

Trinity I

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: 11 June 2023

Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 00] We live in a very transactional world where true and real relationships suffer under this constant exchange for self or self-promotion.

So marriages have failed. They do fail because the role of a spouse, according to our current mindset, is to be able to get some value or worth from our partner.

And if that doesn't happen, we kick them to the curb. Schools are no longer for the purpose of learning. They become a means to merely getting a job or paycheck, and fewer people go to college to learn.

They go for the party culture and to be pampered as paid guests. Hospitals and medical institutions rarely focus upon patient care anymore.

It's all about billing insurance companies in order to pad the coffers. It's no wonder that 44% of our young people in this country see no hope for the future.

[1 : 17] And that number increases every year. Artificial intelligence is threatening to replace real human contact in life and in the workforce.

And churches have become so fixated on competing for relevance that any sense of the holy has been replaced. So that the mission today is to be whatever you need to be in order to make everyone feel as though they are the most important customer in the congregation.

On this day that we celebrate that great apostle and father of the church, St. Barnabas, we see what true and what authentic friendship and love really is.

St. Barnabas was originally known as Joseph or Joseph. He was a Jew living in Cyprus. And his name was changed by the other apostles to Barnabas because of its meaning.

Son of encouragement or son of consolation. We read in Acts chapter 4 verse 36. And Joseph, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles, which is translated as son of encouragement, a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it.

[2 : 47] And then he brought the money and he laid it at the apostles' feet. In other words, Barnabas was a giver, not a taker.

He was a servant, not a spectator in the Christian faith. And he represents what every Christian, what you and I should be. One committed to the church because it is the body of Jesus here on earth where the Holy Spirit dwells.

St. Barnabas helped assimilate Saul, who became the apostle Paul, into the Christian community, vouching for his calling by God.

He traveled and he labored with St. Paul throughout the Greek coastland between the black and great seas. He spent over a year preaching and teaching the faith in Antioch, where believers were first called Christians.

He was one who gave people second chances. He didn't hold grudges like with John Mark, who had abandoned he and Paul in their first missionary journey.

[3 : 58] And when he and Paul went their separate ways, Barnabas took John Mark with him and ministered in Cyprus, becoming its first bishop.

There are accounts that he even preached in cities like Alexandria, Rome, Milan, and throughout southern Italy. Barnabas gave all that he had so that hope would overcome the fatalistic worldview of the Greek pagans.

And so that the light of Christ would shine forth in full splendor. In our gospel reading this morning, we heard here in John chapter 15 that we are to love one another.

We are to love one another. And we are to do this as Christ loves us. Therefore, this love has no selfish ambition.

It is a love that goes beyond the transactional and self-serving actions that we often see today in our culture. And if we are honest, we see in ourselves daily.

[5 : 14] It is a love of selfless sacrifice. It is a love of service for the good of others. Never asking how we gain or how we benefit or what we get out of these relationships.

And we read the pinnacle of such love here in John chapter 15, verse 13, which states, greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his own life for his friends.

St. Barnabas demonstrated such love by giving all that he had, his land, selling it, and giving it to the apostles, giving it to God, by teaching and preaching the good news, and by welcoming the sinner, those who had disappointed him or even failed him.

But his ultimate act of love came sometime around AD 60. Barnabas was stoned to death by Judaizers in Cyprus.

Barnabas did not die with the most worldly stuff. No, he died with nothing that the world values at all. But he died with everything that our Lord values.

[6 : 36] A willingness to be a true friend of God by being a true friend to others. We celebrate this day in giving honor to St. Barnabas because in him and through him, we see the life and the light of Jesus Christ through the actions of this faithful and true disciple.

St. Barnabas demonstrates a life lived in true love for God and for others, which resulted in a dying to himself, so that others might know the true love and the friendship of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

You see, folks, this is a life of purpose, a life of meaning, a life of hope that our world desperately needs to hear and to see in our lives as well.

Therefore, may our prayer be that we be like St. Barnabas, striving to be a faithful friend, especially to those hurting, and to bring hope to bear so that the light of Christ might fill our lives and the lives of those around us.

Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.