

Barnabas – A Good Man

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, July 7, 2019

Main Theme – Considering the life of Barnabas and why God’s Word defines him as a ‘good’ man.

WORSHIP & PRAYER COMMUNION

NOTE – I want to call forth the ushers distribute the emblems of Communion

KEY – Please allow me to share the following poem (as spoken by Christ Jesus)

Take and eat as you remember
 The sacrifice that I made,
 The bread and wine that represent
 The life I freely gave

My body beaten and pierced with nails,
 My blood poured from my side,
 For it was the only way for you
 To receive eternal life

As you sit and reflect a moment,
 Confess your sins to me
 Let my blood cleanse you once again
 So you’ll be truly free

And if you need my healing touch,
 Reach out to me today,
 For in this quiet communion time
 Your healing is already made

Then when you’re ready to partake,
 Be thankful and be glad,
 For you, my child, have many blessings
 That others do not have

So let this communion time extend
 To bless somebody else,
 Reaching out to touch a life
 That may be in need of help

But don’t let this time just pass you by,
 Not letting it touch your need,
 For I’ve ordained this communion time
 So you can fellowship with me

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NIV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Regular Events**
 - Women’s Ministry – Tuesday Evening, July 9, from 6:30–8pm
 - Men’s Breakfast – Saturday Morning, July 13, from 9–10:30am
- **Special Events**
 - CYC Baptismal Event – Saturday, July 13 (Time) @ the Barry’s (Candidates?)
 - Family Fun Day – Saturday, August 10 (Time) on the S. Barre Common (Help?)
- **Special Thank You**
 - May God bless you for the generous offering for Teen Challenge (\$800 Per Center)

MORNING OFFERING

At this time, I want to call forth our ushers.

-Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to the Lord/His work
 -Your giving fuels the work of Christ in and through this church

Luke 6:38 (NIV)

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

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- **CHILDREN DISMISSED FOR CHILDREN’S CHURCH**
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INTRODUCTION

NOTE – Please have your Bible at the ready (i.e., Acts 11) and be prepared to take some notes.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

FYI – The pages of Scripture are FILLED with timeless characters who have captivated the hearts and minds of believers for centuries. If I were to ask you list SIGNIFICANT/MEMORABLE figures who appear in the biblical narrative—heroes and villains alike—you might mention Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and Miriam, Gideon and Samson, Ruth, David, Solomon, Elijah and Elisha, Joseph and Mary, Peter, James, John, Paul, etc., to name a few.

KEY – i.e., Impacting PRIMARY characters who dominate the works in which they are found.

NOTE – Yet Scripture is also full of notable SECONDARY and THIRD-TIER figures who—in their own way—can be JUST as noteworthy and impacting to the diligent student of Scripture. i.e., Figures that even faithful churchgoers may know LITTLE about unless they are deep in the whole of the Word through personal study (FYI – this is a PLUG for personal study).

This morning I want to touch upon such a figure and one aspect of his life worthy of consideration.

KEY – This AM I want to talk about a man named BARNABAS who appears in the pages of the N.T.

Q. What do we know of this man? Consider this short but packed statement:

Acts 11:24a (NIV)

24 He [Barnabas] was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith . . .

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

NOTE – There is MUCH that we could note about Barnabas from this small selection of words:

-We could talk about Barnabas as a deeply spiritual man who was reliant upon the H.S.’s power

-We could talk about Barnabas as a man of strong faith—faith cultivated through time/hardship

KEY – But this morning I want to consider one aspect of his life noted by Luke (the author of Acts):

Acts 11:24a (Emphasis Mine)

24 He [Barnabas] was a **good** man . . .

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 3

NOTE – Upon first consideration this MIGHT sound contradictory when compared to other sections of Scripture. My mind races to the words of Jesus Christ, “No one is good—except God alone” (cf. Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19).

Q. How do we reconcile Acts 11 with passages like those that I just noted?

A. Acts 11:24 is NOT claiming that Barnabas’s personal goodness was sufficient to save/redeem, but as one who was saved by the grace of God, the Lord had CULTIVATED goodness within this man.

NOTE – After all— isn’t “goodness” one aspect of the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

Galatians 5:22–23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.

NOTE – And IF Jesus was good and it’s God’s will to conform us into His wondrous image...

Q. ...Shouldn’t we TOO grow in goodness? YES

GOODNESS?

NOTE – But herein we begin to run into a PROBLEM: i.e., “What does it mean to be good?”

KEY – The term “good” —like the term “love”—is used so often in our culture to communicate so many different things, it has almost become a NON-WORD. i.e., A word that possesses NO clear meaning.

Q. How was the movie? **GOOD** (i.e., a passable, acceptable way to kill time).

Q. How was the movie? **GOOD** (i.e., life-changing and transformative cinema).

Q. How was school today? **GOOD** (thoroughly boring but I managed to survive the day).

Q. How was school today? **GOOD** (I got an ‘A’ on the final exam that I was studying for).

Q. How was church today? **GOOD** (Pastor didn’t preach any heresy and I stayed awake today).

Q. How was church today? **GOOD** (God moved in the midst of worship and changed my life).

NOTE – The meaning of the word is UNCLEAR apart from tone and context (i.e., non-word).

KEY – And this is true in how we use the term in relation to PEOPLE—i.e., it is a non-word...

- Tim is a good/good guy
- Bubb is a good/good guy
- Patty is a good/good lady

Q. But what does the Bible mean by the term “good”?

-Perhaps an analysis of the life of Barnabas can be of aide.

NOTE – BARNABAS is a figure who appears now and then throughout the Book of Acts. This morning I would like to take some time considering his appearance in these various accounts, trying to DISCERN what it was about him that led the author of Acts to characterize him as a GOOD man!

ACTS 4

NOTE – Let’s begin with a selection from Acts 4...

Acts 4:32–37

32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all 34 that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of **encouragement**”), 37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and **put it** at the apostles’ feet.

Q. What do we learn about Barnabas – a “good” man?

1) He Was a Source of Great Encouragement (v. 36)

- Barnabas gave support, confidence and hope to others.
- Hearten, Cheer, Uplift, Inspire, Motivate, Strengthen & Enrich.

KEY – Never UNDERESTIMATE the power of encouragement—MEMORABLE IMPACT.

“Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you.” –William Arthur Ward

2) He Was a Man of Generosity/Sacrifice (v. 32, 34–37)

-Barnabas was moved by compassion to go above/beyond in helping to meet the needs of others!

ILL – The story is told that one day a beggar by the roadside asked for alms from Alexander the Great as he passed by. The man was poor and wretched and had no claim upon the ruler, no right even to lift a solicitous hand. Yet the Emperor threw him several gold coins. A courtier was astonished at his generosity and commented, "Sir, copper coins would adequately meet a beggar's need. Why give him gold?" Alexander responded in royal fashion, "Copper coins would suit the beggar's need, but gold coins suit Alexander's giving."

Q. Do you want to be “good” before the Lord? Practice encouragement...

1 Thessalonians 5:11a

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up . . .

Q. Do you want to be “good” before the Lord? Practice compassionate/sacrificial giving...

Hebrews 13:16

16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

QUOTE – “You make a living by what you get—You may a life by what you give” –Unknown

ACTS 9

NOTE – Let’s continue with a selection from Acts 9...

Acts 9:26–28 (Post-Saul’s Conversion – Initial Days as a Believer)

26 When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27 **But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.** 28 So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

Q. What do we learn about Barnabas – a “good” man?

NOTE – He Had a Heart for the Outcast, the Outsider and the Shunned (v. 27–28)

-Barnabas worked diligently—putting his own reputation on the line—to bring Saul into the fold.

Q. Can you imagine what might have happened if Barnabas FAILED to build such bridges?

Q. What might have happened to the health/ministry of Paul if Barnabas was not present?

Q. Do you want to be good before God? Consider the manner in which you regard the outcast...

James 1:27

27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress (i.e., outcasts, outsiders and the shunned of society) and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Matthew 25:31–46

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

44 “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

45 “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

ACTS 11

NOTE – Let’s continue with a selection from Acts 11...

Acts 11:19–30

19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed [cf. Acts 8] traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

22 News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they **sent Barnabas** to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and **encouraged** them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

25 Then Barnabas **went to Tarsus to look for Saul**, 26 and when he found him, **he brought him to Antioch**. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. 30 This they did, **sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas** and Saul.

Q. What do we learn about Barnabas – a “good” man?

1) We—Again—See Barnabas Working as a Source of Encouragement (v. 23)

2) We—Again—See Barnabas Working to Open Doors to the Outcast (v. 25–26)

-We saw Barnabas help Saul find his way into the fold of the church (Bridge-Builder)

-Now we see Barnabas help Saul find his way in to deeper levels of ministry (Mentor)

3) We See Barnabas was Deemed a Man of Good Repute and Trustworthiness (v. 22, 30)

-He could be trusted to provide oversight/give an honest report (v. 22)

-He could be trusted with the finances (good steward of his money & others) (v. 30)

Q. Do you want to be “good” before God? Encourage others (already noted beforehand)...

Q. Do you want to be “good” before God? Provide mentorship and open doors of ministry...

Q. Do you want to be “good” before God? Be a person of “reputation and trustworthiness” ...

ACTS 13

NOTE – Let’s continue with a selection from Acts 13...

Acts 13:1–5

1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, **“Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”** 3 **So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.**

4 The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. 5 When they arrived at Salamis, they **proclaimed** the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

Q. What do we learn about Barnabas – a “good” man?

1) We See Barnabas was Responsive to the Call of God (MACRO Level)

Matthew 28:18–20

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

2) We See Barnabas was Responsive to the Call of God (MICRO Level)

-i.e., He was willing to allow the Lord to use him and lead him as the Lord saw fit
-Consider the levels of intimacy with Christ, faith and obedience this would require

Q. Do you want to be “good” before God? Recognize the Great Commission of Christ Jesus...

Matthew 28:18–20

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Q. Do you want to be good before God? Recognize YOUR place/response in that Commission...

(cf. Isaiah 6)

Here I am...send me

ACTS 15

NOTE – Let’s conclude with a selection from Acts 15...

Acts 15:36–41 (cf. Acts 13:13 & 2 Timothy 4:11)

36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” **37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark,** with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work (cf. Acts 13:13). 39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. **Barnabas took Mark** and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Q. What do we learn about Barnabas – a “good” man?

NOTE – It Was Not in His Nature to Quickly Quit on a Person (Continual Investment)

KEY 1 – This was a case where—in a sense—BOTH parties were CORRECT. PAUL’S assessment that John Mark was not ready/prepared for ministry was accurate, and Paul had to continue in the mission with a more suitable/reliable helper.

KEY 2 – But BARNABAS was also correct. John Mark had potential—and that potential would not be realized apart from time, mentorship, investment and prayerful encouragement. He was WEAK, but he could be made STRONG!

NOTE 1 – PAUL went his way with Silas – and PRAISE God that he did (fruitful ministry)

NOTE 2 – BARNABAS took John Mark under his wing – and PRAISE God that he did (consider)

-John Mark would become the AUTHOR of the Gospel of Mark

-John Mark would in time become PROFITABLE to even Paul in ministry:

2 Timothy 4:9–11 (Emphasis Mine)

9 Do your best to come to me quickly, 10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is **helpful** to me in my ministry.

Q. Do you want to be “good” before God? Stop quitting on people and put in the hard work...

-Ministry is messy and requires a great deal of time, sacrifice and investment—embrace the pain!

-Remember – there is reward for those who are willing to put the time, sacrifice & investment in.

KEY – Because of Barnabas, BOTH Saul of Tarsus and John Mark were cultivated and reached their potential in Christ (because he would NOT quit when everyone else said that he was crazy). And those you may not have known much about Barnabas – I assure you that heaven does!

CONCLUSION

KEY – I would posit that Barnabas was a GOOD man because...

- He was an Encourager
- He was given to Compassionate Giving
- He had a heart for the Outcast and the Outsider
- He was a Mentor who Opened Doors for Greater Ministry
- He was a man of Good Reputation and Trustworthiness
- He was Missional and Responsive to the Call of God
- He did Not Quit on People but Helped the Weak

FYI – He was good because He reflected much of the best in Jesus Christ!

Q. Will such things be said of you? Potentially!

QUOTE – There are certain fine things that you and I can never possess. We know that. Genius, greatness, –they are high and forbidding mountain peaks. Their sides are rugged and precipitous. They have pulled iron hoods of snow and ice upon their brows. But goodness, –that is a peak that may be scaled by the tender feet of little children and by the tottering feet of old age. It may be scaled by the reluctant feet of those in life’s prosaic middle passage. Let us address ourselves then to this high task. Let us matriculate this morning in God’s school for this degree, the degree of “goodness.” And one day it may be written of us as it was written of Barnabas, “He was a good man.”