

## Lessons from the life of Barnabas – A model of encouragement (Tino Todino – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2018)

### 3 takeaway points from the life of Barnabas

1. **He looked for the best in people.**
  - a. **No Barnabas, no Bible as we know it!**
2. **He was someone who didn't need the limelight**
  - a. He was glad and not envious
  - b. He was content to work behind the scenes (in the shadow of Paul).
  - c. In Scripture we don't have a single recorded word of Barnabas!
3. **He was keen to facilitate and release others into THEIR ministry**
  - a. Standing alongside people is the best form of encouragement.

### Introduction

Some of you will know that I play the trumpet. I started off in the Cubs with a Bugle given to me by a gentleman called Charlie Baines. I remember Charlie because he wore the scouting leaders uniform so impeccably, no creases in his shirts, his beret firmly and properly in place, his shoes shined to within an inch of their lives. He loved playing the Bugle and the trumpet and he stood out from the crowd because he was a real encourager. Once I mastered the Bugle, Charlie gave me a trumpet and started me off in a musical talent I didn't know at the time I had.

In secondary school I had two music teachers, Mr Jones and Mr Burnip. Mr Jones taught about music theory, the history of music, led the school swing band and ran the music department and Mr Burnip was the peripatetic brass teacher who took me from trumpet basics to around grade 8 standard by the time I left for Uni.

When I was about 14 I had hit a barrier in my trumpet playing. I didn't seem to be improving and practicing was a real bind. I remember going to see Mr Jones and Mr Burnip one lunchtime and telling them that I wanted to quit playing the trumpet. Mr Burnip looked me in the eyes and told me in no uncertain terms that I would be a fool to stop now and throw it all away, and he described how every musician plateaus for a while, but if I hung in there I would break through and find myself improving very quickly again. Mr Jones agreed and said that he thought I would be 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet in the school orchestra in not very much time at all.

By the time about 15 mins or so had passed I decided not to quit. They had skilfully rebuilt my confidence and encouraged me. They stood by me and watched as over time what they predicted came to pass. Within mere months I'd progressed from struggling with grade 2 pieces to mastering grade 4 ones. Within a year or so I was playing as 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet in the school orchestra. Over the next 4 years till I left 6th form I played many solo pieces in the orchestra and swing bands. By the time I left school I'd performed Haydn's trumpet concerto (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Movements) in concerts and was at grade 8 standard.

Nicola at University.

**The point of this story is this.**

**We all at some stage in life lose faith in ourselves and want to quit. If it hasn't happened yet, it will! At that point you will need someone who will stand alongside you, believe in you and your gift and encourage you.**

I want to show you one of my heroes of the Bible who knew how to do this well. His name was Barnabas and his name meant Son of Encouragement.

- 1) What do we know about Barnabas? (Acts 4:34-37).
  - a. He was an early disciple of Christ who wanted to do what was right and good by being very generous. He sold some real estate and gave the money to the apostles.
  
- 2) A man who had a special talent ("Son of Encouragement").
  - a. He was renamed from Joseph to a name that matched his most outstanding characteristic. His ability to stand beside others and walk with them which is the essence of encouragement
  - b. The word that Luke uses is παρακλησις (paraklesis), which describes the act of **calling people closer together, onto closer intimacy and stronger comfort**. It comes from the verb παρακαλεω (parakaleo), which in turn is a construct of the words παρα (para), which expresses the notion of immediate vicinity or proximity, and the verb καλεω (kaleo), meaning to call.

Let's see how this is written about in Scripture.

### **BARNABAS STOOD BESIDE PAUL.**

In Acts 9 after Paul's conversion, we see Paul in Jerusalem trying to join himself to the disciples there.

<sup>26</sup>And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup>***But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.*** <sup>28</sup>So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. <sup>29</sup>And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. <sup>30</sup>When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

He was having trouble convincing them of his sincerity (9:26) which is a small wonder considering his past.

### **1<sup>st</sup> point: He looked for the best in people.**

Barnabas believed in Paul when the apostles did not. Barnabas used his God given gift to bridge the gap and bring the 2 sides together.

But Barnabas knew how to bring people together. Even the persecutor and the persecuted.

Barnabas was instrumental in setting up and taking part in the ministry God had for Paul. If it wasn't for Barnabas' we may never have had much of the New Testament revelation that Paul received and taught!

### **No Barnabas, No Pauline epistles.**

## **BARNABAS STOOD BY THE LOCAL CHURCH (Acts 11:19-26).**

### A. Background:

After the church was scattered under Saul's persecution, Greeks were receiving Christ and had started to gather in Antioch. (Acts 8:4, 11:19-26). The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to see what was going on (read vv. 23-26).

When Barnabas got there we read that:

1. He was glad for them when He saw God's grace at work in their midst (23a).
2. He got involved by using the gift God gave him to encourage everyone in their faith and commitment to God. (23).

He wasn't promoting his own agenda, nor the agenda of the church in Jerusalem, just encouraging them in the grace that God had given them.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Point – He was someone who didn't need the limelight**

3. Then he went to fetch Paul (still Saul) and brought him to Antioch to further encourage the believers there and they stayed there for a whole year teaching and standing alongside the church there. Barnabas knew how to get other people involved and strengthen the work of the ministry.

A good leader learns how to facilitate and release other people into that which God has for them at that time. A good leader promotes and makes space.

**A good leader doesn't do the work of 10 people but learns how to put 10 people to work**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Point – He was keen to facilitate and release others into their ministry**

#### **BARNABAS STOOD BESIDE JOHN MARK.**

In Acts 13 we see Paul, Barnabas and John Mark on the 1st Missionary Journey. John Mark was Barnabas' cousin and Barnabas clearly thought he was ready for a journey like this. However, we learn that at Pamphylia John Mark for whatever reason leaves them and returns to Jerusalem.

When Paul & Barnabas are ready to go on the 2nd missionary journey, Barnabas again wants to take John Mark but Paul refuses and they have a major argument over it. So much so that Paul decides to take Silas and Barnabas takes John Mark. (Acts 15:36-39).

We don't hear anything else in the book of Acts about Barnabas nor about John Mark. However, the scriptures bear witness to the effects of Barnabas encouraging and standing alongside John Mark.

How?

**Mark later wrote his Gospel which is recorded in the scriptures!**

**So, no Barnabas, No Gospel of Mark.**

We read that even Paul later recognized his John Mark's usefulness (2 Tim. 4:11, Coll 4:10-11).

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), <sup>11</sup>and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

Conclusion:

1. The church will never have a shortage of people who want to be its Pauls!
2. Are you willing to be its Barnabas?