

ENCOURAGEMENT

Acts 4:32-37

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In this passage there is a very prominent Christian; a preacher named Joses or "Joseph." Yet, very few if any would know anything about this Joseph and what he did, because he is identified by another name in scripture that is a description of what kind of man he was.
- B. He was "Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement)" Acts 4:36 (NKJV) (consolation KJV). References will be from the (NKJV or KJV) with a few from the (NASB)
- C. Just as James and John were called the "Sons of Thunder" apparently for their fiery impatience, Joseph was called "Barnabas" or "son of encouragement" apparently for his ability to be a source of comfort, consolation, confidence, hope, motivation, reassurance and support.
- D. Understand: every Christian needs encouragement, every Christian should also be a "son of encouragement." We should encourage others 1Thess 5:11 (NASB).
- E. TERMS DEFINED:
 1. Comfort: a calling to one's side; hence, either exhortation or consolation. In some passages it is used to combine encouragement with the alleviation of grief (Vines)
 2. Consolation, Console: Same Greek word: sometimes translated exhortation; sometime comfort, sometimes encouragement
 3. Exhort, Exhortation: Primarily to call to a person: (a) to call on, entreat; (b) to admonish, exhort, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct (always prospective, looking to the future, in contrast to the meaning of comfort, which is retrospective, having to do with trials experienced)
 4. As can be seen from these definitions these words all relate to the same idea. In fact they all come from the same root Greek word.
 5. Our English word "Encourage" seems to encompass the ideas of comfort, consoling and exhortation.

DISCUSSION: So, how can we be the sons of encouragement?

I. ENCOURAGE BY OUR GODLY LIFE

- A. Christ's Example Rom 15:5 (NASB). 1Pet 2:21
- B. Barnabas' Example Acts 11:22-24
 1. He remained true to the Lord; he served the Lord
 2. Possibly his main encouragement was his example, "he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith."
- C. What About our Example?
 1. By faithful attendance- Heb 10:24-25 (NASB).
 2. By faithful service 2Cor 7:2-4; Rom 1:11-12

3. By good clean moral living Rom 12:1,2
4. Lives of great men all remind us We can make our lives sublime, And, departing, leave behind us Footprints on the sands of time. Footprints that perhaps another, Sailing o'er life's solemn main, A forlorn and shipwrecked brother, Seeing, shall take heart again. Excerpt from "A Psalm of Life" By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,

II. ENCOURAGE THROUGH OUR WORDS

- A. By using the Word of God 2Tim 4:2; 1Thess 3:2-3; Acts 13:15; Acts 15:30-33
- B. By uplifting words Job 16:5; 2Chron 30:22; Acts 14:21-22 (NASB); Acts 16:40; Acts 20:1-2
- C. Daniel Webster left his country home and went to Boston to study law. He entered, without invitation, the office of Christopher Gore, then head of the Massachusetts bar. There he was looked upon as an intruder, and nobody paid any attention to him. One Day Rufus King saw the lonely, solitary student. He warmly shook his hand and said, "I know your father well. Be studious and you will win. If you need any assistance or advice, come to me." Years later, after he had achieved renown, Webster said: "I can still feel the warm pressure of that hand, and hear those challenging words of encouragement." God's Revivalist, quoted in 1,000 Stories & Quotations of Famous People, p. 329.

III. ENCOURAGE WITH SPECIFIC GOOD DEEDS

- A. Barnabas' Example Acts 4:36-37 Barnabas sold his property to provide for those who were in need
- B. Each of us need to encourage others by good deeds
 1. By our hospitality Matt 10:42; 2Cor 7:12-13
 2. By our support Acts 18:27-28; Acts 28:14-15
- C. Acts of hospitality don't have to be big nor does the support we give to others in need. Note Matt 25

CONCLUSION:

- A. Are we a "Barnabas"? Do we give consolation; try to alleviate grief?
- B. Do we give encouragement; try to urge someone to keep on trying; compliment them on what they are doing for the Lord?
- C. Paul said in Rom 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
- D. If our example, words and deeds are not a source of support and strength to other Christians, then we need to examine and change our heart.