

All Disciples Show (Part 2)

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Preacher: Brett Sanders

[0:00] Amen, amen. Children, we are ready for Children's Church at this time. You may make your way up here with Miss Savannah and Miss Catherine today.! We are so thankful for our children and all that they are getting to learn about who Christ is and all that he's done for us.

And so we are so very thankful for that. Last week, we talked about the importance of having mentors in our life. The importance of having people in our life that we can go to, that we can bring our concerns to, that will open up with us, that will share with us, that will give us advice, that will be there for us.

And this week, as we continue to talk about the fact that all disciples show, we're going to be talking about the fact that disciples show others.

We are to be involved in other people's lives. We are to engage them in the culture. And I was reminded of when I was first really shown the importance of this.

When I was first shown how impactful this can be in our lives. It was actually when I was in college, going into my senior year of college, me and a couple of my close friends had the opportunity to go spend the week with a man by the name of Chuck Wood.

[1:22] Now, none of you, I'm sure, know who Chuck Wood is. But Chuck had just retired from the Army and where he had spent the last half of his career as an Army chaplain. Before that, he spent the majority of his career as an enlisted man going through ranger school and then becoming a ranger instructor.

And so he was this man's man. And we got to go spend this week with him. And during that week, we actually stayed on cots in his garage. And then we would go along with him on all the things that he was doing.

All the people he was going to see. And during that week, he told us over and over again the importance of meeting with people. The importance of having people that you're pouring into, that you're investing into.

And it wasn't just something that he said to us. This was something that he showed us with his life. This is something that he not only poured into us that week and modeled for us individually.

But we got to have a firsthand account. We got to witness how he did this each and every day. This wasn't just something he did while we were there. This just wasn't a show that he was putting on for people as they come in.

[2:37] This is how he lived his life. And during that week, he told us the importance of this. And he says, this isn't just something that I've come up with. This isn't just something that I'm saying is important.

This is something that we see throughout Scripture. And I can remember he said, let's take a look at Jesus's life. Let's just take a look at his life. Yes, Jesus would minister to the multitudes.

Yes, Jesus would preach sermons to thousands of people. Yes, he would do those big events. But that's not where he spent most of his time. He said, look at Jesus's life.

He did those things. But he spent far more time with those disciples that went around with him. And even more than that, he was very intentional about those 12 apostles that were very close to him during his ministry.

And then even on top of that, the three that he really poured his life into, Peter, James, John, those that he really built those relationships with.

[3:38] And Chuck said, he says, this is the model that has been given to us. This is God's plan. And so we must be a part of that. And so there are many different places that we could go to in Scripture to see how this is God's plan for reaching the lost, reaching the nations.

And we could easily look at Jesus's life. But for our time this morning, I want us to look at a relationship. I want us to look at how this played out in some people's lives.

And so for our time this morning, I want us to take a look at Paul and Barnabas's life. You know, many times when we think about Paul's life, we see him in the driver's seat.

We see him as the mentor in the relationships. We see him as the one who is showing others how to live and to follow his example. And we definitely see this play out in Paul and Barnabas's relationship, especially later on.

But at the beginning, what you see is Barnabas giving Paul an example. What you see at the beginning is Barnabas coming alongside him and encouraging him.

[4 : 48] And so I want us to take a look at the beginning of their relationship and then over a couple different places throughout their relationship and see the importance that we have of meeting with people, of showing people, of investing in their lives.

And so to do this, we're going to start our time looking in Acts chapter 9. So if you have a copy of God's Word, I want you to go ahead and open there with me to Acts chapter 9.

But then we're also going to look at the next few chapters of Scripture all the way to chapter 13 to look at how this played out in Paul and Barnabas's life.

But to begin with, what we see is that showing means we must see those God places in our lives. Showing. In order to show, we must see those that God has placed in our lives. And we get this from Acts chapter 9 verses 26 through 30.

[5 : 49] Right here through 31, it says this. And it says, So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up.

And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. Now I want to take for just a moment, I want us to consider the situation as it is to the apostles.

You have the arch enemy of the church coming in and wanting to meet with you. You have the one who had over and over again persecuted Christians, who was there as Stephen Stoney, who was approving of that execution there.

You have the one who was traveling around trying to squash this movement of God's people, this movement of the church, and throw those individuals in prison. And so you have this person who had seen the example of persecuting the church over and over again.

You have this person who is now coming in, and rightfully so, they were a little bit concerned. They were a little uneasy about what was going to take place. But their caution needed to give way to their Christ-like behavior.

[7 : 49] Their caution needed to give way to their Christ-like behavior. And here in this passage, Barnabas steps in and he speaks up for Paul. This simple act, that otherwise seemingly minor detail, just this one little portion of Scripture, this one little verse in this section, it ends up having and leading to a lifelong friendship in Paul and Barnabas' life.

In this very small section of Scripture, Barnabas steps into Paul's life and shows him very quickly what it means to extend the grace that he had already been shown in his life.

In a very quick way, in a very ordinary way, he steps in to show God's grace, show the grace that he had already been shown in receiving Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

In this seemingly small act, God uses it in a powerful way to encourage Paul. You see, oftentimes we gravitate towards the exciting stories in Scripture.

Those powerful stories of martyrdom or mass conversions or miracles. But much of the Christian life is oftentimes doing ordinary things with gospel intentionality.

[9 : 10] Much of the Christian life is doing ordinary things with gospel intentionality. Faithful Christian living doesn't always look extraordinary.

I love how Tony Morita, he says it this way. He says, Even better, I love how Frank Craddock, he put it once, he said this.

He said, To give my life for Christ appears glorious. To pour myself out for others. To pay the ultimate price of martyrdom.

I'll do it. I'm ready, Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory. But he says, We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking a thousand dollar bill and laying it on the table and saying, Here's my life, Lord.

I'm ready to give it all. He says, But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank and has us cash that thousand dollars in for quarters.

[10:10] And we go through life putting out 25 cents here, 50 cents there. Listening to the neighbor's kids' troubles instead of saying, Get lost.

Go to a committee meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home. Usually, giving our life to Christ isn't glorious. It's done in all of those little acts of love.

25 cents at a time. He said, It would be great and easy to go out in a flash of glory. It's harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul.

And I would add to that, that the way that people have the courage to go out in a blaze of glory, to go out in martyrdom, is because they have been living a life of pouring out their life a quarter at a time, 25 cents at a time, saying yes to God.

See, many times we make discipleship harder than it needs to be. We think we have to have all of the answers before we begin. We think we need to know all the ins and outs of discipleship before we even begin this process, before we even take that first step of taking people in.

[11:21] We have to have it all figured out. The problem is, if that were the case, we would never begin. We would never start. And so we've got to simply take that first step and begin with a relationship.

Something small. And so I want to ask you the question, How are you preparing to serve God right now? How are you preparing your heart to be able to spend time with God and then spend time with others?

Are you stepping in and meeting needs as you see them? Because the truth is, if you are a follower of Christ, you have a testimony. You have a way in which God has been working in your life, and now He has called you to show that to others.

He's called you to live it out and show it to others. Be intentional to see others. You see, many of the leaders in Jerusalem saw Saul's past.

They saw his past and looked at him in light of that. They saw what he had done, the things that he had done, and not what Christ was doing in his life.

[12:29] Barnabas saw the potential. Saw that God was at work in his life and began to invest in his life. And think of the difference this small investment made in his life.

Think of the difference this small investment made in the kingdom of God. How God would go and use this small investment to reach a lost and dying world.

May we see as God sees and not as man sees. I'm reminded of the story of when Samuel goes to Jesse and saying, one of your sons is going to be the next king.

And he begins having his sons walk there in front of him, pass in front of him. And Jesse had some impressive sons. These sons who were tall, who looked like king material, who looked like they could be the next leader.

But then this is what we read in 1 Samuel 16, 7. He says, But the Lord said to Samuel, Do not look at his appearance or the height of his stature, because I have rejected him.

[13:32] For the Lord sees, not as man sees. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. I want to encourage you today.

Keep your eyes open to those who God is putting in your path. Don't have something set in your mind, thinking that you've got to wait for the next Billy Graham to come along, so that you can make a name for yourself and ride their coattails and say, I had a part in his life.

No, look at who God has placed in your life. Be obedient to those who have come into your life. And parents, I've got a great place for you to start.

If you're a parent, then you have some people in your life that I can promise you without a shadow of a doubt, God is calling you to invest in their life, to pour into them, to show them what it means to follow Christ.

But I want to encourage you, don't let it stop there. Be open. Maybe it's someone at work. Maybe it's a neighbor. Maybe it's a college student, a church member, someone else that everyone, someone that everyone has overlooked, someone that everybody said, it's not worth the time and invest in them because God does not look at the outward appearance.

[14:44] He looks at the heart. And he can do amazing things with people who have a willing heart and a heart to serve him. So pour into their lives and look for those that God has placed there.

As we continue looking at Paul and Barnabas' relationship here, we also see this. Showing means we must recognize the gifts in others and encourage them.

We must recognize the gifts in others and encourage them. This is something that Barnabas did well. This is something that he was, after all, the encourager. If you go back to Acts chapter four, you'll realize that his name is actually Joseph, but he goes by his nickname Barnabas, which means the encourager.

He's someone who encourages so much that this becomes what everybody refers to him as, as the encourager. And so before we look at Acts 11 right here, I want to give you a little bit of background information.

Persecution had led many in the Jerusalem church to disperse, to scatter. And some of those that were being scattered made their way up to Antioch.

[15 : 53] Now at Antioch, God began to work and move in a mighty way. In Antioch, God was working and moving. And so the church in Jerusalem wasn't exactly sure what to do with all these new Gentile believers.

And so they sent Barnabas to go check things out, to see what's going on. And this is where we pick up in Acts chapter 11, starting in verse 19, it says this. Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen, traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except the Jews.

But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching to Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number of who believed turned to the Lord.

The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem. And they sent Barnabas to Antioch. And when he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad and exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith.

And a great many people were added to the Lord. And so Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch.

[17 : 17] For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians. The church in Jerusalem heard that there was something going on in Antioch.

God was moving, was what the report was coming in. And so they decided to send someone to investigate it. The situation is similar to the conversion of the Samaritans. Many in the church in Jerusalem weren't exactly sure about the Samaritans coming to faith in Christ.

And so in Acts chapter 8, they sent out Peter and John to go investigate these conversions that were taking place among the Samaritans. And now they hear about these Gentile believers in Antioch.

And so they send Barnabas to check on things. Once in Antioch, Barnabas, without hesitation, begins to rejoice at what God is doing. When you think about all the people they could have sent to Antioch to investigate this, praise God they sent Barnabas.

Praise God they sent the encourager. One who is looking and seeing how God is moving, who's not going to go and say, hey, well, these people aren't Jews. I'm not sure that they can come to faith in Christ.

[18 : 28] These people don't look like us. These people don't act like us. We're not sure that what's going on. But he went there. He saw the Holy Spirit moving and rejoiced and praised God and encouraged the church.

What a beautiful picture we see taking place here. Barnabas could have easily remained the authority on all matters concerning this church. He could have been the one that everyone looked to for answers.

But he saw God doing something special here. And he went to get a good friend. He traveled to Tarsus, which was about 100 miles away. And he found his friend Saul.

It had been a long time since Barnabas had seen Saul. But Barnabas knew the potential that Saul had had before the apostles did. He knew his call to reach the Gentiles.

He knew that he was a brilliant theologian. He was exactly what this world-reaching congregation needed. They needed a Saul. They needed a Paul here to come in.

[19 : 28] So for an entire year, they met with the church and taught the church. It was during this time when everyone else started noticing there was something different about the believers in Antioch.

And it says, And in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians. The people in Antioch were looking at this church and they're thinking, something's different about them. And so the people there, not the believers, not the Jews that were there, but the people in the community began looking at them and they recognized there's something different.

And so they started calling them the Christ ones, the ones who follow Christ. Antioch was a special place. God was doing a mighty work in Antioch that would literally change the course of Christianity. In fact, if you take your Bible and if your Bible has some maps in the back of it, it most likely will have maps of Paul's first, second, and third missionary journeys. I encourage you to look at where they all start.

Look at where they all begin. They begin in Antioch. They begin with this church sending them out to take the gospel message to the nations. Antioch needed a strong theological foundation.

[20:40] Did Barnabas understand all that was going on? Most certainly not. But he knew that God was at work and that he decided to join in what God was doing. And he also knew that this man from Tarsus that he had encouraged earlier could play a significant role in the life of this church.

This is a great reminder for us to recognize the gifts of those that God has placed in our lives and encourage them to use them. Give them an opportunity.

See what God has blessed them with and encourage them to use it. Encourage them to use those gifts and abilities. And Barnabas could do this better than anybody.

He was this encourager who recognized the needs that they had in Antioch and he knew Paul's strengths and he knew that this would be a great fit and God would be glorified.

And so finally, as we look at Paul and Barnabas' relationship, we see this. We see the fact that showing means going together.

[21:46] Showing means going together. And this will be a great lead-in for the next two weeks that we're going to be discussing in this discipleship pathway of the importance of going.

But it's a reminder for us as we see the importance of showing. I want you to look at the first three verses of Acts chapter 13.

First three verses says this. It says, Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Mania, and a lifelong friend of Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.

And while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off. There is so much that we can recognize about this church in these few verses.

[22:47] This church had a heart for the nations. In the church, it was the church at Antioch, not the church in Jerusalem, that would become a catalyst for a worldwide missions movement.

In Jerusalem, the church was struggling with some things. They were caught up on some racial things of trying to figure out if these new converts needed to be circumcised or not. They were struggling with other people other than Jews coming to faith in Christ.

And so they were struggling with these things. But in Antioch, we see from this passage that there was a diversity in leadership within the church. In Antioch, we see that the leadership consisted of Jews, those from Cyprus, several mentions to those from North Africa, those with money, those without money.

It shouldn't surprise us that this church, a church with such diversity in it, this church is the church that birthed a worldwide missions effort.

Paul and Barnabas could have some strong disagreements. I don't want you to, I don't want to paint a picture for you here that wasn't true. Paul and Barnabas, they would go on to have some strong disagreements.

[24:00] Paul could be abrasive at times. Don't want you to think this is always easy to do this. He has strong convictions and he has strong ways of sharing those convictions at times.

But here's the thing, the church needed this. The church was at a point where it needed strong theological convictions, strong theological truth. And God also knew that he needed a friend to be there with him through this.

Yes, they struggled at times. They had ups and downs in their friendship, but what they had in common would allow them to continue to serve together. Throughout their relationship, Barnabas went from mentor to taking more of a supporting role.

What a great example for Paul. What a great example for this church planner who is going into different regions, who is establishing the church, who is taking this role of mentor and leader in it, and then passing the torch and supporting and encouraging the church through writing letters, through other visits.

What a great example for him to follow. God works and moves in those intentional relationships. I told you earlier about Chuck Wood and our time together, but during that week, he also gave me a book.

[25:20] He encouraged us to read a book. It's a very short book, and if a short book even scares you, there's even an abridged version of a short book, but in this book, this is a book by Robert Coleman titled *The Master Plan of Evangelism*.

In this book, Robert Coleman, he makes some very astute observations from Scripture and calls the church to put those into practice. In fact, Billy Graham not only wrote the foreword to this book, he said this about it.

He said, few books have had as great an impact on the cause of world evangelization in our generation than this book. And in this book, Robert Coleman says this.

He says, it all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow him. This revealed immediately the direction his evangelistic strategy would take.

His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow. Remarkable as it may seem, Jesus started to gather these men before he ever organized an evangelistic campaign or even preached a sermon in public.

[26:36] Men were to be his method of winning the world to God. And that is still his plan today. of us, men and women, investing in the lives of other men and women who will then go and invest in the lives of others.

This is God's plan and it has not changed. This is the way that he reaches a lost and dying world is through relationships. It is my prayer that as we become more focused on being a church, that is focused on discipleship, discipleship, that is focused on knowing and growing and showing that it will lead us to going.

It is my hope that this is something that becomes more and more characteristic of our church, that we are ascending people, that we pray and fast and ask God to raise up individuals that have a desire to take the gospel message to those that have never heard it.

It is my prayer that we are a church that seeks to plant other churches. It is my prayer that we are a church that seeks to come alongside struggling churches to revitalize them, to breathe new life into them, to encourage them.

This is both exciting and challenging. It is exciting to see what God is moving, how God is moving, but it is challenging because often times it takes us sending out our very best.

[28:03] The church sent out Paul and Barnabas. If you were to think about, if you were to ask a pastor, hey, who do you want to send out?

Who do you want to go for? Paul and Barnabas are probably not on the top of your list. We want to hold on to this brilliant theologian. We want to hold on to this encourager who is constantly encouraging.

God is using them in mighty ways here. We don't want to get rid of them. Look at all that they're doing here. Lord, Lord, take Gertrude, the complainer. Take her. Please tell me there's not a Gertrude in this room today.

But we want to take those, but don't send out our very best. But yet, this is what we see taking place. This is how we see God moving and working is sending out those very best.

And as we have this desire for discipleship, God will work in our lives. He will move us to have this heart to send out those that will go to where God is leading them.

[29:08] This passage reminds us that we must continue to raise up and send out workers. This is what churches with a focus on discipleship do.

They send out. They grow. They understand. They know. They grow. They show others. And they go to the nations. This is the product of a church that is focused on the discipleship.

A church that does discipleship well will be a church that sends people to the nations. That sees the lostness around them and seeks to meet those needs.

So this morning, I want to encourage you to pray. I want to encourage you to pray for those that can come into your life that can show you what it means to follow Christ.

Pray for those that God has placed in your life that they can be an encouragement to you that can challenge you. But also pray that your minds, your eyes will be open to see those that God has placed in your life.

[30:15] That you won't just be someone who takes this word and does nothing with it, but you show it. You invest it. You pour into others' lives so that they can go and do the same.

And so I want to encourage you to pray. Pray that our eyes will be open. Pray that as we see those that God has placed in our life that we can be an encouragement to them. And pray that God will give us the boldness and courage to go with them, to model for them, to show them what it means to follow Christ.

Father, we thank you so very much. thank you for what you have shown us and the example that you've given us of what it means to be a follower, that you invested in people's lives, that your plan to reach the nations was people.

It wasn't big events or large gatherings, but Lord, it was investing in people. Give us that heart. Give us a heart to see those around us, to see those that you've placed in our lives and to step in and be those encouragers in their life.

Lord, give us the boldness to do that. Lord, I pray that if there are those here today that don't know you as their Lord and Savior, Lord, that would be where they begin. That would be where they start.

[31:32] That would be what they place their hope and their trust in today. And Lord, I pray that you would help us to come alongside them, to show them consistently and constantly what it means to follow you, to point them on a regular basis to you as the source of their greatest hope in this life and joy.

So Lord, we thank you. We thank you for the example you gave us. We thank you for the examples you give us in Paul and Barnabas looking at their life. And Lord, I pray that as we look at their life, we would be challenged to go and do the same.

Thank you so much for Jesus. And it's in his name we pray. Amen. I want to invite you to take your Baptist hymnal out and turn to hymn number 255 at the cross.

I want to encourage you to, as we stand together, if the Lord is speaking to you, respond as we stand together and sing. Amen.