

Paul's fellow workmen

Part 1

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[00:00:00] I wanted Ian to go first because the Holy Spirit is certainly far more important than any human workers whom he uses.

And our subject for the alternate lectures is fellow workmen or fellow workers with Paul.

I'd like to look tonight at Barnabas, who was really Paul's mentor, the one from whom Paul learned, with whom he worked, and yet the time came when we no longer hear of Barnabas and Paul, but we hear of Paul and his company.

And you know, it's an interesting thing and something very important when it comes to human relationships and working together.

It may well be that there's an older person whom the Lord has been using, has been blessing, [00:01:02] takes a younger person under his wing, and when does an older person like that step back?

And what if the younger person outshines him?

You know, Barnabas was a choice vessel for the Lord, but Paul was the one to whom God gives revelation and to whom God entrusts truth far beyond anything that Barnabas had.

And you know, how does a couple of brothers like this, how do a couple of brothers work together?

First of all, let's look a little at the character of Barnabas. He's introduced to us in the book of Acts at the end of chapter 4.

And you'll have to pardon me, I can't talk quite as fast as Ian can.

I hope I can jam Barnabas into 45 minutes, but it's going to be difficult.

[00:02:05] I'm not an Australian, and I did live in this part of the country for 12 years and learned to talk a little more slowly here, you know. Acts 4 at the end of the chapter, and I want to read, starting in verse 32.

All the believers were one in heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

With great power, the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and much grace was with them all. There were no needy persons among them, for from time to time, those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales, and put it at the apostles' feet. And it was distributed to anyone as he had need. Now here we come to Barnabas, Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas, [00:03:03] which means son of encouragement, sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

This portion here at the end of chapter 4 is really a highlight in the history of the early believers in the church at Jerusalem.

The heart and soul of the multitude of those that had believed was one, and they pooled their resources.

They didn't realize it, but the Holy Spirit, in giving this love in their hearts, that no one will call what he has his own and hang on to it selfishly, the Holy Spirit, in his wisdom, was also preparing for the future.

It wouldn't take long before persecution would set in. They would have to flee in every direction, and they wouldn't have had time then to put [00:04:04] a for-sale sign on the house, put it in the hands of a realtor, and dicker over price. It would have been too late.

So here, selling things, pooling their resources, using them for the common good, was really not only the love that the Holy Spirit should have brought in the hearts, but also his wisdom. But here's a man, Barnabas, who comes to our attention. His name isn't really Barnabas to start with, but Joseph, or Joses. He's given the appellation Barnabas, son of encouragement, because he is one who stands out above all the others who are doing this. He's not from Jerusalem.

He's not one who would have really been in danger of losing his property there a few chapters later. He's from the island of Cyprus, and evidently he has his property over there sold.

[00:05:04] He's one who, from the start, goes above and beyond what others are doing.

What he does is a tremendous encouragement to the apostles, and they give him this name, Barnabas, son of encouragement.

He brought the money, put it at the feet of the apostles here. It's at your disposal.

We find in the next chapter, there's a couple who would like to be well thought of, and they're hypocrites. They pretend to do what Barnabas does. They would like this kind of recognition, but for them it doesn't work out that way. We've got to run along.

Barnabas' notice was a Levite.

People from the tribe of Levi had been set aside back in the book of Numbers for the Lord's service.

[00:06:02] They had taken their stand on the Lord's side in Exodus 32.

The curse that Jacob had pronounced upon Levi that he would be scattered in Israel has turned to

blessing for him because these Levites are scattered throughout the tribes. They're the ones who replaced the firstborn as the hereditary servants of the Lord. But Barnabas, born into this, we find through his actions, goes far beyond what a Jewish Levite would have done.

The Jewish Levite was to live from the contributions of others, and the first thing we find Barnabas doing is selling what he has and contributing it for the good of others.

He's given this beautiful name, Bill Weir. I've heard him speak on Barnabas a few times. He calls him Barney the Encourager.

[00:07:03] Now turn to chapter 9 of the Acts.

Fortunately we don't have Barnabas from Genesis to Revelation like the Holy Spirit, so he is confined to the first half of the book of Acts, plus a reference in one or two other places.

In chapter 9, Saul, the great persecutor of the Christians, has been saved.

And he started right out at Damascus to take his stand for the Lord, be baptized, and preach Jesus that he's Christ.

And there's a lot condensed into these verses in the middle of chapter 9. Galatians 1 fills us in on some of the details, gives us a little more clarity. Anyway, Paul was saved at Damascus.

According to Galatians, sometime later he went to the desert of Arabia. He was there for about three years. [00:08:01] He came back to Damascus and increased, really, in power, according to verse 22, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

And the Jews are going to kill him.

Saul just manages to escape.

And this man who had gone there to persecute the Christians is very, it's a humiliation.

He's let down over the wall like a big laundry basket by the disciples. They're holding the ropes and let him down safely. The man who had, at one point, wanted to kill them. Well, verse 26, having arrived at Jerusalem, he is saved to join himself to the disciples. He tried to join the disciples there. Somehow, in the process of leaving Damascus, he had neglected to get a letter of commendation, [00:09:01] hadn't he?

And I don't know, under the circumstances, whether it would have been so easy to write in one.

But he tries to join the disciples, and it says, all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and related to them how he had seen the Lord in the way in that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.

And he was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

Barnabas is a man who is not only a big loving heart and generous, but he was a man who had an interest for the Lord's work.

Others at Jerusalem don't know and don't trust this Saul.

Some years back, he had been the ringleader in the persecution that they had gone through, [00:10:05] and they just don't trust that man.

But Barnabas has heard what God has done a hundred miles away at Damascus. And Barnabas doesn't hesitate to stick out his neck for this fellow believer.

But he takes him, brings him to the apostles, tells them how Saul had met the Lord, how the Lord had met him in the way, and how his life had been changed, how he had been speaking boldly in the name of Jesus at Damascus.

You know, we need brethren like this in our assemblies today. Brethren who will take a believer whom his brethren perhaps don't trust and whom he knows, and he knows that God has done a genuine work in this person's life. [00:11:03] We need brethren who will take him and bring him and introduce him and stand fast and not take no for an answer.

It's so easy to be like the Christians at Jerusalem who had had a bad experience in the past with Saul of Tarsus.

And you know, years later, they remember that, and they're not going to trust that man. We need Barnabases who can break down that kind of distrust.

And sad to say, in many assemblies, the initial feeling toward any believer that isn't really well known in that assembly is a feeling of distrust.

You know, if he comes in here, he's going to spoil things. The assembly is not a private club.

It's the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. [00:12:01] And we need men like Barnabas who can bring in those whom God is saving, introduce them, and help them to get established. Well, Barnabas goes on.

In chapter 11, we read of him again.

In verse 19, those who had been scattered abroad through the persecution that had initially gotten started by Saul after Stephen's martyrdom, well, they've gotten as far as Antioch.

They've gotten several hundred miles away. And they're speaking the word first to Jews alone, then some of them get a little bolder, speak the word to Greeks.

They speak of the Lord Jesus.

They announce the glad tidings, the gospel of the Lord Jesus, emphasizes lordship. And God works mightily and he starts saving Gentiles at Antioch. [00:13:01] Peter is the one who was brought before us as first bringing the gospel to the Gentiles in the previous chapter.

And he had been called on the carpet for going into the house of a Gentile and proclaiming the gospel to him.

And he really had to explain what he had done and that he had witnessed God working.

It broken all the brethren's rules, but God had been the one who had been working. And Peter had been called on the carpet to explain this. Well, we find the Lord is working in other places too. And here at Antioch, the Lord has been working. And then interestingly enough, we read that news of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem. I like assemblies that have ears.

And it's a very interesting expression, the ears of the church at Jerusalem or the assembly [00:14:02] at Jerusalem. I don't know who functioned as ears there. The body, you know, is composed of many members and each one is necessary. And it's so important that an assembly have ears, an interest for the Lord's work elsewhere. And not only did they hear about this, but now they send out Barnabas to check things out. They've called Peter on the carpet for having gone into Cornelius' house. But thank God they send the right man to Antioch, who having arrived and seeing the grace of God, rejoiced and exhorted all with purpose of heart to abide with the Lord or to cleave to the Lord, to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

And then we read about what kind of a man Barnabas was. And you know, these are the qualifications that God looks for in a man whom he can use, [00:15:02] in a man whom he can use to train and to encourage others too. What do we read about him? We read that he was a good man.

Starts out with a good man.

And then we read full of the Holy Spirit and faith.

Now, it's hard to imagine a bad man full of the Holy Spirit.

If there isn't some character, some evidence of goodness already. And God starts with one who is a good man here. And he's full of the Holy Spirit and full of faith. Now, there's sometimes an argument as to whether a Christian should be an optimist or a pessimist. And personally, I say a Christian ought to be a realist. But a Christian has no business being a pessimist.

Because that would indicate that there's no faith there, is there? He's certainly not full of faith if he's a pessimist.

[00:16:04] Jesus comes to the place and things are so different from anything he's seen before.

As a Jewish Levite who had been converted to Christ, a large company of Jews converted to Christ meeting at Jerusalem. And he comes to Antioch and a lot of Gentiles have been saved. He hadn't seen anything like that before. But he comes there and he sees the grace of God. You know, if we go somewhere different and people have a little different customs or their skin color may be different or their background is different or, you know, they wear beards and we don't or they don't wear beards

and we do or, you know, whatever the situation is, we tend to get occupied with outward things many times.

And Barnabas, the thing that strikes him is the grace of God.

And what he, you know, he's a man of wisdom.

[00:17:05] And what lies on his heart, he encourages them that they should really stick close to the Lord.

Sometimes when we go somewhere and we see things different, we see people, you know, acting in ways that we're not used to, we'd like to convert them to our way. And it's so interesting when you travel from country to country even.

You see such different things and people get occupied with such small things. The important thing is to encourage believers, especially new believers, but old ones too, to really stick close to the Lord.

And Barnabas was the kind of person who could be a help, a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. Well, if he's full of the Holy Spirit, he's not going to act on his own. He's going to be led by the Spirit, as Romans teaches us. [00:18:02] Great number of people are brought to the Lord. And Barnabas isn't like some people today, especially preachers. You know, whenever they get called to another church, somehow it's always a bigger one that pays more salary, isn't it?

Somehow it's always climbing up the ladder. Very seldom is anyone going to go down the ladder. That kind of a call isn't of the Lord, obviously. Well, Barnabas doesn't come here and say, this is a wonderful opportunity to become the preacher and to have a big congregation.

These people need teaching and I'm just the one to do it. No, he sees they need teaching.

And he doesn't tell them how dumb they are, how little they know and so on, but he takes off a few days, crosses the mountains, I understand it's about 80 miles and across [00:19:01] a mountain range, and he goes to Tarsus.

The Lord had said through Ananias, and this was a chosen vessel to himself, had told Ananias he was to carry his name to the Gentiles. And he goes and he hunts this man up. It says that he went to Tarsus to look for Saul and when he found him, often said, he I don't think he found him rocking on the front porch back and forth. He went to look for him when he found him. Later on, we find a letter addressed to the churches in Syria and Cilicia. We're never told how the churches in Cilicia started. I suspect that that's what Paul was doing when he was at Tarsus. He was busy for the Lord in the neighborhood there. I suspect that's why Barnabas had to hunt him up, but Barnabas brings him to Antioch and the two of them teach these Christians for a year's time.

[00:20:01] And it wouldn't surprise me if they had daily meetings with them. That's sort of, it doesn't say it in that many words, but that's the implication that we have here that they met with the church and taught great numbers of people. And here we find this combination, Barnabas and Saul beginning. Notice Barnabas, the experienced man, the man whom God has been using, is used now to unselfishly call Paul, a man whom, still Saul, a man whom he knew that God was going to use among Gentiles, call him to help teach.

Saul had a tremendous understanding in scripture. It's not at the feet of the noted Jewish teacher of the day, Gamaliel. And he had spent several years in the desert with the Lord, being taught by him, no doubt unlearning a lot of Jewish tradition, learning how to apply the Old Testament scripture. We believe that he's the one who wrote to the Hebrews. [00:21:03] He's certainly the one who wrote to the Romans and so many other epistles. Barnabas' understanding in scripture is tremendous, but here, these believers, most of whom had no background in spiritual things, contrary to the Jews who had believed at Jerusalem, they need to be taught from the bottom up. And Barnabas spares no effort to get the best man to do this, and they do this in fellowship together.

You know, it's so nice when we study Paul and his fellow workers, we find very seldom does Paul work by himself.

And you know, this is something that's sad to say we have lost sight of today. Most brethren who serve the Lord, among us at least, if I can use that term, tend to be one-man bands.

There are some who can work together with others. [00:22:02] But generally speaking, when you see two brothers coming at the same time to an assembly, it's because of some problem in that assembly. And it's not because the brethren, you know, are enjoying working together for the Lord. And you know, it's a sad thing when a brother has to be a one-man band and when he can't work together with someone else. And if he hears, well, Brother so-and-so is going there, he says, well, then I'll go that way. Here are two that can work together a whole year at Antioch. And the result is that the disciples are called Christians there. Well, and yet these Christians are growing.

Others come and Agabus can stand up and give what the Lord has given him. There's that liberty. He doesn't have to clear it with Barnabas or Saul first. And the Christians are acting on the word that is brought before them. They hear of a famine coming up. We've gotten spiritual help from Jerusalem. [00:23:02] We can send some material help to these poor Christians who have been persecuted, who have been scattered, who have lost what they had, and so on. And who shall we send it with? They couldn't write out a check and put it in an envelope, paste a 29-cent stamp on it or 50-cent stamp on it, you know, get it to a foreign country and have it there in a few days. Who shall we send?

Barnabas and Saul.

Can we spare them?

They've been teaching us a whole year. Well, it's high time to put into practice what they've been teaching us. And they send these two brothers to Jerusalem. Both of them had relatives and friends there and it would give them a nice opportunity to visit.

It's beautiful the way things are done. And when they finish their mission in chapter 12, the last verse, they come back to Antioch. You know, they hadn't left Antioch because somebody wanted to get rid of them or because they wanted to get away from there. No, they're happy to go back again. [00:24:02] And this time they bring a young man with them, John Mark. And then we read in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers in chapter 13. God has raised up others in the meantime. Barnabas, he's mentioned first. He's probably the senior one, the older one.

Simeon who's called Niger.

Niger means black.

Big city church. Antioch was the third biggest city of the Roman Empire at this time. Estimated population of half a million, something like Charlotte. Well, you would expect there'd be some black people there too. Simeon called Niger. Here's Lucius the Cyrenian from the present day country of Libya in North Africa. And Imenion, foster brother of Herod the Tetrarch, a fellow who had been raised in a palace with these corrupt Herods.

And then there's Saul who later writes to the Philippians that he had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

[00:25:02] And you know, if he had had any choice, humanly speaking, before he was saved, now the Pharisees sometimes tried to avoid having even the shadow of a woman fall on them. And certainly Paul would have crossed the street to avoid having to touch Imenion with a 10-foot pole.

And here they are, saved by the grace of God, these five brothers he's using in the assembly at Antioch, ministering to the Lord, fasting, denying self.

And the Lord says, now separate me, Barnabas and Saul, to the work to which I have called them. He had made it plain to them what he wanted them to do. Now he makes it plain to the assembly. And I think that's the normal order, that God would show a person what he wants him to do, and then that he can make that plain to his brethren in due time. It doesn't say Barnabas and Paul went to the assembly and asked for a letter of commendation [00:26:03] because they want to start serving the Lord now. They've been doing that a long time. But God makes it plain that he's going to use them in the regions beyond. And you know, we don't like to lose some of our most capable preachers and teachers, but God may want to use them elsewhere. And we find here that the Holy Spirit says, now how he said it, we're not told whether he said it through a brother, whether it was an audible voice or a conviction of heart that they all had, but it was plain, the Holy Spirit said, separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I've called them, and they fast and pray, lay hands on them. Brother Raymond Campbell years ago said he figured they didn't just lay hands on them, but they also reached into their pocket, you know, to have something to help them along with. And I tend to appreciate that thought. [00:27:01] But this is, they let them go.

They let them go. And they're sent by the Holy Spirit, and they go. They go to the island of Cyprus, first of all. That's where Barnabas came from. And they start at one end, and they go clear through to the other end. They run into opposition from one whom Paul has to call the child of the devil, the sorcerer.

Powers of darkness oppose, try to turn away the governor of the island from the truth. This magician sorcerer is blinded, the governor is converted, and the work goes on.

They leave the island of Cyprus, and here we have a major change. Up till now we've read of Barnabas and Saul, Barnabas and Saul, and in verse 13, having sailed from Paphos, Paul and his company came to Perga of Pamphylia.

[00:28:05] Paul and his company.

We don't read of a big argument between these two brothers, do we? Not at this point.

We don't read of Paul asserting himself, trying to push Barnabas aside.

We don't read of competition. We don't read of Barnabas asserting his seniority.

I'm the older brother, I've been in this work much longer than you have. I'm the one who got you started.

Nothing of the sort.

Very quietly the spirit of God signals whom he is going to use in first line, and who is going to be background.

Is it easy for those of us who are older and experienced to step back and let others [00:29:02] whom God wants to use take the leadership?

Can we work as helpers to those whom we helped to get started?

This is some of the beautiful lessons that we learn from Barnabas. There's no friction between these two in this way at all.

We simply are reading now of Paul and his company.

John leaves them, he goes back.

This we'll come back to, at least if we get to it tonight yet.

They come to Perga, then to Antioch in Pisidia.

Another Antioch, you know the Antiochuses, the Seleucid rulers had started, founded new cities here and there, and they were quite proud to name them after themselves. [00:30:02] So there's an Antioch in almost every province. I found Danvilles in quite a few of the states in this country, and you know there are Washingtons in most states too, and so on.

But this is Antioch in Pisidia.

They go into the synagogue, and we find Paul does the preaching. They're told, men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, speak on. Paul gets up and speaks.

Barnabas takes back seat here, and Paul is the one whom God is outstandingly using.

But it's teamwork.

And whether the one speaks or whether the other speaks, that's not really the point. They're working together in the interests of the Lord, and this is what is so needed today too.

The first Sabbath's preaching produces a great interest.

The next Sabbath, almost the whole city is gathered together, and the Jews are so jealous [00:31:03]

that they start the persecution. We don't want to go into all the details, but as we go on through chapter 13 and 14, we find conversions, we find persecutions.

In chapter 14, when they get to Lystra, there was a Greek fable that had gotten started in that area probably a few hundred years before that the gods, a couple of the gods had come to earth once, and they were run out of town and couldn't get anything to eat. People were cruel to them, and they had changed that town that sat in a valley. Well, they had changed the valley to a lake and changed the people to fish, executed their judgment on the town.

And as they had gone on a little farther, they had found an old couple, and this old couple didn't have much to give them, but had given them the bread and the milk that they had.

And, you know, they had rewarded this old couple very wonderfully. [00:32:04] Well, here Paul and Barnabas come into this area, and Paul heals a crippled man.

And oh, these people, the gods have come back, and this time we're going to play it safe. We're going to worship them. And so they called Barnabas Jupiter, Zeus, he was the head god of the Greeks, the dignified old gentleman who heads things up.

And Paul is called Mercury, or Hermes, because Mercury was the main speaker for the Greek pantheon.

And Paul is the speaker.

Paul is the one who tended to be forward and to do most of the preaching.

And Barnabas was a dignified older man.

And well, they have a hard time preventing these people from worshiping them. [00:33:02] So what happens instead is some of the Jews come along, get the people stirred up, and when they start stoning Paul, they leave him for dead. Some people think it's altogether possible that the experience he mentions in 2 Corinthians 12, being caught up into the third heaven, not knowing in the body or out of the body, maybe it was at this time when he was stoned and taken out to the local dump and left there for dead.

Well, God brings him back, and Barnabas and Saul, on their return journey, they stop in each place where they've preached the gospel, regardless of the persecution. They want to establish these new believers. They establish elders for them. And in chapter 14, verse 23, having chosen them elders in each assembly, having prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord on whom they had believed. [00:34:04] And they go back to Antioch, and they call a missionary meeting, report what God has done with them, not what they have done for the Lord.

You know, today there's great emphasis on reporting what I have done for the Lord, but they report what God had done with them.

And they stay there a good while. And while they're at Antioch, in chapter 15, some false teachers come along, hey, we're glad that you believe in Jesus.

That's well and good, but, you know, the rest of the story is, if you want to be one of God's chosen people, you'd better get circumcised. You'd better start keeping the law. This is what God commanded way back in Moses' time. And they come along with this kind of a line. So confusion, Judaizing teachers.

It doesn't call them brethren. [00:35:02] Certain persons, certain men, having some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers. Obviously, they're not brothers themselves, but they come down from Jerusalem, from Judea. That's where Christianity got started. They passed themselves off in that way. And Barnabas and Paul, or Paul and Barnabas, resist this.

And rather than deciding the case independently, well, okay, if they want to believe that way in Judea, let them. We'll believe this way here, and we'll each do our own thing. No, we want to stay one in doctrine. There's no such thing as independent assembly scripturally. And they send Barnabas and Paul and some others with them to Jerusalem to talk this out with the apostles and elders. And we have this wonderful chapter 15 where they can discuss these things, and they finally [00:36:04] can write a letter.

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.

And we don't have time tonight to go into how they arrived at this. But interestingly enough, after reading Paul and his company, or Paul and Barnabas, a number of times in this chapter, we find several times again Barnabas and Paul. When it came to Jerusalem, Barnabas was well-known there. Barnabas was well-trusted.

Barnabas had introduced Saul.

And Saul, in the minds of some, was probably still a somewhat questionable commodity. And we find in this chapter that at Jerusalem, we read Barnabas and Paul.

If they're working together, well, there are some places where, you know, it's very normal working together for Paul to take the lead. This seems to have been his gift. [00:37:02] But in some difficult situations, it's better for him to hold back and for Barnabas, the older man who's well-known, well-trusted here in Jerusalem, to take the lead.

In verse 13, all the multitude kept silence and listened to Barnabas and Paul, relating all the signs and wonders which God had wrought among the nations by them, and so on. Well, the problem is resolved.

There is accountability and openness toward their brethren, and the Lord gives the answer to the problem.

Spirit-led conclusions in that letter.

They go back to Antioch to share this with the assembly, and it brings joy to the assembly. In the last part of the chapter, we have a rather sad note.

[00:38:01] Barnabas and Paul were just as human as the rest of us. And after all this wonderful working together, we find Paul suggests, well, let's make another trip. Let's go back and revisit the places

where we preached the word. We need to strengthen our brethren.

Shepherd care was no doubt on his heart and teaching.

And Barnabas says, fine, we'll do it. They're in full agreement on that. But Barnabas says, let's take John Mark along. Give him another chance. Paul says, no way.

And they get into quite a quarrel about this. Barnabas, the encourager, he wants to give a young man another chance. For Paul, the work was first.

He wouldn't take this one who had gone back and not gone with them to the work. As long as they were on Cyprus where there were relatives with a family, family connections and all, John Mark was happy for the trip. [00:39:03] When the going got rough, John Mark had turned around and gone home. Paul says, no way. Barnabas says, but we will take him along, perhaps insisted on his seniority there.

The upshot was they went different ways.

Barnabas took John Mark, went back to Cyprus. And in the act, we read nothing further of their service.

Paul, having chosen Silas, went forth, verse 40, committed by the brethren to the grace of God.

And I believe the brethren at Antioch here made a quiet choice.

Paul and Silas, they could commit to the grace of God.

We don't read that they did this for Barnabas and John Mark. I would think they prayed for them. But I think they felt Paul is in the right on this matter.

[00:40:06] And I think we have to accept their judgment in the matter and the evident judgment of the spirit of God who does not go on with Barnabas' history for us, but who does go on with Paul's history in the following chapters where we see him used in his ministry for much blessing, not only to these whom he had reached before with Barnabas, but also to go on into Europe and to, you know, to reach out into new parts of Asia Minor with the word. But Barnabas does not sink into disgrace.

Thank God for that.

Paul refers to him very respectfully when he writes to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 9, verse 6.

He speaks about, well, do Barnabas and I, are we the only ones who can't take a wife with us when we travel, who have to work with our hands, who can't receive support [00:41:05] from others? Barnabas and I, he still associates him with him. Now, he writes the Corinthians hadn't been reached with the gospel at the end of chapter 15. Paul reaches them in chapter 18. So it's years later when he writes to them that he refers to Barnabas in high terms, respectful terms.

This is not a quarrel that they could have no fellowship together, but each insisted on this way to do the work.

And God used Barnabas too.

John Mark is the one who writes the gospel about the perfect servant. John Mark, the one who failed in his service initially and to whom Barnabas gave a second chance and spent time with patiently.

Paul later on writes to Timothy, bring Mark when you come, he's serviceable to me for ministry.

[00:42:01] It's beautiful to see that God continued to use Barnabas, not in the forefront, not in the limelight, in the background, to prepare other servants.

And you know, God has a different ministry for each of us. But we might well ask ourselves tonight, how would Paul have gotten his start? How would Paul have become such a useful servant had God not had a Barnabas there to help him as he got started?

But then the time came for Barnabas to fade into the background and for God to use Paul. Barnabas didn't write any epistles as far as we know.

There is a letter in the apocryphal books of the New Testament called the Epistle of Barnabas.

I doubt that it comes from this Barnabas, I think it's just been given his name. Well, may the Lord bless his word to our hearts and encourage us to be encouragers like Barnabas [00:43:07] was. Shall we pray? Our God and our Father, we thank thee for Barnabas. We thank thee for how that it's used him as a blessing to many at Jerusalem, at Antioch, in many other places, and particularly how he was used in the life of that one who became the Apostle Paul.

Our Father, we thank thee for the examples we have here of working together, of serving the Lord together, of helping others.