

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: The Church Member of My Dreams

SERMON REFERENCE: Acts 4:36-37

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1259

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) What would a pastor's dream church member be like?
- b) Acts 4:36-37
 - i) A dream church member would be like this man Jose.
 - ii) Jose was called Barnabas.
 - (1) The word "Barnabas" was interpreted "Son of Consolation".
 - (2) The Greek word for "consolation" is the same word the Holy Spirit is called by, "The Comforter".
 - (a) It literally means "encouragement".
- c) Barnabas was a great encourager.
 - i) If there is anything that people need today, it is encouragement.
 - (1) There are so many people who are discouraged.
- d) 2 Corinthians 1:3
 - i) God is called a God of all comfort.
 - (1) This is literally the same word as "the God of all consolation" and "the God of all encouragement".
 - (2) If you are discouraged, God didn't do it.
 - (a) The devil did it.
- e) The devil wants to get us discouraged.
 - i) If he gets us discouraged, then he has us set for failure.
 - (1) Discouragement is the dark room where the negatives of failure are developed.
 - ii) If you are discouraged, then the devil is on your trail.
- f) If you are encouraged, then you can do almost anything.
 - i) Thank God for people who have the gift of encouragement and know how to encourage people.
- g) 1 Thessalonians 5:14
 - i) In this verse, "feble-minded" doesn't literally mean those who are weak minded.
 - (1) It means "small souls".
 - (a) Those people who are discouraged.
 - ii) Paul was saying to encourage the discouraged.
- h) If there is anything that we really need, then it is those who know how to encourage other people.
 - i) Barnabas had the gift of encouragement.
- i) Today's message will share five characteristics of encouragement that are found in Barnabas' life.

2) BARNABAS WAS A LOAD-LIFTER (ACTS 4:36-37)

- a) There was great distress in the land of Jerusalem at this time.
 - i) Revival had broken out.
 - ii) Many people wanted to know what was happening.
 - (1) They poured into the city of Jerusalem.

- (2) Many became Christians and decided to stay and learn more about their faith.
 - (a) They had no home to sleep in.
 - (i) There were no hotels.
 - (b) They were not wealthy people.
 - (i) Many of them were just common, ordinary people.
- iii) Early persecution arose immediately.
- iv) Many of these people had no place to go and nothing to eat.
 - (1) It was turmoil.
- v) There was a great need for financial resources and immediate needs.
- b) Barnabas had some property that he sold and gave to the apostles to help.
 - i) Acts 4:36-37
 - ii) He saw a need, and he moved in to meet that need.
 - (1) He saw a load and decided to lift it.
- c) Galatians 6:2
 - i) That is what an encourager is.
 - (1) He lifts burdens from people.
- d) We don't have to have property to sell in order to lift a load.
 - i) We can give love, wisdom, advice, or time.
 - ii) Maybe there is a mother next door with a sick child.
 - iii) Maybe there is someone we know who has an elderly parent who is sick.
 - iv) Maybe there is someone we know who has just lost their job and needs someone to loan them a car.
 - v) We all have something to give.
- e) Wouldn't it be wonderful to be in a church full of people who wanted to lift someone else's load and bear someone else's burden?
 - i) That is what Barnabas did.
 - (1) He had land, and he sold it.
- f) Barnabas knew the difference between ownership and stewardship.
 - i) A lot of us think that we own what we own.
 - (1) But we don't own it; we are only stewards.
 - (a) It needs to be available to the Lord if the Lord wants to use it.
 - ii) Barnabas didn't lose what he had.
 - (1) As a matter of fact, he still has it.
 - (a) The only thing that we carry to Heaven is what we have given away.
- g) When true wealth is divided, it multiplies.
 - i) We are often told that if we tithe, then we will be able to do more with the nine-tenths after we tithe; God will bless the ninety percent.
 - (1) But it is not the ninety percent that God blesses; it is the ten percent that we gave that God blesses.
 - ii) It is not the seed that is kept in the barn that increases.
 - (1) It is the seed that is invested that increases.
 - (a) It is that which is given away.
 - (b) It is that which is sown.

- (2) It is that which you plant that multiplies and comes back again and again.
 - iii) The way to get is to give.
- 3) BARNABAS WAS A FRIEND-FINDER (ACTS 9:23-27)
- a) Acts 9:23-26
 - i) This was after the conversion of Saul, when Saul became Paul.
 - ii) They wanted to kill Paul.
 - (1) They felt that he was a traitor.
 - (a) Paul had been persecuting the church.
 - (b) Now, he lined up with the church.
 - (2) His former friends wanted to kill him
 - iii) Paul needed to go and be with the Christians in Jerusalem, but they were afraid of him.
 - (1) They were suspicious of him.
 - (a) They didn't think that he had really been saved.
 - iv) Paul was like a man without a country.
 - b) Acts 9:27
 - i) Barnabas was a friend-finder.
 - (1) Paul needed a friend.
 - ii) Barnabas went out and found him and became a friend to a lonely, new disciple.
 - c) There are a lot of new Christians who need someone to find them and to be a friend to them.
 - i) A lot of people need an encourager.
 - (1) If anyone needs encouragement, then it is a brand-new Christian.
 - ii) Many times, a new Christian finds it hard to fit into our churches.
 - (1) Especially, if they come from different backgrounds, cultures, or a different socio-economic status.
 - (2) They want to be a part of the group, but they don't know how to fit in.
 - iii) We need some Barnabases who will find these people and bring them in.
 - (1) That is what an encourager is.
 - (a) He is a friend-finder.
 - iv) Just as little babies need love and care in the physical world, so do baby Christians in the spiritual world.
 - (1) The most important year is that first year when a person comes to know Christ.
 - d) A church needs to be filled with people like Barnabas who will find a friend, embrace that friend, and bring him or her into the fellowship.
- 4) BARNABAS WAS A BRIDGE-BUILDER (ACTS 11:19-24)
- a) A revival meeting had broken out in Antioch.
 - i) The Christians had been persecuted.
 - (1) Many of them left Jerusalem, and some went to Antioch.

- (2) They began to tell the story of the resurrected Lord.
- (3) People believed, revival fire got started, and there was an upheaval.
 - (a) The city was turned upside-down and inside-out for the Lord Jesus.
- ii) Word of the revival got back to Jerusalem, the headquarters where the apostles were.
 - (1) The apostles wondered if it was of God.
 - (a) The revival had no apostolic guidance or apostolic credence to it.
 - (i) The apostles had not approved it, initiated it, nor watched over it.
 - (b) They wondered if it was real Christianity.
 - (i) Was God really blessing there?
 - (2) They sent Barnabas to investigate.
 - (a) Acts 11:24
 - iii) Barnabas saw at Antioch the grace of God.
 - (1) He saw God moving in such a way that he said the revival had the unmistakable stamp of the authenticity of God upon it.
 - (2) Barnabas exhorted them.
 - (a) Acts 11:23
- b) Barnabas was a bridge-builder.
 - i) In Jerusalem, there was traditional Christianity.
 - (1) Even though it was young, it was still old enough to have tradition to it.
 - (2) The apostles were there, and they knew what God was doing.
 - (3) These were the Jewish people.
 - ii) In Antioch, there was something that was spreading.
 - (1) The people back in Jerusalem didn't start it, and they didn't control it.
 - (2) It was among the Greeks.
 - (3) It had a little different form, but it was the same thing.
 - iii) Here was Barnabas.
 - (1) Barnabas came from the group in Jerusalem, but he knew the group in Antioch.
 - (2) He became a bridge-builder.
 - (a) He was a person who saw what God was doing in Antioch, and he knew what God had done in Jerusalem.
 - (i) He knew the old, and he saw the new.
 - (ii) He believed in the tradition, but he also believed in the frontier.
 - (b) He was used of God to mold it all together.
 - (i) We need this kind of person in the church today.
- c) Many people today look at something new and say, "We have never done it that way before."
 - i) There are three kinds of church leadership:
 - (1) The risk takers
 - (2) The care takers

- (3) The undertakers
 - ii) A lot of people don't want to be risk takers.
 - (1) They like it just like it is.
 - (2) They don't want anything new.
 - (3) These were the people back in Jerusalem.
 - iii) Barnabas had vision.
 - (1) He saw that God wanted to do something wonderful.
 - (2) He gave encouragement to the people in Antioch and to those back in Jerusalem.
 - d) An encourager is a bridge-builder.
 - i) They can take the past and link it to the future.
 - ii) They can take the old and link it to the new.
 - iii) They can take the traditional and tie it to the frontier and say, "We can do it."
 - (1) They don't think of reasons why it cannot be done, but reasons why it can be done.
 - iv) That was the kind of encourager Barnabas was.
 - (1) When there was a bridge that needed to be built over troubled waters, Barnabas said that he would build that bridge.
 - (a) He wanted to bring people together for the cause of Christ.
- 5) BARNABAS WAS A DISCIPLE-DEVELOPER (ACTS 11:25-26)
- a) Barnabas saw that the people needed to be taught.
 - i) They needed someone to develop them.
 - b) Barnabas didn't see the Paul that we see; he saw the new convert.
 - i) Barnabas thought that Saul had a gift and an ability.
 - (1) God had given to Saul an uncanny insight into the Word of God and the ability to teach.
 - (2) Saul became such a proficient teacher of the Word that people were first called Christians at Antioch because he so infused them for Christ.
 - c) What Barnabas did was to find disciples and find their hidden talents and buried gifts.
 - i) He would develop them and bring them out.
 - d) In every church, there are people who need to be found and encouraged.
 - i) They have gifts and abilities that need to be developed.
 - (1) But it takes a Barnabas to find those people.
 - e) Barnabas played second fiddle; we don't hear much about him.
 - i) Paul wrote thirteen books in the New Testament.
 - ii) Another man, whom Barnabas influenced, wrote the Gospel of Mark.
 - iii) More than half of the books in the New Testament are there through the influence of Barnabas.
 - (1) Barnabas knew how to encourage people.
 - (a) He could find talent.

- f) An encourager is not necessarily the person who does it themselves.
 - i) But they can stand by someone else's side and encourage them.

- 6) BARNABAS WAS A FAILURE-FIXER (ACTS 15:36-40)
 - a) Paul and Barnabas linked together to become missionaries.
 - i) On their first missionary journey, Barnabas brought along his nephew, John Mark.
 - (1) When things got started, John Mark quit.
 - ii) On their second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted John Mark to go along, but Paul didn't want him to go.
 - (1) Paul and Barnabas agreed to disagree.
 - (a) Acts 15:39
 - (2) Barnabas took John Mark, and Paul took Silas.
 - ii) John Mark was the one man whom Paul wanted when he was in a Roman prison.
 - (1) 2 Timothy 4:11
 - b) Barnabas took John Mark and lifted him up and encouraged him.
 - i) This same John Mark later wrote the Gospel According to Mark.
 - ii) John Mark was the one man whom Paul wanted when he was in a Roman prison.
 - (1) 2 Timothy 4:11
 - c) Barnabas found failure and fixed it.
 - i) Barnabas found John Mark, a man that even Paul wouldn't have anything to do with, and he gave John Mark another chance.

- 7) CONCLUSION
 - a) Barnabas had the gift of encouragement.
 - i) He was a load-lifter.
 - ii) He was a friend-finder.
 - iii) He was a bridge-builder.
 - iv) He was a disciple-developer.
 - v) He was a failure-fixer.
 - b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
 - c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16