

JOSEPH THE CYPRIOT

All Saints Presbyterian Church
Bill Laughlin 18 January 2026

JOSEPH THE CYPRIOT

- Paul is considered by most to be the greatest Apostle.
- But Joseph was the greatest Apostle behind the greatest Apostle.
- He was called an “Apostle” in Acts 14:14.
- He was one of the few men Luke describes as “full of the Holy Spirit.”
- What was his nickname?

INTRODUCING JOSEPH THE CYPRIOT

Acts 4:36-37 ³⁶Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles **Barnabas** (which means **son of encouragement**), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷sold a field [*a septic field?*] that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Why was he called that? And what do we learn from him about encouragement?

4 Scenes – 4 Lessons

A WORD ABOUT THE WORD “ENCOURAGEMENT”

- Comes from a Greek word: **parakaleō**
- Breaking that word down: **para + kaleō**
beside + to call = to call beside
- Picture two people standing side-by-side (“parallel”), one speaking (“calling”) to the other to approve, lift up, support, encourage.
- It is also translated “exhort” and “comfort.”

SCENE #1 – PAUL ARRIVES IN JERUSALEM

Acts 9:23-26 *(Shortly after Paul on the Road to Damascus)*

²³When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, ²⁴but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, ²⁵but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

²⁶And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple.

WHY THIS REACTION?

ANOTHER REACTION:

Acts 9:27-30

²⁷But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

²⁸So he [Paul] went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. ³⁰And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

- **From a human perspective, how critical was this moment?**
- **Any personal stories like this one?**
- **What lesson on encouragement would you draw from this scene?**

1st LESSON FROM THE SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1. An encourager recognizes the potential God has placed in others.

SCENE #2 – BARNABAS TAKES A CHANCE

Recognizing the Need ...

Acts 11:22-26

²²The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, ²⁴for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

SCENE #2 – BARNABAS TAKES A CHANCE

Taking the initiative (12-13 years after Scene #1) ...

²⁵So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

How did Barnabas encourage Paul in this case?

My Barnabas – Johnny Miller

2nd LESSON FROM THE SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1. An encourager recognizes the potential God has placed in others.
2. An encourager develops the potential God has placed in others.

SCENE #3 – FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Acts 13:1-3

¹Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ²While 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.” ³Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Who's in charge?

Acts 13:4-8

⁴So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. ⁶When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. ⁷He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. ⁸But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

Who's in charge?

Acts 13:9-13

⁹But **Saul**, who was also called **Paul**, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, looked intently at him ¹⁰and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?”

¹¹And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.” Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. ¹²Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

¹³Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem...

Who's in charge?

PAUL DISPLAYS STUNNING SPIRITUAL POWER

WHAT WILL BARNABAS DO?

3rd LESSON FROM THE SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1. An encourager recognizes the potential God has placed in others.
2. An encourager develops the potential God has placed in others.
3. An encourager elevates those more gifted than himself.

SCENE #4 CONFLICT ERUPTS

Acts 16:36-40 ³⁶ And after some days **Paul said to Barnabas**, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” ³⁷ Now **Barnabas** wanted to take with them John called Mark. ³⁸ But **Paul** thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. ³⁹ And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. **Barnabas took** Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but **Paul chose Silas** and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

WHO WAS RIGHT? WHO WAS WISE?

WHICH COMES FIRST – THE WORK OR THE PERSON?

- Paul now captains the team – He puts the work first.
- Barnabas recognizes Paul's leadership, but he wants to give John Mark another chance.
- The church at Antioch seemed to side with Paul, committing him and Silas to the grace of God.
- Barnabas departs with John Mark with no mention of the church's blessing. His name never appears again in Acts.

WHO WAS VINDICATED, PAUL OR BARNABAS?

Colossians 4:10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and **Mark the cousin of Barnabas** (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him) ...

2 Timothy 4:11 Luke alone is with me. Get **Mark** and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

1 Peter 5:13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does **Mark, my son**.

And, of course, we have the **Gospel of Mark**.

4th LESSON FROM THE SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1. An encourager recognizes the potential God has placed in others.
2. An encourager develops the potential God has placed in others.
3. An encourager elevates those more gifted than himself.
4. An encourager, with discernment, lifts up those who fail, and becomes God's channel of grace and forgiveness to them.

SOME COMMENTATORS BELIEVE THAT BARNABAS WROTE THE BOOK OF HEBREWS.

Hebrews 10:24-25 ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

WHAT WOULD THE NEW TESTAMENT LOOK LIKE WITHOUT BARNABAS?

New Testament in ESV Bible 280 pages

Gospel of Mark 22 pages

Paul's 17 Letters 72 pages

94 pages

Barnabas indirectly accounts for 33.6 % (1/3) of NT

Add in Book of Hebrews (12 pages) = 38% of NT

All because Barnabas, Son of Encouragement,
never gave up on Paul or on Mark

LESSONS FROM THE SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

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3. An encourager elevates those more gifted than himself.
4. An encourager, with discernment, lifts up those who fail, and becomes God's channel of grace and forgiveness to them.

WHO HAS BEEN A BARNABAS
IN YOUR LIFE?

MY BARNABI