



“MAKING A DIFFERENCE”

A Study of the Early Christians in the Book of Acts

“ENCOURAGEMENT MAKES A DIFFERENCE”

Text: Acts 11:19-26

INTRODUCTION: As believers, desiring to live a Christ-like life, we need to determine, as Barnabas did, to encourage others with our words, actions and _____. First century followers of Christ were resolute in their service to Christ in the midst of a hostile culture. The encouraging nature of Barnabas is recorded as early as the fourth chapter of Acts and glimpses of his _____-_____ spirit continue throughout the book. In Acts 4:36 – the apostles knew a man named *Joses*, and they surnamed him *Barnabas* due to his consolatory lifestyle. In the course of this much needed and timely lesson, we will learn how to be an _____ by examining the life of Barnabas a little more closely. In the Book of Acts, we will consider three notable reasons why Barnabas was known as an encourager.

I. THE PLACE OF ENCOURAGEMENT - _____ (11:19-21)

This city was the home of approximately 200,000 people and it was situated 300 miles north of Jerusalem. It was a city steeped in idol worship and filled with _____ practices.

How did God *maneuver* to bring the Gospel and Barnabas to this city?

A. The Scattering of the _____. (19)

Saul, an integral part of the persecution leveled against the church at Jerusalem, saw members of the church being scattered abroad – (*Judaea and Samaria/Acts 8:1-4*).

In the midst of being scattered, these believers refused to remain _____!

B. The Salvation of the _____ (11:20-21)

These scattered, believing Jews, began to be “soul _____”.

V.21 – Reveals that a “*great number believed and turned unto the Lord.*”

Our *silence* is to be blamed for the lack of souls being saved today.

II. THE PERSON OF ENCOURAGEMENT - _____ (11:22-24)

This great encourager, in the Church at Jerusalem was sent – 300 miles to the north – and when he arrived he saw “*the grace of God*” and was glad; and he exhorts them, one and all, with purpose of _____ to “*cleave unto the Lord*”.

Four characteristics seen in Barnabas’ life which made him an **Encourager**:

1. **Barnabas was _____** (23) Romans 12:15, I Corinthians 12:26
2. **Barnabas was Good** (24) Galatians 6:10, James 4:17, III John 11
3. **Barnabas was _____** (24) Full of the Holy Spirit and Faith - Eph. 5:18, Rom. 10:17
4. **Barnabas was Giving** (4:36-37) Acts 20:35, II Corinthians 9:7

It's easy to see that the lifestyle and choices seen in the life of *Barnabas* answered the charge given by Paul in his First Epistle to Timothy (6:17-18).

The Place of Encouragement, The Person of Encouragement and.....

III. THE _____ OF ENCOURAGEMENT (11:25-26)

One really never knows what a *little bit of encouragement* is capable of doing.

We never really know what positive consequences that our words and simple _____ of encouragement might produce.

The Encouragement of Barnabas resulted in.....

A. Helping a Missionary Get His _____ (25)

Barnabas left Antioch and went to get Saul/Paul in Tarsus and then returned to Antioch to teach new believers.

Acts 9:26-27 – While others were skeptical, doubtful and cynical about Saul's conversion, Barnabas let _____ do its work.

Peter, James and John and others had their faith challenged by the faith of Barnabas.

Does our *faith* work that way? Whose *faith* is encouraged by our own?

God constantly looks for encouraging Christians with whom He can entrust the lives of spiritual newborns? (Romans 15:7)

B. Helping our _____ Get its Name (26)

It was the enemies of Christ that gave believers their new name, and it fit!

"Christian" means "Christ-like ones" or Christ followers".

The name fits because God's will for His children is for them to be *conformed into the image of His Son (Romans 8:29)*.

How's that working for you? How's it working for me?

We must labor heartily, tirelessly and endlessly to become more like _____ and we must be willing to be a modern-day Barnabas', encouraging others to do the same (Gal. 4:19).

CONCLUSION: Who was the last person that we encouraged? Who was it, that perhaps we could have encouraged and simply chose not to do so? Sometimes, we can become so tightly wrapped up in ourselves that we neglect the Christian duty to encourage others. Let's choose to be a modern-day Barnabas, and as we look to encourage others – *believers and unbelievers* – let's live in expectation of the increase that only God can give. May our daily prayer to the Lord be these – *"Lord, Make me a blessing to someone today."*