do we dare to believe that God is at work, & has a plan for the John Mark’s in our lives?

Who needs our encouragement today? Even if it costs us something, are we willing to be a Barnabas, knowing that God can use those who others reject, for His glory and the good of His sovereign plan?

Acts 11:19-24 - Barnabas was an encouragement to Gentiles! In a time when the gospel had not yet been given to them, Barnabas acknowledged their inclusion in the good news & encouraged them to stay true to the Lord!

Barnabas, as an ambassador of the church in Jerusalem, could have denied their inclusion, & discouraged the Jewish believers from sharing the gospel with them, but Barnabas was a “son of encouragement” & he cheered this on!

When God appears to be doing a new thing... are we quick to discredit it because it doesn’t fit our paradigm of how God works? Or do we get excited & encourage those involved to continue in it, and see where God is leading?

Barnabas lived into his new name, & it had a profound effect on those around him! It even came full circle with Paul & John Mark - **2 Timothy 4:11**

What a legacy Barnabas left behind for us to follow! If God can do this thru him, He can do the same thru us... May we be known as encouragers!

It’s good to be known as “Jesus Freaks”... “Reformed”... “Bible People”... But are we also known as “Sons & Daughters of Encouragement?” It’s hard to be known as these former things w/out being the latter! So be a Barnabas!

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