

Barnabas' Edifying Expositions

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. Acts 11:19-26
- B. One of the great tragedies of our time is that there are so few kind people.
 - 1. That this is how every child of God ought to be - Eph. 4:32, 4:2
- C. What mental disconnect occurs when a Christian fails to apply this when teaching the lost?
 - 1. Why do so many become confrontational, appearing to believe that attacking the lost is some sort of virtue? - 2Tim. 2:24-26
- D. Rather than considering the sermon and its content (which does not appear in the text), we will consider the manner in which it was delivered.
 - 1. Barnabas serves as the best illustration of this.
- E. Barnabas was a name given to him later in life. His given name is Joses or Joseph. Barnabas means "Son of Consolation" and comes from the same root word as the word translated as "Comforter" used by Jesus for the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. He earned the title of "Encourager" from the brethren for reasons that seem evident from the text
 - 2. He was an exceptional judge of character; he was able to see the potential for good in others who were often dismissed by others
 - 3. He was able to spend time with these people and help them to realize their potential for good

I. BARNABAS BROUGHT OUT THE GOOD IN FELLOW CHRISTIANS

- A. The needy saints in Jerusalem - Acts 4:32-37
 - 1. There was very little more precious to a Jewish man than the inheritance left for him by his father (242 verses)
 - a. Esau's profane sale of his birthright - Heb. 12:16-17
 - b. Barnabas sold his to help hungry Christians
 - 2. He trusted the apostles to use it wisely
 - 3. He trusted the recipients to have genuine needs
 - 4. Being trusted is encouraging and empowering
 - 5. You will not pay a higher compliment to a young person than to give them a responsibility and refuse to micromanage them
- B. Saul of Tarsus - Acts 9:26-28
 - 1. He saw the potential good that would come of Saul being part of the church at Jerusalem at a time when even the apostles did not
 - 2. He gave the apostles the benefit of the doubt that they would respond reasonably to his defense of Saul
 - 3. When he was in a work where he needed help, he went to get Saul
 - a. Acts 11:25-26
- C. John Mark - Acts 15:36-39
 - 1. Barnabas saw the good in John Mark and stood up for him even against someone he once defended and with whom he worked several years
 - 2. He was right - 2Tim. 4:11

II. BARNABAS BROUGHT OUT THE GOOD IN CHURCHES

- A. Barnabas had no difficulty with follow up work - Acts 11:19-21; 2Cor. 10:14-18
- B. Barnabas had no difficulty with following instructions - Acts 11:22
- C. Barnabas was a self starter who drew strength from witnessing others prosper in the Lord - Acts 11:23
- D. Barnabas preached and taught the church the same way he taught and encouraged individuals - Acts 11:23-24
- E. Barnabas stayed with the disciples to establish them; he didn't encourage them and leave them - Acts 11:25-26
 - 1. He was the located preacher at Antioch when disciples first began to be called Christians

III. LESSON

- A. Christians fall away and churches dwindle without edifying encouragement.
 - 1. Not every verse is about liberals, denominations, homosexuals, false doctrine, and sin
 - 2. And if you think otherwise, your faith is warped and your soul is at risk
 - 3. And if you preach this way, you preach an unbalanced doctrine and put souls at risk
- B. Years ago I wrote a diary of a negative preacher. It is still valid today
 - Wed, Nov 1... Taught Acts 3 in Bible class tonight; took vs 6 and managed to segue into a lengthy discussion on institutionalism. Spoke against social drinking for the invitation. Hope brother Slesh got the message.
 - Sun, Nov 5... Preached on the Deity of Jesus controversy both morning and evening. Made certain to name all of the brethren involved.
 - Wed, Nov 8... Really cut loose on Acts 5:1-11 tonight in class. Bet that all those rich brethren who make more than my preacher's salary go away tonight feeling properly rebuked. Used the invitation to reinforce it by talking about the camel through the needle's eye.
 - Sun, Nov 12... preached on "the 28 questions" controversy and creedal tendencies in big churches in the AM. PM, preached on marriage, divorce and remarriage; hadn't done a lesson on it since last month.
 - Wed, Nov 15... studied Acts 8 in class. Used example of Peter and Simon sorcerer to justify strong public criticisms of everyone who doesn't hold same positions on the issues. Imagine they will now have more respect when I talk about the Baptists and Catholics this coming Sunday.
 - Sun, Nov 19... Run off two denominational visitors during the sermon while I was illustrating my point with the story about the traveling salesman, the farmer's daughter, and the pope. Just figure that they have no stomach for the truth. PM preached on the 1Cor. 11 covering issue.
 - Wed, Nov 22... For the invitation, reminded the brethren not to allow their neighbors to see them eat turkey on Thanksgiving lest they think of them as Quakers. Class seemed dull tonight; no one appeared interested in returning to Act 8:22-24 to discuss the continuous cleansing issue.

Sun, Nov 26... In preparation for the coming holidays, preached in the AM on the evil of decorated trees and the sinful nature of wrapping paper with Santa's picture on it. Evening preached on Holt's doctrine of individualism. Really slamdunked 'em, too!

Wed, Nov 29... In class, talked about Acts 18 and Aquila & Priscilla teaching Apollos. Pressed audience to discuss 'women speaking in Bible class' issue. Allowed one of the young men to deliver invitation; told him afterward he was a bit soft on sin.

Thur, Nov 30... End of the month meeting with the elders. Discussed at great length possible reasons for dwindling membership. One of the elders suggested some sermons on "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5) and "add to your faith" (2Peter 1). Made it clear to him that platitudes of positivism would weaken the church, not build it. Vehemently asserted that I only preach sound doctrine! Told elders that December sermons would solve the problem: 3 part series on attendance, 4 part series on discipline, and one lesson on the evils of sectarianism. That'll make 'em snap to and walk a straight line!

Yes, I know it is hyperbole, and I am aware it is a caricature, but it makes a valid point. There is no implication in this article that ANY Bible related topic is unimportant. Nor am I suggesting that error should not be refuted sternly. I am simply trying to say that a steady diet of these things without a refreshing balance of the whole counsel will weaken devout Christians and choke newborn babes in Christ. May I never close my mind to the possibility that I might be stuck in a "tear down error" mode and need to get into a "build up the church" frame of mind for spiritual equilibrium. May we all avoid focusing so intently on counting out our anise and cumin seeds for the right tithe that we omit the weightier matters (Matt. 23:23).