

REVIEW:

- Want to be outstanding – want to stand out as a disciple; Be salt and light! Be a good Samaritan!

The greatest commandment:

Matthew 22:34-40 (NIV) Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

For your reflection: What kind of neighbor are you? Are you more like Mr. Rogers or Mr. Hideout in my home-my gated community-sealed off from the world around me? Do you tend to “stand out” or “blend in”? How have you been “salt and light” this past week? A good Samaritan?

OUTstanding: Be a Barnabas!

I’ve got good news and bad news....

- The bad news is that our world is suffering from a fatal disorder called sin...
⇒ For a list of symptoms refer to: The 7 deadly sins, the 7 sins listed in **Proverbs 6:16-19**, and the sins listed in **Galatians 5:19-21**.
- The good news is that there’s a cure! (The cure is the Good News!)
⇒ Check out **John 3:16**, **Ephesians 2:8-9**, **Romans 5:8-11**, and **Romans 10:5-15** to get you started!

A closer look at the word *encouragement*:

- In the Greek it’s the word *paraklesis*: to be called to one’s side -- to “exhort,” to “urge,” to “encourage,” to “give joy” to “comfort” him or her...
- When Jesus is speaking about the one who is to come after him, the helper, the counselor, the comforter, describing the work of the Holy Spirit, the Greek word there is *parakletos/paraclete*.
- **Hebrews 3:13** (NIV) But encourage one another daily, as long as it is call ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness
- **1 Thessalonians 5:11** (NIV) Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Four “B’s” – Be like Barnabas:

Acts 4:34-37 (NIV) For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales³⁵ and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”),³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.

#1 BE a _____ steward of your resources.

For your reflection: Want to be an “outstanding” disciple of Jesus? Want to “stand out” as a disciple of Jesus? Then take a page from Barnabas’ book of encouragement and be a generous steward of your resources—see a need and fill a need.

Acts 9:26-27 (NIV) ²⁶When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷But 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.

#2 BE a _____ to outsiders.

For your reflection: Take a page from Barnabas' book of encouragement and be a friend to an outsider, extending friendship to someone even when it's hard. Be a bridge builder and a peace-maker. Who immediately comes to mind? What are you going to do?

Acts 11:22-24 (NIV) ²²News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

#3 BE _____ to where God is working and join Him there.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 (NIV) Do not quench the Holy Spirit.

For your reflection: Take a page from Barnabas' book of encouragement and be alert to where God is working and join him there. Celebrate God's presence and work in the lives of others, acknowledge it—give God the credit and the glory and do your best to fan the flame! Where is God working? Who can you encourage?

Acts 11:25-26 (NIV) ²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and 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.

#4 BE interested in the _____ of others!

Philippians 2:1-5 (NIV) ¹Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Acts 15:36-41 (NIV) ³⁶Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

For your reflection: Take a page from Barnabas' book of encouragement and be interested in the success of others. Be blessed to be a blessing, seek out and encourage the success of others, especially within the church, with members of the family of faith because when they win, we win, and when we win the gospel wins. Who comes to mind?

Questions for reflection/discussion at home, in your life group:

1. What portion of Acts related to Barnabas stood out to you, and why? How will you continue to study and meditate on it this week?
2. Revisit each of the "for your reflection" sections found above. Which one resonated with you, and why?
3. What are some practical ways that you can be a Barnabas this summer in your neighborhood and in our community and beyond?
4. What was *for you* in this message? What, from this message, is God pressing upon you to *share* with someone else?