

A Half-hour With Barnabas

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Worship

Introduction:

The Bible describes him as “a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (**Acts 11:24**). He was a great servant and a great encourager to others. In fact, his name meant “son of encouragement” (**Acts 4:36**). If Barnabas were allowed to come back and speak with us for about 30 minutes, what would he say? Note six lessons Barnabas teaches us.

Discussion:

- I. “Your brethren are more important than your possessions.”
 - A. In **Acts 4:36-37**, Barnabas sold a tract of land and laid the entirety of his proceeds at the apostle’s feet to help needy brethren. What causes a person to let go of one of his best financial investments? Love and a true perspective of what is valuable. Barnabas valued his brethren more than he valued his possessions.
 - B. Remember Jesus’ words in **Luke 12:15**, “For not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” We do not know how wealthy Barnabas was, but he certainly grasped the concept Paul taught in **I Timothy 6:17-19**. He did not put his trust in his wealth, but in God. Therefore, he was able to use the blessings from God to serve others and store up treasures in heaven. Barnabas would tell us that our brethren are more important than our stuff.

- II. “Don’t get upset when you don’t get picked.”
 - A. By the time we read to **Acts 6:1-7**, we have already been introduced to Barnabas and his servant mentality. Here was a man who was a great Christian. In fact, **Acts 11:24** claimed he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. Yet, when the Jerusalem congregation picked seven good men, full of the Spirit and wisdom to lead the work of providing for the widows, his name is not on the list. Barnabas, however, would go on to do great service, being sent from Jerusalem to Antioch when the gospel reached that city and a church was established.
 - B. How many stories have we heard of men who leave congregations because they were overlooked in the search for elders or deacons? How many get upset when they were not selected to be a teacher? Not Barnabas. Barnabas simply continued doing what he could do. When the time came that his specific skills were needed for a specific task, he was ready to get to work and head to Antioch (**Acts 11:22**). Barnabas would tell us not to get upset when we do not get picked even when we are qualified. Do what you can and when you are picked, do your duty.

- III. “Go where you are needed.”
 - A. In **Acts 11:19-21**, the gospel arrived in Syrian Antioch and many believed. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard about it, they wanted someone to go and strengthen the church there. Barnabas, the son of encouragement, was sent. This was not a small trip. He was not sent for a week long gospel meeting. This was a lifelong change. Then in **Acts 13:2-3**, the Holy Spirit selected Barnabas to travel with Paul all over the known world establishing churches.
 - B. Think about the sacrifice that called for. Barnabas was not attached to this world. He was looking forward to eternity. Therefore, he was able to pack up and go where he was needed, where he could be used the most. By the way, for Barnabas, being where he could be used the most did not necessarily mean going where he could lead public prayers or lead singing most frequently. He went where there was hard work needed and he did the hard work—publicly and privately. Barnabas would tell us to go where we are needed.

- IV. “Empower others.”
 - A. In **Acts 11:22-23**, the apostles sent Barnabas to strengthen and aid the new Christians in Antioch. One of the greatest contributions Barnabas made in the congregation there was bringing Saul from Tarsus (**Acts 11:25-26**). Barnabas was not interested in what would make him look the best. Therefore, he did not try to accomplish everything all on his own. Instead, he was interested in what was best for the brethren and for Christ’s church. He was able to see that the congregation needed someone in addition to himself and he went and got him.

- B. Don't forget the past between Barnabas and Saul. Barnabas had been the one who brought Saul to the apostles in **Acts 9:26-28** and vouched for him. Barnabas was interested in giving others opportunity to grow. He did not do that by taking a backseat but by developing them. The greatest story of his success is Saul. Barnabas's initial confidence in Saul paid off as he went on to surpass Barnabas in teaching and strengthening churches. Barnabas would tell us to invest our time in others, give them a chance and empower them.
- V. "Be patient with others."
- A. Along with the above point, Barnabas would teach us to be patient with each other. In **Acts 13:5**, John Mark traveled with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. However, in **Acts 13:13**, John left them. We do not know exactly why. However, it must not have been on good terms with Paul. When Paul asked Barnabas to travel with him again, Barnabas wanted to give John Mark another opportunity, but Paul refused. Their disagreement was so sharp went on separate journeys with other men (**Acts 15:36-41**).
 - B. Barnabas's patience with John Mark paid off. Even Paul eventually came to see John Mark as valuable (**II Timothy 4:11**). Additionally, John Mark ended up writing the gospel of Mark. Perhaps Paul did not always remember or perfectly follow his own teaching on patience (**II Timothy 4:1-2**), but Barnabas understood and practiced patience very well. Perhaps Paul was simply passing on what he had learned from Barnabas when he wrote to Timothy and us about patience. Barnabas would encourage us to be patient with our brethren.
- VI. "Do what is right, even when apostles do what is wrong."
- A. I am sure that Barnabas would talk to us about one of his greatest mistakes, recorded in **Galatians 2:12-13**. Despite Barnabas's great work as a servant of brethren, there was a time when he went astray and acted with prejudice. While in Antioch, despite having been one of the first teachers who came to encourage the Gentile Christians, when Peter began to hold himself aloof from Gentiles, Barnabas followed his hypocrisy. I imagine Barnabas regretted those days for the rest of his life.
 - B. How many people would have done the same thing because they saw an apostle doing it? We learn a great deal about influence from this. However, the lesson we learn from Barnabas is to do what is right no matter what anyone else is doing. Peter also needed that lesson. His hypocrisy came because he was concerned what the men James sent would say. Barnabas would tell us, do what is right no matter what anyone else does, even if it is an apostle.

Conclusion:

I can hardly imagine getting to spend 30 minutes with Barnabas. I can hardly wait to get to spend eternity with him and with all the other great saints of the Bible. To do so, we must learn the lessons they teach us in scripture. Follow Barnabas's example as a servant and minister and learn to do what is right no matter what anyone else does.