
The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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Barnabas: He Was a Good Man

by Tim Nichols
Conclusion

The Traits of Barnabas

1. **He was a good man.** To say that a person is good is to affirm that his life is morally pure. Barnabas was not a thief, drunkard, fornicator, etc. He did not habitually walk in sin. All men stumble into sin from time to time, as did Barnabas, but his general demeanor of life was to abstain from all kinds of evil. That is what being good implies.

Being good implies more than the avoidance of sin. It also implies the positive doing of that which is right. One could not say about the priest and Levite who passed by the man who fell among thieves, in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, that they were good (Luke 10:25-37). They could see their fellow man suffering and did nothing to relieve that suffering. Barnabas was a good man in that he not only abstained from evil, but also did good deeds, such as that recorded in Acts 4:36-37 when he sold his property and gave the money to relieve the suffering of the poor saints.

2. **He was full of the Holy Ghost** (Acts 11:24). This is not saying that Barnabas had special power from God to work miracles. Rather, it is used in the same sense as Ephesians 5:18 – “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” A person is full of the Holy Ghost when he is led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:18). To the degree that a person's life is full of the things of this world which root out devotion to God, he is not “full of the Spirit.” Sometimes we see men who are so involved in sports, work, accumulating wealth, and other such like things that God is effectively rooted out of their lives. These men are not “full of the Spirit.” When we say that Barnabas was “full of the Spirit” we describe a life which is fully surrendered to the obedience of God.

3. **He was full of faith** (Acts 11:24). In order to be described as one full of faith, Barnabas had a deep faith in God. The writer of Hebrews said, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). We must conclude that Barnabas had a deep faith in God. Secondly, Barnabas had a deep faith in Christ. He believed and obeyed the gospel. He acknowledged that Jesus was his Lord and lived in obedience to him.

Thirdly, Barnabas had a deep faith in his fellowman. When others were afraid to have anything to do with Saul of Tarsus who wished to be identified with the church in Jerusalem, Barnabas took him aside, talked to him, became convinced of his true conversion, and subsequently recommended him to the church (Acts 9:26-27). Later, when the work in Antioch was greater than he could do alone, Barnabas went to Tarsus to bring Saul to assist in that work. He had faith in Saul.

On the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas took his cousin John Mark with them. For some reason, John Mark turned back at Perga (Acts 13:13). When time came for the second journey, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, but Paul refused. The disagreement was so strong that Barnabas and John Mark went one way and Paul and Silas went another. Barnabas' faith in John Mark was justified. He did his work well so that Paul later could write, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (II Tim. 4:11). Barnabas' faith in his fellowman was commendable.

The Fruits of His Life

1. **He was a liberal giver** (Acts 4:36-37). He sacrificed to give to the Lord as witnessed by his selling his property and laying the funds received at the feet of the apostles for them to use to distribute to the poor. Stingy men never accomplish much for the Lord.

2. **He was concerned for the souls of men.** Barnabas was willing to leave the comforts of his home to preach the gospel at Antioch, the various cities of the first missionary journey and in his travels with John Mark. He made sacrifices to convert the lost. He had a perception that the gospel was to be taken to the whole world and was willing to be used in disseminating the message. Consequently, he was active in bringing many souls to Christ.

3. **He was a "son of consolation"** (Acts 4:36). The text tells us that the apostles changed Joses' name to Barnabas which means "son of consolation." Just as Jesus changed the name of Simon to Peter because he could see the rock-like character in the man, the apostles could see the good consolation which Joses gave and called him Barnabas. He had the ability to cheer and encourage his brethren. He was not a man who discouraged any good work done in a local congregation, with such words as "It'll never work" or "We've tried that before." Barnabas had an ability to stir men to greater service.

4. **Barnabas was free from jealousy.** When Saul first began working with Barnabas, the Scriptures referred to the pair as "Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:2, 7). After the events on the island of Cyprus, the pair were referred to as "Paul and Barnabas" (Acts 13:43, 46; etc.). Commentators are generally agreed that the leadership in the group changed from Barnabas to Paul. Sometimes when strong men work together a spirit of jealousy interfered with their work. One is envious of the abilities of the other and bitter words follow. Barnabas was free from this evil spirit.

Someone has said that the most difficult chair to fill in an orchestra is "second fiddle." The conductor has no trouble filling the chair of the "first fiddle" and maybe even third and fourth fiddle. However, few people want to be second fiddle. Barnabas knew how to accept the role of second fiddle without bitterness and animosity.

Conclusion

A few years ago, a good brother and friend preached on Barnabas and said that he hoped that when he died men could say about him what was said about Barnabas – "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." I have remembered his words for six years now and find myself feeling the same way. I hope that when I come to the end of my way and am lying in a coffin that my children can lean over into the coffin and say, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." I feel confident that, if these words can be truly said about me, that I soon shall hear these words from my Father, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). (The idea for this lesson was taken from several sources, including *Simple Sermons for a World in Crisis* by W. Herschel Ford.)

News and Notes:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16