

Sermon Outline for FBC Feb. 02, 2020

## **“Better to Encourage Than be Discouraged!”**

### **Acts 11: 19-24**

Today the message is entitled “Better to Encourage Than be Discouraged”. It seems people find it easier the other way around, “be discouraged rather than to encourage”. God knows that and so He gives us examples of encouraging.

The person we will be reading about is Barnabas. Why Barnabas? Because he was an encourager and shows us how to see the positive and good in events and people. He did not start life as Barnabas, it was a name given by the apostles to state his character.

#### **Acts 4: 36 NIV**

*Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (Which means Son of Encouragement).*

**Barnabas had maturity, wisdom and the gift of encouragement. He was sent to Antioch from the mother church in Jerusalem to build the church. His ministry work was about 32-51 AD.**

#### **Acts 11: 19-24 NIV The Church in Antioch**

*19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.*

*20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.*

*21 The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.*

*22 News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.*

*23 When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.*

*24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.*

**Barnabas saw how God was working in the church and encouraged them. Barnabas saw the good that was happening in Antioch. The gentiles (non-Jews) were coming to follow Jesus and Barnabas encouraged them and the church for their growth and excitement and faith. This was a pivotal time in the early Christian church as non-Jewish and Jewish worshipped together as one in faith.**

**Barnabas and Paul had quite the relationship. Just after Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus and changed his life around, he ran into opposition from the disciples because of his history of persecuting anyone who followed Jesus. Barnabas came to his rescue by encouraging the apostles to trust Paul.**

**Acts 9: 26-27 NIV**

*When Paul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.*

**Next, we see Barnabas reaching out to Paul to assist in this work in Antioch. It is here in Antioch that the name we call ourselves, “Christians,” is first recorded**

**Acts 11: 25-26 NIV**

*25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,  
26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So, for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. **The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.***

**See how words of encouragement can accomplish much. As followers of Jesus Christ, God almighty, we are to be encouragers for our faith. Rough times will come to us all.**

**How do we want to handle those times – with grumbling and complaining or with encouragement from each other to overcome and go beyond?**

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### **Joshua 1: 8-9 NIV**

*8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

*9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

**Frank Sciacca, in his book “To Walk and Not Grow Weary,” states:**

The word “Encourage” in the New Testament of the Bible, is the verb form of the word used for “Counselor,” the Holy Spirit. Its primary meaning, however, has to do with someone called “alongside” to stir up an individual to stand on his/her own two feet and face the rigors of life. <sup>2</sup>

**Sometimes it takes just a word, a hug or merely listening, to encourage another person. Everyday we can encourage others simply by being sensitive to what they are feeling. Never underestimate what a few words of encouragement can do for someone.**

**Paul and Barnabas were encouragers! They spent most of their collective ministry time encouraging everyone to trust God in everything and to support each other in faith.**

### **Acts 13: 43 NIV**

*When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged (encouraged) them to continue in the grace of God.*

**We can be encouragers simply by applying this truth from**

### **Ephesians 4:29NIV**

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

**I was told along time ago that if you are actively encouraging someone in need, it is hard to be discouraged about your own situation. By doing some encouraging, I find it renews my spirit and restores my joy in being saved by God.**

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<sup>2</sup> Frank Sciacca, Pg. 78

**I have tried to use this concept when I am facing tough times in my life and have found that it is “better to encourage than be discouraged.”**

**Bibliography:**

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