

Acts 11:19-30 Be Encouraged

Some of the greatest success stories in history have followed a word of encouragement from a loved one or a trusting friend. Example

A) Nathaniel Hawthorne is listed as one of the great names in American Literature.

B) But he probably would not have been had it not been for his confident and encouraging wife SOPHIA

C) See Nathaniel came home one day – heartbroken because he had been fired from his job!

When Nathaniel brought the news to his wife – she responded with an exclamation of Joy & enthusiasm

A) “Now you can write your book!”

B) He responded with a frustrated tone – And what are we supposed to live on while I write it!

C) To his surprise she opened up a drawer and pulled out a substantial sum of money.

1) Nathaniel asked – Where did you get all that!

This was her response:

“I have always known you were a man of genius, I knew someday that you would write a masterpiece. So every week, out of the money you gave me for housekeeping, I saved a little bit. So here is enough to last us a whole year.”

Sophia Hawthorne

D) During that year Hawthorne wrote the American bestseller – **The Scarlet Letter!**

When most people who have achieved great things tell their stories, they mention those who encouraged them along the way.

A) Those who encouraged them to not quit – but to keep on going – **keep trying – keep believing – keep knocking!**

B) Those who inspire us in that way – are essential to our growth and success in life!

C) Encouragers are **ESSENTIAL for the Church!**

D) So much so Did you **know that Encouragement is a spiritual gift?**

Romans 12:5-8

“So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

So Encouragement is a Spiritual Gift!

Today in our text we are going to look at a man who had the gift of encouragement – His Name is Barnabas – **V. 19-21 Set the scene of our study!**

A) The Lord is on the move – working in the Church – the **work of God spreads to Antioch**

B) **I want you to note here: The People that the Lord is using here are no names!**

1) Not Peter, John, not one of the Apostles, not another super Deacon!

C) No name guys ! – God does a great work through!

1) I think – God leaves off the names – so that we understand – He can use anyone!

D) We have a tendency to Elevate people – Some pp have extraordinary gifts.

1) Others are ordinary – God uses in extraordinary ways.

You have all heard of Billy Graham, DL Moody, Billy Sunday? Three great American Evangelist

A) Probably haven't heard of Edward Kimball, Wilbur Chapman or Mordecai Hamm.

B) It all started with Edward Kimball – who was concerned about a young man who worked at a shoe store – One day back room shared Christ

C) Young man received Jesus – Dwight L Moody

1) DL Moody – Became a Great evangelist

Moody, whose international speaking took him to the British Isles, preached in a little chapel pastored by a young man with the imposing name of

Frederic Brotherton Meyer.

A) In his sermon Moody told the story about a Sunday School teacher E. Kimball who personally went to every student in his class and led each of them to Christ.

B) That message changed Pastor Meyer's ministry, it birthed within him a desire to Share Christ - inspiring him to become an evangelist like Moody. {FB Meyer

1) Over the years Meyer came to America.

C) While speaking in Northfield, MA a young preacher heard Meyer say, "**If you are NOT willing to give up everything for Christ, are you willing to be made willing?**"

D) That remark led **J. Wilbur Chapman** to respond to the call of God on his life.

Chapman went on to become one of the most effective evangelists of his time.

A) A volunteer by the name of Billy Sunday, a retired **Baseball player** - helped set up his crusades and learned how to preach by watching Chapman.

B) Billy Sunday eventually took over Chapman's ministry becoming one of the most dynamic evangelists of this century. **Billy Sunday's preaching brought thousands to Christ.**

Inspired by a 1924 Billy Sunday crusade in Charlotte, NC a group of Christians dedicated themselves to reaching their city for Christ.

A) They wanted to have Billy Sunday come back but he was unavailable so they asked a little known evangelist Mordecai Hamm to come and share.

B) The Crowds were small but one night at the end of the meetings a tall lanky 16 year went forward to give his life to Christ - - **His name was Billy Graham!**

C) Billy Graham has communicated the gospel to more people than any other person in history.

1) And it all started with a Sunday School teacher named Kimball.

D) Millions have been affected by his decision to go into a shoe store and share Christ with one person.

So God was moving in Antioch – the Church in Jerusalem heard about it

A) We need to send someone there to encourage the believers – Who?

Barnabas **RD V.22-24**

B) Who was Barnabas ?

C) We first met Barnabas in Ch. 4 – Growing Church – Communal living out of necessity.

1) Growing need for Provision { TURN CH.4

Acts 4:36-37 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

A) Sold to it to Bless the body!

B) So First thing we learn about him Acts 4 he was a Generous man!

1) Those with the gift of encouragement are often Generous – Generous with time, talents, resources

C) Something special about this guy – so much so that the Apostles Changed his name from Joses to Barnabas

1) Son of Encouragement! – Such an encouraging guy

D) So when things are breaking out in Antioch -the Church leaders send him to Antioch to Encourage the new believers.

v.24 - GOOD MAN!

A) Characterized by being FULL of the HS & faith

B) A person who is FULL of the HS – walking in the spirit is going to portray the Fruit of the Spirit.

Gal 5:22-23 “ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.”

C)Key fruit is Love – These are all characteristics of Love.

Joy is loves rejoicing

Peace is loves stability (Opposite of Chaos & confusion Longsuffering is loves patience

Kindness is loves Grace {shows loved – not deserved

Goodness is Loves Virtue {Respectibility- integrity

Faithfulness is loves Dependability. {Trustworthy

Gentleness is loves Meekness. {Power controlled

Self Control is loves Discipline.

1 Corinthians 13 Paul described it this way!

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, love never fails.”

So Barnabas was such a good encourager because He was Full of the HS – Full of Love!

A)Chose to see people in the Lord – to show them in grace –

B)Full is covered completely – exuding love!

C) Full of faith: Encouragers are those who are able to see the Lord in every situation.

1)others see A Giant – Full of faith person sees a Ginourmous God.

D)Others see a Storm – Encouragers see the stiller of

Encouragers are those who believe in a God who can do great things! -

Nothing too big for Him!

A) See God as the one who desires to show himself strong on our behalf.

B) They live with a certain degree of expectation – Lord what are you going to do next!

That was Barnabas: “I will sell land and give money – God can work – do something great!”

A) I will go to Antioch encourage – God can build up and strengthen – Whatever it is I am there.

B) Notice The Focus of his Encouragement!

V.23 “When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.”

C) With Purpose of heart they should continue in the Lord! – Continue to pursue the Lord

Purpose of heart – speaks of diligence!

A) Speaks of focus – not wavering – eye on the prize!

B) But his encouragement had to do with their relationship with the Lord.

C) I mention this – because sometimes in our love for pp – **our encouragement – allows them to remain in their sin.**

You have a girl friend who is having a rough time with her husband. She says he is selfish jerk.

A) You are trying to be encouraging – get caught up in the emotion –

B) **Yea he is jerk – you deserve better**

1) You are so great! – Kick him out!

C) Hello – that is not encouraging them in the Lord – encouraging them to sin!

1) Always two sides to a story -

D) An encourager is not an enabler either!

1) Showing sympathy – even giving help to someone that enables them to stay in their sin.

Encourager is going to point people to the Lord !

A) His ability to work – Do miracles – the faithfulness of His word

B) An Encourager is one who will lovingly challenge you to deal with your sin!

1) Deal with a bad attitude!

C) Move forward in the Lord and not be crippled by things like Bitterness & unforgiveness

Hebrew 10:24-25 “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

The Result of his encouragement:

A) V.24 A great many were added to the Lord!

B) Heart of Godly Encouragement is contagious

1) It is awesome to be around people who love Jesus and love each other.

C) Those who are excited about the Lord and stirring each other up in the Lord!

So Barnabas: Generous, Full of HS – Full of faith **NEEDS HELP**

Barnabas saw Potential not Problems: V.25-26

A) Now we last saw Saul in Ch.9 after his conversion – went up in to Jerusalem

B) His presence there created quite a stir – They ended up sending him – home – 7-11 yrs pass

**1) In obscurity – Some looked at Saul – Problem
Trouble follows that guy**

C) Barnabas saw Potential – earlier Acts 9 everyone was afraid – he brought Saul to the Apostles

1) When no one wanted anything to do with Saul, Barnabas stood up for him, believed in him

D) Now 11 yrs later – needs help – who do I get – I am going to go look for Saul!

E) Other might give up on us – But God never does!

Encouragers are willing to stick their neck out for those they see Potential in.

A) Encouragers Champion the underdog

b) He jumps on the band wagon when everyone else is jumping off

**C) Encouragers see mistakes as learning opportunities
Opportunities for Discovery**

Bring some application here with our kids!

Jonas Salk, the great scientist and the discoverer of the vaccine against Polio, understood the concept of being encouraging.

A)He was once asked, “How does this outstanding achievement, which has effectively brought an end to the word polio in our vocabulary, cause you to review your 200 previous failures?”

B)His response (paraphrased) was, “I never had 200 failures in my life. My family didn’t think in terms of failure. They taught in terms of experiences and what could be learned.

2)I couldn’t have made it without learning from the previous 200 experiences”

Winston Churchill, too, was raised with encouragement.

A)He was not intimidated by errors. When he made one, he simply thought the problem through again.

Someone asked him. “Sir Winston, what in your school experience best prepared you to lead Britain out of her darkest hour?”

Winston thought a minute and then said, “It was the two years I spent at the same level in high school.”

“Did you fail?”

“No,” replied Winston. “I had two opportunities to get it right.”

What Britain needed in that Dark hour was not Brilliance, but perserverance to press through

Children feel encouraged when we see their assets and their potential more than their mistakes.

A)Seeing their mistakes as opportunities to learn rather than failures!

B)Opportunities for growth as we encourage them in the midst of their failure.

1) So thankful for parents & mentors who let me make mistakes

C) Barnabas was that kind of Guy!

1) Saw Potential not Problems

V.27-29 See a guy with another Spiritual gift – Agabus { Prophecy

V.30 BARNABAS WAS TRUSTWORTHY!

I don't know about you – but the more I learn about Barnabas the more I want to be like Him!

A) We live in an age where it is **hip to be Critical**

Aa) People get paid big money – to sit on TV or radio or in print – every day! Criticize

B) **Critical of our President** – our GOVT – sports stars – managers – coaches

1) Sit and watch sport center – listen to them pick apart – Players and coaches \$ 435,000

C) **I want that Job** – that comes very easy to me!

1) I can be very Critical of others

But there is something really ugly about that especially in the body of Christ!

A) I would much rather be poor and used by God to build others up and encourage others in Christ

Aa) Church can we ALL PRAY about being more encouraging as a fellowship

B) There is **a place for championing truth** – Pointing out error and false

teaching

1)CC is known for that!

C)Many circles it has expanded –beyond that to being Critical of things have to do more w/ flavor and preference – **than right vs wrong / truth / error**

1)We teach exposition – they are topical

D)Our worship is contemporary – they are traditional

A)Do we know the difference between right and wrong & Just different?
– Personal Preference.

B)Lord help us to be encouragers – Give pp the benefit of the doubt!

1)Give 2nd Chances

2)See Potential not just problems

C)See **Encouragers are a lot like JESUS!**

Conclude: Greatest encourager – Jesus

A)Jesus saw man in His sin – separated

B)Also saw the Potential for what Man could be in God !

C)In His love for the lost Humanity

D)He showed the Ultimate Generosity and Sacrifice leaving heaven and coming to earth

1)Give His life as a Sacrifice for Man

E)Know forgiveness- freedom – life in Jesus

F) Become his workmanship – Your Destiny

End: Repent – Criticalness – Child – spouse – body