

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** The Gift of Encouragement

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Acts 4:34-37

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1575

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Acts 4:34-37
  - i) Barnabas was his nickname.
    - (1) “Surnamed” means that is what they called him.
  - ii) The word “consolation” literally means “encouragement.”
- b) Barnabas had the gift of encouragement.
  - i) He had a way of encouraging people everywhere he went.
- c) Some people are encouragers, and some are discouragers.
  - i) It has been said that discouragement is a dark room where the negatives of fear and failure are developed.
- d) The Bible tells us that God Himself is the God of all consolation.
  - i) 2 Corinthians 1:3
  - ii) God is the God of all encouragement.
- e) All real encouragement comes from God.
  - i) Therefore, all discouragement comes from the devil.
  - ii) We are never more like God then when we are encouraging people.
    - (1) We’re never more like the devil than when we are discouraging people.
- f) Discouragement is a terrible thing because it is the tool the devil uses to open the door to all other kinds of problems that come into our lives.
  - i) We all get discouraged.
- g) 1 Thessalonians 5:14
  - i) The word for “feeble minded” in this passage literally means “the discouraged,” “the faint-hearted.”
    - (1) It means a person who is small-souled, one who is discouraged.
- h) In today’s message, we will see five instances in the life of Barnabas where he encouraged someone.
  - i) These instances show us five types of people whom we should seek to encourage.

2) FIND A NEEDY PERSON AND ENRICH HIM (ACTS 4:34-37)

- a) This was a time of great persecution for Christians in Acts 4.
  - i) These early Christians had their goods confiscated.
  - ii) Many of them were hiding in secret places and in caves.
  - iii) They were afraid of the authorities.
  - iv) Many of them were put to death.
- b) Barnabas was a wealthy man and a landowner.
  - i) Barnabas sold his land and took the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.
    - (1) He wanted the money to go to help those who needed to be helped.
    - (2) He saw that there were some who carried a heavy load, and he moved in to help bear their burden.
- c) If there is someone who is struggling financially and we have money that we could give to help them, then we should help them.
  - i) It’s not what we keep in the barn that multiplies, but it’s what we sow that multiplies.

- ii) Luke 6:38
  - d) It has been said that stewardship is that area of life where men make money, and God makes men.
  - e) Barnabas realized that God had not given him money just for his own enrichment.
    - i) God had given it to him to encourage others with it.
    - ii) Barnabas took the resources that God had given him, and he used them to bless those in need and those who were hurting.
  - f) Some people want to hold on to their wealth just in case they ever experience a financial reversal.
    - i) One day when our lives are over, the only thing we will have left is what we gave away.
  - g) We can give more than money.
    - i) We can give love.
    - ii) We can give help.
      - (1) Perhaps we could help a neighbor with household chores.
    - iii) We can give time.
      - (1) Perhaps we could help tutor a child who is struggling in his school work.
    - iv) We can give wisdom.
      - (1) Perhaps a retired business person could help a young couple learn how to put together a budget.
  - h) Barnabas loved to encourage people so much that he was called by his nickname, which means “an encourager”, “the son of consolation.”
- 3) FIND A LONELY PERSON AND INCLUDE HIM (ACTS 9:23-27)
- a) Acts 9:23-27
    - i) In this passage, the Apostle Paul had recently been saved.
    - ii) The Christians did not trust him because he had been a persecutor of the church.
    - iii) He was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, but they did not trust him because he had professed Christianity.
    - iv) Saul (who later became the Apostle Paul) was a lonely man, and Barnabas took him in.
  - b) Like Saul, new Christians may lose their former friends.
    - i) We need to include new Christians and befriend them.
    - ii) It has been said that a friend is someone who comes in when everyone else has gone out.
  - c) We need to be careful in our churches and Sunday school classes that we don't become sacred societies for snubbing sinners.
    - i) Invite newcomers to sit with you in church.
    - ii) Invite them to join your Bible study group and for fellowship after church.
  - d) Studies show that a significant percentage of today's population suffers from chronic loneliness.

- e) The Apostle Paul never forgot what Barnabas did for him.
  - i) Romans 15:5-7
    - (1) God is a God of comfort, and we are to be that way with one another.
    - ii) Paul knew what it was to be received because he knew what it was to be rejected.
  - f) A new believer in Christ does not need to be shut out.
    - i) They need love and encouragement.
    - ii) They need contact with other believers in the family of God.
- 4) FIND A MISUNDERSTOOD PERSON AND AFFIRM HIM (ACTS 11:20-24)
  - a) Acts 11:20-24
    - i) Barnabas found some people who were perhaps misunderstood, and he affirmed them.
    - ii) During this time, the Gospel was spreading, and revival had broken out in Antioch.
      - (1) But the center of Christianity at that time was Jerusalem, and that is where the apostles were.
    - iii) Barnabas was sent to investigate whether the revival in Antioch was real or not.
      - (1) They did not want to deny the work of the Holy Ghost.
      - (2) They did not want to attribute to Satan the work of the Holy Ghost, but they also did not want to attribute to the Holy Ghost the work of Satan.
      - (3) When he got there, Barnabas saw that the revival was real, and he affirmed the new believers.
  - b) There are a lot of people who are misunderstood and who need our affirmation and encouragement, just as Barnabas encouraged these new believers in Antioch.
  - c) Barnabas could have gone to Antioch and been a wet blanket.
    - i) He could have told the new Christians, "You're not doing things just exactly the way we think you ought."
    - ii) Some people don't want anything to happen that they can't control or that they don't understand.
      - (1) Any kind of growth threatens them.
    - iii) But Barnabas saw the grace of God on these people, and he affirmed them and blessed them.
  - d) Instead of thinking why a thing can't be done, an encourager thinks of why it can be done.
  - e) We can encourage others who are starting something new or trying to accomplish something.
    - i) We can encourage them by coming along side of them and believing in the grace of God that we see in them and through them.

- 5) FIND A POTENTIAL AND UNDEVELOPED PERSON AND DISCIPLE HIM (ACTS 11:25-26)
- a) Acts 11:25-26
    - i) Barnabas went to get Saul and brought him back to Antioch to teach the people.
      - (1) He didn't stay in Antioch and lead the whole thing himself.
      - (2) He knew that his job was behind him, so he found Saul who had the gifts and abilities to teach the people.
        - (a) He saw that Saul (the same one who had fled from the wrath of his enemies) had hidden talent and buried abilities, and he began to work with and develop Saul.
        - (b) Barnabas didn't put himself first.
  - b) We have in our churches today a lot of Saul's.
    - i) We need to find them and develop them.
    - ii) Many of them are overlooked, and they need to be in service in our churches.
  - c) People need to be encouraged.
  - d) Barnabas never wrote a book in the Bible, but half of the New Testament was written by Paul, whom Barnabas encouraged.
    - i) The Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, whom Barnabas also encouraged.
  - e) We may never be great leaders, but we can be great encouragers.
- 6) FIND A FAILING PERSON AND RESTORE HIM (ACTS 15:36-39)
- a) Acts 15:36-39
    - i) By this time, Paul had become the leader, and Barnabas was following Paul.
      - (1) It takes much grace to play second fiddle well, but Barnabas knew how to do it.
    - ii) Barnabas found John Mark, a failure and a quitter, and put his arm around him and invited him to work with him.
      - (1) Paul may have been logically right, but John Mark learned from Barnabas that failure is not final.
  - b) We don't know all that Barnabas did for John Mark, but we see evidence of his impact upon John Mark's life.
    - i) 2 Timothy 4:11
      - (1) Paul was in prison, and he said that he needed Mark (the same one whom he earlier wouldn't have anything to do with).
  - c) Galatians 6:1
    - i) Perhaps Paul learned this lesson from Barnabas.
  - d) We need to be a Barnabas to those who have quit going to church, failed in business, perhaps ruined their marriage, who are looked upon as a disgrace, and those who feel like failures.

7) CONCLUSION

- a) Acts 11:24
  - i) This verse contains a character sketch of Barnabas.
  - ii) Barnabas was a good man because he was full of the Holy Ghost.
    - (1) It was God in him.
    - (2) God is the God of all consolation.
  - iii) Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost because he was a man of faith.
- b) Each of us can be a person of faith today.
  - i) Trust God to fill you with the Holy Spirit and give you the gift of encouragement.
- c) In order to become a person of faith and be filled with the Holy Ghost, you must first receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.
- d) Do you know Jesus personally?
  - i) Are you saved?
  - ii) If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16