

BARNABAS: THE ENCOURAGER

Scripture: Acts 4:32–37; 9:19–28

A. Introduction — Witnessing Within the Church

1. Witnessing is usually connected with evangelism – bold preaching etc.
2. This is certainly an essential part of Christian witnessing.
3. But witnessing can also take place within the body of Christ
4. Even faithful Christians become discouraged, facing setbacks, fears, failures etc
5. A timely word of encouragement can restore hope and renew strength.
6. Barnabas is one of the most encouraging figures in the book of Acts.
7. He is remembered for giving generously, welcoming a new work of God flourish.
8. His original name was Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus.
9. The apostles gave him the name Barnabas, which means son of encouragement.
10. What a wonderful reputation to have, as one who always builds up others.
11. Do we help strengthen others? Or do we find fault or reasons to reject people?

B. Barnabas Witnessed by Giving Acts 4:36–37

1. He recognised other's needs, put love into action, & gave willingly, sacrificially.
2. The early church in Jerusalem was experiencing remarkable growth.
3. On the Day of Pentecost, thousands had responded to the gospel.
4. Many people remained in the city to learn & grow in their new faith.
5. This created practical difficulties, with people needed food, shelter etc
6. The church responded by sharing what they had to help needy believers.
7. Their generosity demonstrated that Christian love was more than words.
8. He sold a field & brought the money, & placed it at the apostles' feet.
9. He recognised that what he possessed could be used to meet the needs of others.
10. His property wasn't just something for himself; it was an opportunity to serve God.
11. His generosity demonstrated that he valued people more than possessions.
12. Giving is one way we witness, but it isn't limited to putting money in the offering.
13. He expressed his faith practically. He saw a need & did something about it.
14. Encouragement is not just kind words, sometimes it means giving practical help.
15. We can encourage others through our time, gifts, hospitality, finances, & service.
16. An act of kindness may seem small to the us, but a lifeline to someone struggling.
17. We can ask God to make us generous, to become a channel of God's grace to all.
18. Are we using what God has given us to bless the body of Christ?
19. Ask yourself: "How can God use what I possess to bless someone else?"

C. Barnabas Witnessed by Greeting Acts 9:26–27

1. Saul's conversion created a difficult situation.
2. Saul had persecuted Christians and was feared by the church.
3. After his conversion, the disciples in Jerusalem were understandably suspicious.
4. Barnabas took the initiative, & brought Saul to the apostles.
5. He explained how Saul had encountered the Lord on the road to Damascus.
6. He testified that Saul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

7. Barnabas became a bridge between Saul and the suspicious believers.
8. He did not ignore Saul's history, but recognised the power of God's grace.
9. He saw what God was doing in Saul rather than defining him by what he had done.
10. He helped others recognise that a changed life deserves an opportunity to grow.
11. Who might God be asking you to encourage, welcome, or help today?
12. He recognised the evidence of God's work in Saul's life & helped others see it too.
13. Is there someone waiting to offer friendship, or give them an opportunity to grow?
14. Are we helping people feel that there is a place for them in the body of Christ?

D. Barnabas Witnessed by Going Acts 11:22–26; 13:1–2

1. Barnabas was a man of spiritual character & willing to go where he was needed.
2. The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to investigate & encourage the new believers.
3. He arrived & saw evidence of God's grace, & rejoiced in their spiritual growth.
4. Genuine encouragement strengthens people to keep walking with Christ.
5. We see we are to learn to recognise & affirm God's work in other people.

E. Barnabas Witnessed By Sharing His Ministry

1. Barnabas saw that the growing church at Antioch needed further teaching.
2. He travelled to Tarsus & brought Saul to Antioch, where they taught for a year.
3. He was not threatened by someone else's gifts, putting mission ahead of self.
4. Barnabas created an opportunity for Saul to become a major leader in the church.
5. Encourage others, mentor younger believers, & make room for their gifts.
6. A faithful encourager wants people to fulfil God's purpose for their lives.
7. “Lord, where would can I serve? What can I do to help Your church grow?”
8. Are we willing to step forward when God shows us a need?

F. Barnabas Was Generous In Giving Second Chances

1. John Mark had failed Paul & Barnabas on their earlier journey. (Acts 13:13).
2. Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus after disagreeing with Paul over him.
3. This shows that one failure did not have to determine the rest of a person's life.
4. Years later, Paul spoke positively of Mark' ministry, (2 Tim 4:11 & Philemon 24).
5. Some people need correction; others need restoration; many need both.
6. We should never treat a person's worst moment as the final chapter of their life.

G. Conclusion — A Fellowship of Encouragers

1. Barnabas made a difference through generosity, acceptance, praise & partnership.
2. Who needs my encouragement this week? Whose potential have I overlooked?
3. What practical step can I take to help someone grow in Christ?
4. We may never become well known, but we can all encourage someone.
5. An encourager can strengthen a church, restore others & help spread the gospel.
6. You may not be able to do everything, but you can encourage someone who can.
7. You can make a difference in someone's world.
8. Let us be people who strengthen the church, recognise God's grace in others, & help fellow believers become all that God intends them to be.