

BROKEN VESSELS

HOW GOD USES ORDINARY PEOPLE

Barnabas – The Encourager

July 23, 2023

1. Meet Barnabas

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.
Acts 4:32–34 (ESV)

...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
Ephesians 4:3 (ESV)

Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus,... Acts 4:36 (ESV)

A. Barnabas was nicknamed “the encourager.”

B. Life is hard. People can be hard. We all need someone that encourages us.

- 2. Barnabas encouraged people by opening his eyes to see the needs around him and going out of his way to meet them.**

...sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. Acts 4:37 (ESV)

- 3. Barnabas encouraged by assuming the best about people, not the worst.**

And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. Acts 9:26–27 (ESV)

4. Barnabas encouraged by rejoicing in new things.

But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. Acts 11:20–21 (ESV)

The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose,... Acts 11:22–23 (ESV)

5. Barnabas was an encourager by giving people another chance when others wrote them off.

Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. Acts 15:37–40 (ESV)

At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers. Philemon 22–24 (ESV)

Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him).... Colossians 4:10 (ESV)

Life Group Questions

1. Have you struggled with discouragement? Has someone's encouraging words or actions made a life-saving difference for you?
2. See Acts 4:32-36. When Barnabas saw big needs in the church, he made big sacrifices to meet those needs. Why is it important to open our eyes to the needs of people around us and be willing to meet those needs with our finances and/or time? Who is in need around you? What are practical ways you can encourage them?
3. See Acts 9:26-27. Barnabas encouraged people by opening his heart and life to Paul when others avoided him. Who are the outcasts at CrossWinds? How can we be like Barnabas and open our lives to welcome them?
4. See Acts 11:22-23. Why was it hard for the Jews to accept the Greeks becoming Christians? Why is it important to be like Barnabas and rejoice when the unchanging gospel moves forward in ever-changing ways, even if they make us uncomfortable?
5. See Acts 15:37-40. Barnabas encouraged John Mark when he kept believing in him. He even stood up for him when others, like Paul, wrote him off. Why was Barnabas' fight to give John Mark a second chance pivotal in John Mark's life? Who are the people you have written off? How can you be an encouragement by softening your heart toward them?
6. According to the following verses, why is it important for us not just to attend church but to go out of our way to encourage others who are part of the church? See Hebrews 10:25, Romans 1:11-12, Colossians 4:8, Acts 15:32, Acts 20:1-2, Ephesians 6:21-22.