

Encourage Like Barnabas
11-10-13

How do you encourage your brethren? We are told repeatedly in Scripture to do so, but often we are at a loss as to how to accomplish this work. Perhaps we should turn to our examples in Scripture to find obedience; “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern”. (Philippians 3:17)

When it comes to encouragement, perhaps our best example is the man Barnabas. His real name was Josès, but he was nicknamed Barnabas, Son of Encouragement, by the Apostles. He is revealed to us in Scripture on several occasions:

- Acts 4:36 – Introduced in the church
- Acts 9:27 – Retrieved Saul to the church
- Acts 11:25-30 – Brought Saul to Antioch
- Acts 13:1-3 – Commissioned
- Acts 15:12-22 – Made peace in Jerusalem

What is encouragement? In our language it means to give support, confidence, or hope. The word in Greek is *Paraklesis* – consolation or exhortation. The name *Bar – Nabas* means Son of Prophecy (good words). How did Barnabas work? First, we see he was a team worker. Second, he was a uniter. Finally, we can deduce that he spoke good words

We ought to be team-workers. In Ecclesiastes 4:7-12 we are told the value of working in partnerships. We see a pattern of such throughout the New Testament (Matthew 18:19 – “two of you agree”; Luke 10:1 – “sent them 2 by 2”). We know that “as iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” (Proverbs 27:17)

Secondly, as Barnabas was, so ought we to be people of unity and peace. Barnabas brought peace to many congregations, and was marked as “a good man” for it. In Psalm 133 we are told how beautiful unity is to God. As for making peace? “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

Finally, consider that Barnabas was filled with “good words”. What good words do you have? “The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up” (Ecclesiastes 10:12). “Gracious” words mean “full of grace”; are your words to your brethren full of Grace? “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” (Colossians 4:6)

We ought to encourage like Barnabas. It means we work well with others. It means that we strive for unity and peace among our brethren. It means that we are filled with Good Words