

# Barnabas - Mr Encouragement

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[0:00] Just tonight, I want to encourage you. And just to lead in here, some while back, well, in my younger days, I used to work in an office.

It was the old CES, you know, the job centre. And I don't know if it was April Fool's Day or something, but someone did a bit of a prank. And in the office, they used to have, people would fill in a card, a form, and they put it somewhere.

And then the one who was going to be interviewing that person would pick up the form and say, Mr. Bloggs, Mr. Bloggs, or Mr. Gates, or Ms. Smith, whatever.

And one day there was a form put on the shelf in the basket. And it just said, Mr. E.

E. One who was going to call the person out said, Mr. E. It's a bit odd, isn't it? Just the letter E.

[1:07] Mr. E. And so they went out to the counter area where they're calling the people to come to respond. And they were going, Mr. E.

Mr. E. Mr. E. Mr. E. No one responded. And then the prankster said, oh, that's a mystery, isn't it? It's a mystery. And it was a big joke. It was really funny. I'm talking tonight about Mr. E. Mr. E. Barnabas.

You could call him Mr. Encouragement. I want to encourage you to encourage others.

Encouragement. Encouragement means to put courage into someone.

The English word encouragement. Encourage. To hearten, to uplift, to give them new heart. The word underlying our English word, parakaleo, means to come alongside someone who needs aid.

[2:10] It needs to come alongside someone. Don't you like it when you're having a bit of a tough time and someone comes alongside? Someone comes alongside to give help, to refresh, to comfort.

That's what an encourager is. Amen? An encourager is someone who comes alongside another. So let me introduce someone to you tonight. Meet Mr. Encouragement.

Mr. Encouragement. Joseph. We'll go to Acts 4.36. Joseph was his name, but he had a nickname. The son of consolation.

Consolation. Barnabas. Barnabas means the son of consolation. Or in other words, the son of encouragement. Same word. This parakaleo or a derivation is the same word used of the Holy Spirit.

As some would transliterate, the paraclete. The Holy Spirit. Paracletos. John 14.26 tells of the comforter. And Acts 4.36 tells us of, we've got a bit of a tech problem there.

[3:16] There's a window problem in the way, so sorry about that. But this is Acts 4.36. And it says, So Barnabas, that was his nickname.

The son of encouragement, you could say. And it means someone who comes alongside to offer help and encouragement. Encouragement is a powerful thing, isn't it?

A powerful thing. A wonderful thing. And Barnabas was Mr. E. Mr. Encouragement. He was just the kind of man that he was. That was his nickname. That's what they called him.

He had a reputation. A good one. Kids have a reputation that they think, oh, he's Mr.

Encouragement. Don't you reckon? Or ladies, that you would be Mrs. Encouragement.

Mrs. Encouragement. And he shows us what an encourager is and does. An encourager gives to needs. Oh, beauty. An encouragement gives to needs. Barnabas was a giver.

[4:25] What did he do? He had land. He sold it. He brought the money because there was a need at that time. There was a need in the churches. There was a need and Barnabas was a big-hearted man.

If you're an encourager, it's part of being an encourager is to be big-hearted. He was a man who put his money where his mouth was. He had a generous spirit, a big heart.

And he was a man of uplifting words, of faith, of generosity. And he looked out for the needs of others. He gave of himself for the benefit of others. Here he was. He personally sold his land for the

need of other Christians.

Those people in need, he says, I'm going to step up and meet that need. I'm going to help. And he encourages, sees a need and meets the need. I will give what I can. I will do what I can.

I will try and meet that need. That's Barnabas. What about us? Do we care for others in need? All of us have so much to give. And we're not talking just about money.

[5:25] Not so much. Even money. But think what you can give to others. Friends. All of us can give. To sick people, a word of comfort. To lonely people, some time.

To hurting ones, a shoulder to cry on. To discourage people, hope. That's encouragement. You can give. Give to needs. There may be someone around you, someone that you know, someone in your circle that you know, they could use some help.

Maybe you're the answer to their prayer. Maybe you could give some love. Give some help. Give some encouragement. Give some wisdom. Give some care. As an encourager, we can also give friendship.

Here's another thing about Barnabas. That he saw the grace of God in other people. He did not reject people. He received them. Even the ones on the outer.

So at the time in Acts 9, I know this might be a bit small to read, but from verse 26. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples.

[6:29] He tried to join the disciples. But they were all afraid of him. And they believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, Paul, or Saul, as he was, 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. Saul had been converted. It was a dramatic conversion.

And he had gone to Damascus to kill Christians. He went there and he started preaching Christ in the synagogues. He had been known as public enemy number one. The Christ-hater. The Christian killer.

A man hated and feared. And he'd gone to Damascus breathing out threats of murder. Now, Saul. Did you hear? He's back in town.

Back in Jerusalem. Who? Him? Public enemy number one? And he wants to join the fellowship of the church. Shock.

[7:32] Horror. This man, everyone was frightened. They were packing it. They didn't trust him. Nobody wanted to know him. But Barnabas.

But Barnabas took him. Barnabas gave him friendship. Barnabas reached out to this lonely man. This isolated man.

And he received him as a new believer. Nobody wanted to know Saul. But Barnabas was different. He reached out to this new believer. A new brother in Christ. And Saul, who was, as we know, renamed Paul.

He knew what it was like to be rejected. And what it was like to be received. So in Romans 15, 7, Paul says this. Receive ye one another.

As Christ also received us to the glory of God. Can we have that kind of receptivity that will receive others, will welcome others, will love others, will encompass others?

[8:32] You know, a psychiatrist said 70% of today's population suffers from chronic loneliness. People need friendship. You can be that encouragement.

An encourager is willing to reach out to people, to love, to care, to mentor. We can encourage by believing in others. Now, here's a question for you.

If you wonder whether or not someone needs encouragement, I'll give you a foolproof test. Yeah, I'm quoting someone. How to know if someone needs encouragement.

Here's how. If they are breathing, they need encouragement. Isn't that a good one? Barnabas didn't look at Paul for what he had done.

He looked at Paul for what God was able to make of him. Barnabas encouraged him with love and friendship. Can we be a Barnabas? Can we? Can you be a Barnabas to someone?

[9:31] As God views him or her, not according to their past, but according to God's destiny, God's converting power, transforming power.

Barnabas received Paul. What a risk it was, but he took that risk and he showed friendship. He gave friendship. Barnabas was an encourager also in that he was determined to give a word. Barnabas, it says of him in Acts 11 from verse 22, it says how they were out reaching out in Jerusalem. The church sent forth Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. Verse 23. Barnabas, when he came, he had seen the grace of God. He was glad and exhorted. Same word, encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. And much people were added unto the Lord. Friends, Antioch was the launch pad of the Gentile mission.

[10:37] And when Barnabas arrived, he was glad. He was excited. He exhorted. He gave encouragement. He gave them an uplifting word. The word of God. Barnabas was excited about what God was doing by his grace and how these new believers were getting on.

This was exciting. And he did his best to encourage them. He was willing to go the extra mile, to get involved in their lives, to strengthen, to serve, to encourage. What did he do? He gave the word. That's what he did. Barnabas gave the word. He did that numbers of times, really. That's what we can do. You know, we've had a word tonight from our brother. A word of what God can do in our life. And what's more, we've got God's word in our hands. We can bring it to mind and deliver it. And Barnabas did that. He encouraged them. Keep strong, he said. He exhorted them.

He encouraged them all. He's got that sense he repeatedly encouraged. That's the sense of it underlying here. That he was a repeated encourager. He encouraged and he kept on encouraging.

[11:40] And friends, what about you and me? Can we encourage other believers as younger Christians than you here today? Maybe there's a six-year-old who's trusted Christ. Wow. Think of that.

You can make an impact on a young life, on a young Christian, but not just necessarily young in age. There could be some older people who are still a young Christian. You can help them. You can encourage them. You can give them a word. The word of God. It's been said there's basically two kinds of people in church. Some will seek to find all the faults with others. Some will seek to build up the church and their fellow believers. Seek to help others grow. Look at the character of the man. It says he was a good man.

He was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. And much people were added unto the Lord. He was generous. He was big-hearted. He was tender-hearted. He had a proven character.

[12:36] And Barnabas' life was an encouragement. Friends, your life is an encouragement, isn't it? People are looking at your life. And you can encourage others to the walk with God that you've delivered, that you've walked.

They can follow you. They can be imitators of you as you are imitators of Christ. Barnabas was full of the Holy Spirit. He was empowered for service. And he was overflowing with this faith.

It was contagious faith. And he believed God, that God is able to transform people. He uplifted them. He pointed them to Christ. And it says people got saved.

Amen. When you're an encourager for Christ, people will come to know him. We read on about Barnabas and Saul.

They formed the first missionary team. They were a team. The Barnabas and Saul team. And we see in Acts 11 that they... I'll kind of cut to the point here.

[13:40] Verse 25 talks about departed. Barnabas departed to Tarsus for to seek Saul. He sought out Saul. He wanted to support Saul, keep encouraging Paul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch.

And it came to pass that for a whole year, they assembled themselves with the church and they taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Here was Barnabas giving a word, the word of God.

He was teaching the word of God. And we see it's noteworthy. It was where the church, the saved people were first called Christians. Barnabas was one of the very first missionaries that the church sent out.

As it says in Acts 13, that they ministered to the Lord and the Lord directed that they separate Barnabas and Saul. Send them. They kept faithful even in persecution.

Barnabas kept on pointing people to the Lord, pointing people to the grace of God, giving the word, giving the word, teaching the word. Acts 13, 43, it says that this Mr. Encouragement, Paul and Barnabas, they were speaking to them.

[14:50] They were speaking to them. They were persuading them to continue in the grace of God. So as an encourager, Barnabas was willing to give the word. Another thing about Barnabas was Barnabas was willing to give extra.

Some people are kind of just minimalist. They're minimalist Christians. They do the kind of least. They're just the least. But Barnabas was an overflowing Christian.

He wanted to give extra. Let me explain why I would say that. So here was a time now to launch into another mission. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark.

Now the first time John Mark had gone on mission with them, he'd quit the team and he'd headed home. Paul was not willing to have him come again. Paul thought John Mark was unstable.

A quitter. He had quit once. He would quit again. Now we don't know the circumstances, why he quit. I know as a young man I went on a bit of a preaching trip with an older man and we were driving through, I think it was the Hay Plains and I was the driver and I hit a kangaroo.

[16:00] Bang. And the car was, oh it was just so heartbreaking. And the other guy kept going but I kind of, I kind of was so disappointed that I turned back.

I didn't actually go to where we were going to go and preach and minister for God and it was over in New South Wales somewhere. I thought, you know, afterwards maybe I did the wrong thing there. I shouldn't have turned tail.

And you know, the other guy, he was able to catch a greyhound bus and carry on on the work of the ministry that we had intended to do. So who knows, maybe John Mark, maybe he was unstable, maybe he was just too easily, kind of gave up, a bit of a quitter.

And Paul thought, he quit once, he's going to quit again. He went, oh, don't waste your time on John Mark, basically. And Acts 15 tells that story where Paul said to Barnabas, let's go and visit our brethren again in the city where we preach the word of the Lord.

See how they're going. And Barnabas, verse 37, determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them, sorry, who departed from them, from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

[17:14] So John Mark, he had a chance at mission and he just kind of only, he kind of quit halfway. He never got to really get on with it and had a bit of a reputation.

Maybe he was a bit timid, a bit, maybe a bit so-so, not really strong. For whatever reason, he quit that first mission and kind of left a bad taste in, I guess, Paul's mouth.

And so Paul and Barnabas, Paul said, no, I don't want to take John Mark. Barnabas says, I'm going to take him myself. So they went different ways ministering. Barnabas did the extra.

He took this man that maybe had a bit of a tarnished reputation. He said, I'm going to commit to supporting Mark, John Mark. I'm going to encourage him. I'm going to give him a second chance at ministry.

And he was committed to training him. Give extra. That's what an encourager does. You see someone who's, maybe they need a bit of support.

[18:16] Maybe you can help me get over the line. Maybe you can help them get that strong of faith. And that's what Barnabas did. He made an investment in John Mark. And it says of John Mark that he went on to be a worthy servant of the Lord.

We see that in 2 Timothy 4 verse 11. Paul says, John Mark is useful for the ministry. He's profitable. John Mark became a faithful helper through the encouragement of Barnabas.

And what's more, you know, the gospel of Mark was because of John Mark. Mark went on to write the first gospel that was written. The gospel of Mark, you know, we can think sometimes we can kind of have in the mind, oh, they've tried and failed.

I'm not going to give them another chance. But defeated people need encouragers like you and me. To give them that second chance. How about us?

Do we encourage someone who's discouraged? Do we give someone a second chance? Are we willing to go the extra mile? That's what Barnabas did. Barnabas encouraged by forgiving.

[19:24] He'd seen the failures of John Mark. But he did not give up on him. I think, is it the Salvos who got the slogan?

I think it's where their employment service or something, that they don't give up on anybody. It's a good slogan to have, isn't it? Don't give up on anybody. It's a good thing to think like that, I think. Mind you, you wonder with some.

But, you know, God helping you to have grace. Who knows what could happen? Amen? What God could do. And Barnabas encouraged by forgiving.

Sometimes you've got to forgive people. Well, you should always forgive people. Barnabas saw these limitations, but he did not give up on him. He didn't see John Mark as some failure. Oh, he's a waste of space.

Waste of time. Don't want to waste my energy on him anymore. But Barnabas said, I'm going to give him another go. I'm going to come alongside him and help.

[20:20] I'm going to be that support to him. I'm going to help him be more effective in serving the Lord. What about you, people here tonight? Will you be a Barnabas? A Barnabas to someone who needs a fresh start.

Now, you can't choose to be the opposite. You can choose to be a discourager. Discouragement. It's been called a dark room where the negatives of fear and failure are developed.

There was a preacher, an evangelist one day. Went to a prison. He was talking to 1,000 prisoners. And he asked them this question. How many of you were told by your parents that one day you would end up in prison?

Almost every hand went up in that room. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy. A discouragement.

Friends, we can be a discourager.

We can be an encourager. We can be a lifter of others. Barnabas kept on being an encourager. He never quit. You can be a Barnabas. You can be one.

[21:20] All encouragement comes from God. He's the God of all comfort. Same word, encouragement. He's the God that encouragement comes from. He's the ultimate encourager. And you're never more like God than when you're encouraging others.

Never more like the devil when you're discouraging others. We all need a Barnabas, don't we? I need him. We all need. Barnabas is someone who encourages us.

Are you an encourager in someone's life? Maybe you could think about, actually, there's someone I could encourage. He or she could probably do with a cheer. Barnabas didn't give up on people, even those that have been cast aside.

An encouragement is the act of giving hope, of promise. Friends, think of it for yourself. Take it personally. I'd like to kind of bring it home here.

And preachers like to say, have an application. You need an application here. Are you willing to reach out, to love, to care, to serve, to invest your life in other people, to give and keep on giving?

[22:28] To give, to needs, to give friendship, to give a word, even to give extra. Above and beyond. Ask the Lord, who can I encourage today?

Each day. Church is meant to be that. We're meant to be a mutual encouragement society. It says, when the church is spoken of here in 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 11, it says, Wherefore, comfort, same word, encourage yourselves together.

Edify, build up one another, even as also you do. Church is that. That's fellowship. It's mutual. It's building up one another.

It's a mutual exaltation and encouragement. And friends, think of the Holy Spirit. Our ultimate model, God, the God of all comfort, the God of all encouragement, the very paraclete, the paracetos, the Holy Spirit, the comforter.

He's our model, the Spirit of God. He's our comforter. He comes alongside to help. He's an advocate. It's another translation in the King James of the same word. Jesus, our Lord, is the advocate.

[23:37] He represents us. He speaks up for us. He prays for us. He intercedes for us. He's the stimulator. He provokes us to love and to good works. He's the admonisher, warning us, showing us what's right.

He's the encourager, lifting our heads when we are faint. He's our consolation, bringing us sympathy and blessing. He's our counsellor, bringing us wisdom and sound advice. He's our conviction, leading us to repentance. All of these facets of the Holy Spirit, part of that encouragement, that coming alongside. And friends, all God's people are called to this. This is your ministry. This is your ministry tonight. Because it says that, let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, manner of summits, but encouraging, exhorting one another.

So much the more. More, more, more of encouragement. So much the more. As you see the day approaching. As we get closer and closer to the end of all things. How important this ministry is. [24:43] We're commanded, it says here in Hebrews 3.13, But exhort one another, encourage one another daily, while it is called today. Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

We're told what to do and how often to do it. Exhort, encourage one another daily, while it is called today. If the time zone you're in isn't today, you don't have to do it.

But if the time zone you're living in is today, you have to do it. God says to. Amen. So there's no getting out of it. We're called to come alongside others as a habit, to walk with them, to invest time in them every day.

It's our duty. It's our privilege. Friends, I'm coming to wrap up time here. But God is himself the ultimate source of encouragement. As I've referred to Corinthians 1 verse 3.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort or encouragement. We all need encouragement.

[25:50] It's like the oxygen to our soul. And, you know, it's just great to hear some of the guys getting together after church, the fellowship. It goes beyond the meeting zone. It's the fellowship zone.

It's bigger than that, isn't it? And I've heard some of you young fellas getting together, encouraging one another. That's a great thing. It's like oxygen for the soul. Let's think of it.

How can I be such, more such, an active encourager, an intentional encourager? You know, there's many ways we could reflect on this. Write a note.

Send a card. Give a gift. Buy a meal. Show kindness. Give a second chance. Forgive a debt. Reach out to a hurting person. Comfort someone in pain. Give of your time, of your undivided attention. Have that genuine heart for people. Show a real and loving concern.

[26:50] Nothing matters more than the people. Because this world is passing. But your souls are forever. It doesn't take much for you to give another a word of encouragement.

And it can make a huge impact. You know, the stories told of teachers who had a note written by a student. And they put it on their fridge, you know. Just something that shows love.

Just really speaks so much to people. That you can make a bigger impact than you could even contemplate. And I know some people have contacted me and said, Oh, thank you for the card. Don't know who sent the card, but it wasn't me. Someone in the church is sending cards. That's a wonderful thing to do. Thank you. Thank you. If you're that person, thank God for you. Just to take the time to care.

It matters, doesn't it? And every time you see Barnabas, he was encouraging someone. Right through as we touched on. And Barnabas made people feel big when they were feeling small.

[27:56] He made them feel hopeful when they'd failed. He was full of faith, full of the spirit of God. And he went out on a limb to love, to support, to show friendship.

And he kept people going who otherwise might have given up. Think, to whom can you be a Barnabas today? Probably people that when you really think it over, really mull it over, how can I give?

How can I love? How can I reach out? How can I have that lifestyle of encouragement? So I'm going to determine to be an encourager. Not the opposite. And determined to offer encouragement. Whether through words or actions, it can change someone's life. Friends, Barnabas went out of his way to encourage people. Gave to needs.

And like I say, I'm not just talking about money. Have a big heart for other people. People need care, kindness, consideration.

[28:58] Be a giver. Be generous. A big hearted person. Give friendship. There's lonely people. People isolated. There's people that were rejected or potentially could have been rejected like Paul, as he was, that he had a bad reputation before he was saved.

We don't look at what people's reputation is before they were saved, do we? Because they're a trophy of his grace. We heard this morning. We love people.

We give friendship. We reach out. And we think of how he gave friendship to John Mark. You know, he'd been kind of written off. No, you're done. No more ministry for you.

But Barnabas took him under his wing. And he gave the word. We've got the word. We've got the same word that Barnabas and Paul had. We've got the word. And we can give it.

Give a word of cheer. A word of comfort. A word of love. The word of God, especially. And lastly, give extra. Don't just give the minimal.

[30:00] Just don't kind of do, I'm just going to do the least I can do. No, actually, I want to do more. I want to do more and more. I want to love more and more. I want to encourage and keep on encouraging. Friends, you can be Mr. E.

Mr. E. Amen. And Mrs. or Ms. or Miss. You can be Miss E. I'm being a little kind of lighthearted.

But it's true. Isn't it? Isn't it? You can be like Barnabas. You can be a Barney. You can be like Barnabas, a son of encouragement. Bless you. Let's close this time in prayer.

Lord, we thank you that you are the ultimate encouragement to our soul. That you've given above and beyond. You've given more than extra. You've given your very precious blood for we that trust you.

And Lord, you've counted us such that you've received us when others would reject. Lord, you've welcomed us when we rejected you.

[31:01] Yet you received us. When we were as your enemies, yet you counted us your friend. And Lord, we thank you that we can know that wonderful love. As you are the God of all comfort, all encouragement, really.

It's thanks to you for all the blessings we have of life. We've got your word. We've got much to share. Help us, Lord, to be big-hearted like Barnabas was.

And think of ways we can put this into action. Lord, help us to be big-hearted people. We pray if there's any yet to trust you that they might even take this encouragement to make today the day that they trust you for time and for eternity.

We know the saving grace of God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.