

# Be a Barnabas: The Power of Encouragement in a Gloomy World

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 30 May 2025

[0:00] Picture, if you will, a cold gloomy day in the city and tired people are hunched over their phones scrolling endless feeds of bad news.

! Another crisis, another argument, another reason to feel like the world's one big treadmill of negativity. And people are worn down. There's someone else giving you some bad news. People are worn down with a heaviness.

You can see it in their eyes. You can hear it in their snapping and gossiping. And there's this feeling like you're being dragged downwards in a spiral. It's draining, isn't it?

And a lot of people feel like this picture here of being stuck there too. Imagine then someone steps into this grey, grumpy world and flips the script.

He is different. That's Barnabas. Barnabas. He's just a regular guy. They gave him a nickname, the son of encouragement.

[1:09] The son of encouragement. You can imagine how he flips the script and brings a bit of light and joy. He's got this knack, Barnabas, for lighting up the room.

And Barnabas was the one who'd see someone struggling. Maybe the newbie like Paul, who nobody trusted yet. And he'd say, hey, I've got your back. Let's do this together.

And Barnabas would show up with a kind word, with a generous act, or just a vibe that makes you feel like you can keep on going. And at the time of Barnabas, the early Christians were facing persecution.

There was infighting, discouragement, division. Barnabas was the glue. The glue. Always building people up. Always encouraging. Always pointing them towards hope.

We're going to learn a little bit about Barnabas and the references to him. Here's this fellow. He gave all that he had. His money, his time, his trust, to lift others up.

[2:12] That was his heart. And he sold his land to meet a need. He vouched for the underdog. He stuck with people. Even when they messed up. Time and time again. And in a world that's quick to tear people down, Barnabas shows what it is.

To be the one who brings hope. Who builds up. Who just shows up. With the heart to encourage. And you can be that person too.

You can be like Barnabas. Let's think about how we can learn of his life. Barnabas shows us how we can break the cycle and be a light in the grey.

Barnabas was the guy in the background. But he was like, you could picture it as like a coach cheering people on. Helping others to find their way.

Keeping the early church glued together. When things got tough and rough. And the apostles saw in Barnabas something special. There was something about him that they gave him the name.

[3:12] Barnabas. Barnabas. Bar meaning son. Nabas meaning encouragement or consolation, comfort. Because he was Mr. Encourager. Barnabas.

He was encouraging. And it wasn't that encouragement was just something that he did. It was who he was.

Barnabas. And Barnabas shows us how we can likewise be alike to him. How we can take time for others. What it looks like to be a light, a friend. A builder of hope.

And today we're diving into his story. How he lived. How he loved. And how we can maybe think, how can I be more like him? To love people like he did.

To care about people. And we need people like Barnabas now more than ever, don't we? Think of the gloomy world at times. It's quite dismal, isn't it?

[4:09] Often the news stories are quite negative. You could call Barnabas Mr. Encourager. Mr. Encouragement. This was his character, his ministry, his life's mission, his testimony.

So we're going to go to the Word of God. First, the Acts 4 actually. He radiated hope and upliftment. When we see him here, when we meet him firstly in Acts 4, it talks about him.

And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is being interpreted the son of consolation. Or you could put it the son of encouragement.

A Levite and of the country of Cyprus. Having land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Barnabas, they called him. It was like a nickname. Now, I can look back and think back at school, in school days, I think of the horrible nicknames I got called. Big ears.

[5:12] Big ears. Well, they used to call me Crabby because it sounded like Cray, Craggy, Crabby, they called me. Pommy. Usually in terms, it wasn't really terms of endearment as far as nicknames that I had.

You might think likewise of what you got called when you were a kid. But Barnabas, that was his nickname and it means son of encouragement. His life was not defined by some speeches that he did, by miracles or by prominence that he had like Paul.

He was kind of in the background. What marked Barnabas was his unwavering commitment to encourage, to strengthen the church, to build up others in their walk in Christ.

And he gives us this timeless model. Think about Barnabas as we'll see some instances of what he did. He did this timeless model that Barnabas is for the model of a Christian's character.

And he shows us how we can become sons and daughters of encouragement. Encouragement.

That we have that heart. In a world that's desperate for hope, don't we need to be encouragers?

[6:18] I know some of you got that heart. I know some of the things that you do, the trouble you take to get around people and to care, to love. Notice his generous spirit. He didn't cling to his material wealth, but he believed that God would supply his needs and those of the church.

As a Levite from Cyprus, he owned land, sold it, laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet to support the early church. I'm not asking you to do that today. His act of radical generosity.

It was not for show though. Like Ananias and Sapphira, they did it kind of as a show thing. But with Barnabas, it was spontaneous. It was joyful. He was glad. And it shows his true stewardship, his trust in God.

And his giving flowed from a heart that was devoted to God and the people of God. He had this selfless spirit, didn't he? Selfless. How can we cultivate that spirit of generosity?

Not just with our finances, but with our time, our talents, our resources. Be a generous person. Let's be willing to give freely, expecting nothing in return for the advancement of God's kingdom.

[7:24] And these words were written down before the need came to light last night actually. But are we trusting God to supply our needs, our individual needs, our family's needs, as we lay ourselves at God's feet, as it were, and have that heart.

Like Barnabas, to trust God to be that overflowing person or that love for others, that wanting to bless, that motivation.

To cultivate that generous spirit in just who we are. That we be a generous people. And then we see of scripture, it defines him further as this good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.

And much people were added to the Lord. Here's the secret of Barnabas' effectiveness. It was the fullness of the spirit, wasn't it?

He was good as he was really evidently had fruits there. He was full of the Holy Ghost. He was full of faith.

[8:29] And then we see the result. That there was a testimony, a witness that others came to know the Saviour. And this fullness of the spirit marked Barnabas.

His encouragement, it's not just some human positivity. Hey, we can have positive speakers. I can be a positive guru, kind of coach kind of person in a worldly setting.

But no, this was not a man-made positivity, an optimism. Hey, that's a good thing. But it was God that made it happen. It was the Holy Ghost and faith. It was born of the spirit.

It was the fullness of the spirit. It was the supernatural work of God's spirit working by him, through him to others. And his goodness, it was by God's spirit. Not of his own effort. It was God's goodness that was showing in his life that radiated kindness and integrity and spiritual death.

Notice his faith. He was a man not only full of the Holy Ghost, but he was full of faith. His faith was constant through trials and setbacks.

[9:36] When others saw obstacles, Barnabas saw opportunities for God to work. Notice also with Barnabas, he was a champion for other people. Barnabas' ministry was defined by his ability to see God's potential in other people.

Can you see that, brother, sister, that, hey, amongst us, even the ones that might be maybe not so obvious, that God's working in every soul.

And there's an opportunity for God to do something wonderful in every human soul. And that's why we care about witnessing as a church that we want to reach out and touch people for the Saviour. And Barnabas' ministry was defined by this vision, if you like, this ability to see God's potential in other people. For some, they saw others as maybe problems.

But Barnabas saw what they could become. And he was consistently uplifting and encouraging other people around him. And when Saul, the former persecutor, sought to join the disciples, everybody was kind of alarmed.

[10:40] Hey, they knew this man. He had a reputation. He was a Christian killer. And he was now seeking to join the disciples. This is Acts 9, if you want to turn there.

And you see that as Saul, who would become Paul, wanted to join the disciples in Jerusalem, people feared and doubted. Hey, is this guy genuine?

Is he really fair dinkum? Or is he kind of having a go, having a lend of us here? And maybe he's coming in to spy us out and to hurt us and drag us away like he used to.

And they knew the man that Paul was, as he was Saul. And it says there, and when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself. He wanted to join himself.

He tried to join himself to the disciples. But they were all afraid of him and believed not that he was a disciple. Hey, this man's scary. He's someone who's got a reputation.

[11:36] But Barnabas was different. Barnabas took a risk here, a courageous risk. He believed in the outcast. You know, sometimes we might think, oh, they don't look like they're a Christian.

Or, hey, we're a bit standoffish. But hey, Barnabas said, hey, welcome him, receive him. He took this risk. He believed in the outcast. It tells us, but Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

When Saul, the former persecutor, sought fellowship with the disciples, they feared him. They didn't trust him. They thought, hey, this guy's a shonk. You know, he's going to hurt us.

But Barnabas vouched for Saul, and he brought him to the apostles. What about us? Who is the Saul in your life? Maybe someone that others reject.

They think, oh, we don't want to touch them. They've got a reputation for something that's not right. Rather, to see people that God is redeeming, that they're a work in progress, like all of us.

[12:48] Amen. We're all Christians under construction, aren't we? And God's working on me just like he's working on anyone else. And Barnabas was a man who saw potential where others saw problems.

Think of that. Can you have that heart to be having that generosity towards other people? His discernment, his faith was God's transformative work. That God was working, opening the door here for Saul, later to be called Paul, to become the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Think of it. If Barnabas maybe had not taken the initiative to stand up for Paul, maybe things would have not been so great. But Barnabas here, he was gracious and forgiving.

He had a big heart. And he was always eager to see the best in others and to forgive. He was quick to do that. We see, again, another example in Acts 15. It tells how Barnabas stood with the weak.

You see that in his willingness to give John Mark a second chance after his earlier failure. You see that in Acts 15 from verse 37. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

[14:00] So Barnabas and Paul, they were kind of getting ready to go to another mission. And Barnabas wanted to have John or John Mark to come with them.

Verse 38 though, but Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia and went not with them to the work.

So this man, John Mark, he'd let them down. He'd shot through when they were in this earlier mission. And he kind of gave up and took his bags and went home and left them in the lurch. And so Paul had this preconception about John Mark that, hey, this guy's going to let us down. And verse 39, it reads on, and the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from the other.

And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus. Now Christians can differ. Contentions can be sharp. Hey, we're still brothers and sisters.

[15:06] That can happen. We don't have to fall out. But sometimes there's a difference. There's a disagreement. And that's what happened here. And when John Mark, which was Barnabas's cousin, failed on this missionary journey before, Paul rejected him and said, we're not going to touch him.

We're not going to give him a go. We're not going to give him a second chance. No, we don't want him. John Mark had abandoned Paul, joined their first missionary journey. That's Acts 13, 13. We see Barnabas, he had the heart to give people a second chance. Now someone fails. Do you give up on them?

Someone lets the team down. They do the wrong thing. Might cause hurt. We get that in life, don't we? Do we give people a second chance?

Maybe a third chance. A fourth chance. That can be hard, can't it? But that was the heart of Barnabas. To give people a second chance. To encourage them to grow and learn from their mistakes.

[16:08] Hey, let's have that heart. The big heart of Barnabas. Barnabas. And Barnabas here, he parted ways with Paul to make room for Mark, to take Mark to Cyprus.

And his faith in Mark's potential, it bore fruit. What we got? Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Mark wrote the book, the Gospel of Mark.

Mark later became profitable to Paul for his ministry. That's 2 Timothy 4.11. Paul says later of Mark, hey, he's profitable. There's a usefulness to Mark.

He's one of the servants. He's profitable for the ministry. He's serving God. And of course, he authored the Gospel of Mark. So, the upshot of all of that is Barnabas' discernment was right. He did the right thing in standing by Mark and giving him another go. How about us? Are we quick to dismiss those who fail? Or do we restore them in love?

[17:09] It's the heart of the Gospel, isn't it? As the Bible talks about church discipline. Hey, the overarching motivation is restoration.

That's what we want. It's not to exclude and divide and separate in that way. But to keep the door open.

Hey, yeah, come back. Restore. Come back. Forgive. Who in our lives needs encouragement? Could there be a Saul or a John Mark whom others have written off?

And yet, God is calling us to uplift them. Like Barnabas, let's have that heart. To take risks for people. To speak words of life.

To think, hey, maybe God can work again in that person's life. And they can turn things around. We can trust God's power to work in that Saul. And so when news of Gentiles turning to Christ in Antioch reached Jerusalem, the church sent Barnabas to investigate.

[18:16] It says of him in Acts 11 of Barnabas, it says, when he came and had seen the grace of God, it says, Barnabas was glad. And he exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

Barnabas's encouragement, it was real. And it was active. It was a spirit-empowered ministry that was grounded in the truth. He didn't merely make people feel good. He exhorted them to cleave unto the Lord.

Again, it wasn't just that he was a positive kind of guy. He said, hey, cleave unto the Lord. Cling to Christ. Cleave unto Christ. Cleave unto him. Cleave unto the Lord.

Pointing them to Christ. His encouragement, it led to significant growth. As much people, it says, were added unto the Lord. That's Acts 11, 24.

So Barnabas's life, it was characterized by this humility, this commitment to unity, even in challenging circumstances. So we see that, what did Barnabas see?

[19:19] He saw the grace of God. Wow, God's moving. God's working in these Gentiles. God's doing something in the church of God. And he was glad. And he exhorted them.

He encouraged them. And with purpose of heart, he says, that they would cleave unto the Lord. Barnabas humbly then sought out Paul to join the work.

And there was this partnership there as they strengthened the church. And here was where, at Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians as well.

In Acts 11, 25, 26. You see the heart of Barnabas here too, that Barnabas stepped back to let Paul lead.

He wasn't prideful that he was willing to be second fiddle, if you like. He showed faithfulness and humility, a heart for reconciliation. How about us?

[20:17] Are we willing to take a back seat for God's glory? Do we strive for peace and unity? Even when there's disagreement, in conflicts, do we have the heart to reconcile?

To have a heart for reconciliation? To be a peacemaker? To see unity, to see the church strengthened? That was Barnabas. Can we learn humility that we prioritise God's work above personal pride about our place or position?

This is the ministry of encouragement. And we can all be a part of that. That's what it looks like.

Here's some pointers we could consider. How can I have the ministry of encouragement?

Stay faithful in the little things. Barnabas just quietly got on with it. He was quietly faithful, supporting, encouraging, mentoring, changing lives, standing with people, urging them on like this coach kind of figure.

Stay faithful in the small things. Think of it. Small acts of kindness can yield an eternal impact. You don't know. We think as we get older, you think some of the younger ones, you might have helped along life's journey.

[21:33] Hey, you see that they're going forward for God. There's something there you've sown into their lives and there's some fruit there. You can see that they're going forward for God because you've invested yourself in them.

Even the small things that you do, it yields something. There's an eternal impact and encouragement. It causes us to act intentionally.

Be intentional. Speak truth, truthfully, and invest patiently in other people. There's a yielding there. You reap what you sow. Think about how you're investing in other people.

Is it words of kindness that you're sowing? I trust that they're the words that we should be speaking. And let's create that culture of encouragement in our church, strengthening God's church, that we can stand by others, restore others to the fallen.

Hey, there's people that I know, every time we have church, I think, well, who's not here? And you think, have they dropped out? Have they dropped the ball? If something happened, they need an uplift, they need an encouragement.

[22:37] And you think, how can I restore people? How can I stand by people? How can I restore the fallen? People that might have really gone off track. How can I be patient and have grace with them?

How can I be an encourager? See people through God's eyes. That you see people as God would see them through the lens of God himself. Like Barnabas as he looked at Saul.

Like Barnabas as he looked at Mark. We look beyond the failures to see the potential, God's potential. And think, brother, sister, how can you encourage? It could be just a word.

Some words. Some words that you utter. Maybe those words that sometimes are unspoken that, hey, I should have said something to them. Take the time. We don't know when the opportunity will be gone for us to encourage another.

It's become, as often times we come to funeral times, for example. Think the words that I could have said that I didn't say. Think of those words. Speak them. Those kind words.

[23:36] That act of support. That smile. That stirring. That pat on the shoulder. That caring hand reaching out. Give generously. Offer your time.

Your resources. Your talents. Without expecting anything in return. Trusting that God's going to meet needs here. And cultivate spiritual vitality as well.

We see of Barnabas that he was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. Acts 11, 24. That was his effectiveness. He was full of God.

He was full and overflowing with God, wasn't he? Of the Holy Ghost and faith. And it's our work that can be a true encouragement to others too. You're setting an example. You're a model for others to look at and copy.

So, hey, we want to be, if we're reproducing ourselves, don't we want to be a good example? That if people are copying you, that they're copying the good things about you.

[24:36] And think of it, brother, sister, be a Barnabas to others. So, encourage, build up, restore. May we aim to be encouragers in a world that tears down.

There's churches like that too. Just finding fault. See the potential of who people can become. Hey, once I was lost, now I'm found. Like Jesse was sharing.

Once it was, it was BC. Before Christ. Think of the man that I was then. Now, it's AD, isn't it? I'm in Christ now. But, hey, we've got to think about the others that are still BC. They're before Christ. Let's love them. Let's encourage them. Invest in them. And, hey, there's people that are searching.

God helping us. I was hoping there was a chat would come this morning as we knocked his door on Saturday. And he goes to one big church, a big Pentecostal church down Main North Road there. And we're asking him about salvation.

[25:36] And he says, you know, as we asked him what you're trusting him. He says, I'm keeping the Ten Commandments. Wow. He's pretty good. He must be right up there then if he's keeping the Ten Commandments.

And that's his hope of heaven. You know, he's not. I don't know how many times he's attending that church, but he's not hearing the gospel there. Because going to heaven is not about keeping the Ten Commandments.

It's whether you know Christ. It's whether you know Christ. Otherwise, you're still BC. You're before Christ. All right. You must trust Christ. And so we want to be a Barnabas to see those who need Christ and reach them and see them trust Christ to come to faith.

And it's our actions that speak louder than words, isn't it? Do we care for souls? And for brothers and sisters who are a bit broken, hurting. Hey, there's lots of them.

Churches hurt people at times. But God heals, doesn't he? He can. You're part of the healing. So are you known as someone who builds up others, who brings hope into hard places?

[26:38] Will you be Mr. or Mrs. Encourager or Ms. Encourager this week? Will you be that one to choose someone to uplift?

Hey, there's people in your circle. You know they're going through those gloomy days, those gloomy times. They don't know Christ. Or if they know him, they've fallen by the wayside. They're not really where they ought to be in God.

Someone overlooked, someone struggling. Can you be a Barnabas to them? Can you be an encourager? Can you speak life? Those words, speak them. Speak life. Lend support.

Do something. Do something. And watch what God does. As you act. Can we learn to serve others sacrificially? See others through the eyes of your Lord?

To encourage faithfully? There's so many scriptures we could refer to. And then, as Hebrews 10 talks in the context of assembling together, he says, let us consider one another.

[27:36] Consider one another to provoke. Hey, there's a lot of provoking goes on amongst Christians. Let's provoke unto love and to good works. Let's do that.

Amen? Let's provoke unto love and to good works. How can we create that culture of encouragement such that that is, this is the place to come and get encouraged. This is where my family is.

This is where my brother is, he's going to encourage me. My sister who I can encourage. That I can be that one, that Barnabas character. How can we live such a way in a world full of criticism and condemnation?

To be the body of Christ. To be his hand extended. To be that haven of encouragement in this gloomy world at times. Can we be those modern day Barnabases?

That comfort, that encourage, that exhort, tell people, hey, with purpose of heart, cleave unto the Lord. Won't you cleave unto Jesus?

[28:36] Won't you cling unto him? Hold him fast as he will hold you fast. And let's consider one another that you can name yourself as it were a Mr. or Mrs. Encourager.

That that's who you are. That's who you're known to be. That you've got this heart to give generously. To be that generous person of your time, your talent, your treasure. To give with joy, with joyfulness, with gladness.

That you've got a heart to believe. To believe in God. And to believe in the potential of God. To impact people. The potential of the gospel. Is the power of God unto salvation.

To everyone that believeth. That you can believe the gospel. That you can see God's grace working in human souls. Even when they stumble too.

That you'll believe and you'll keep on believing. You know, we've got loved ones in our lives, don't we? We've got family members that might have been close to God. And now you wonder where they're at. You think, oh, do I give up on them?

[29:38] Do I give up on believing that God can still do? That which you started, he's going to complete it. He's going to finish it. Or do we sort of put people in the refuse pile?

The too hard basket? Yeah. We think, oh, they're too far gone. They're beyond redemption. No, no one's beyond redemption while they've still got breath. Believe that God can do his work.

And think of it. How you can walk in the spirit. And stay filled. Stay faithful. Stay steady. Keep on keeping on. Because it's the fullness of the spirit that fuels you.

That fills you. That enables you. That empowers you. That propels you. And you can speak. Words of love. Of life. Of kindness. Of hope.

And step back. For others too. Hey, maybe someone's going to be serving above you like a poor. Hey, just simply serve. Do your part. Do your bit. And serve humbly.

[30:37] Have that humbleness of mind. That humility of mind. And think, God is in the forgiving business, isn't he? The restoring business. Think of the car business.

They send a car down to the car restorer. And it comes out like a new car, doesn't it? God does that with us, doesn't he?

The others might take that wreck down to the wreckers and cut it up for metal value. But no, God takes that wreck of a life and he restores it to what it can be.

He renews it and makes it brand new again. And that's the God of the second chance, isn't it? The God of the second chance that we can know his saving that he makes us a brand new man.

We're not that man anymore. I know some of you got that testimony. I'm sure most of you, if not all of you, certainly all of you that are saved, you can think back, Hey, the man that I was, the woman that I was, I'm not that person anymore.

[31:40] And God gives a second chance. You can be born again. And you can see in others that potential that overcomes failure, despite failure, the potential. And you can invest in others whom others have written off.

Think of that, that you're investing yourself in other people. Really, they're the most precious resource, aren't they?

Other souls. It's the most precious value is other souls. And think of it as we gather, as we get together, as we argy bargy. Maybe if there's a bit of contention sometimes, as there was contention between Barnabas and Paul.

But they got it sorted. There was still, there was a reconciliation, I believe, that they came to go beyond that difference that they had. And we see in the church, let all things be done unto edifying.

That, hey, that everything that we do has got this purpose. It's got this focus. That it's about edifying, which means a building up. That everything we do is about building up.

[32:43] Building up other people. Building up the church. Strengthening the church. And so think of it, friends, as we think about these truths of the encouragement that we ought to be to other people.

I pray that this morning, if you have yet to trust Christ, can I encourage you to take that step to trust him. To ask him to forgive you of your sin.

To take your sin. To pay for it as he did at the cross. To know his blood washes away our sin. As we trust him, we have eternal life given. Grants it as a gift of no doing of our own.

All of his grace and simply our receiving it by faith. And then, believer, let's walk in the fullness of the Spirit. Let's be overflowing with his Spirit and the acts of his Spirit.

That we will be used of God as we invest in others. See other souls saved. And see the church of God edified and strengthened. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your precious word.

[33:48] And Lord, for the testimony of Barnabas. We know a sort of background sort of man in many ways. That he just got on with it, Lord.

Of being that kind-hearted, big-hearted man. Lord, we thank you of the love that he showed. Of others that others discounted. Lord, we see of the fullness of the Spirit.

Of the fruit of the Spirit. Of his overflowing love. Lord, help us to find words that we will speak. Lord, may we be bold enough to reach out.

To care. To show love. Lord, to lift up others. And Lord, to give opportunities where others might be discounted.

That we would see beyond our own prejudices at times, Lord. To see what you can do in any human soul that trusts in you.

[34:53] That you can turn lives around. And Lord, help us to be a part of that, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.