

Series: The Acts of the Apostles: To Judea/Samaria XII

Text: Acts 15:36-41

HI: The Lord's grace redeems the breaks.

Title: *Break Point*

Hook: Famous Duos/Breakups

Date: 6.11.23

Purpose: To comfort God's people with the news that God redeems a broken people.

FCF: Like the early church, we are too familiar with the strain of broken relationships. God in his grace meets us there, as he redeems broken things to advance his mission in and through his Church.

COR: We all experience disillusionment and pain from broken relationships. The Biblical account is a lesson in reality, as we feel the wounds we read about in the text.

Witness of Christ [WC*]: The word of the Lord (v. 36), the work of the Lord (v. 38), and the grace of the Lord (v. 40) are all centered on Jesus Christ.

Apologetic: A utopian ideal can serve as an idol in our culture—peace, harmony, progress—these are things we long to experience. Many people hold tightly to this until life breaks, and the pendulum swings hard toward disillusionment. In Jesus, we can experience true redemption for the deep fractures we experience.

Form: Inductive

Call to Worship: Psalm 16: 8-9, 11

Benediction: Remember: The God of all grace is redeeming us as his people in every broken place we experience. Walk in that grace this week.

Outline:

I. Sometimes relationships fall apart. (36-39a)

A. Paul wants to hit the road again.

B. The great gospel partnership reaches an impasse.

II. When relationship breaks, God's mission continues. (39b-41)

A. The road parts.

B. The mission continues.

Main Idea:

Subject: What was the result of Paul and Barnabas's separation?

Complement: By God's grace, twice the amount of missionaries leaving from Antioch to strengthen the churches.

Exegetical Idea: By God's grace, the result of Paul and Barnabas's separation was twice the amount of missionaries leaving from Antioch to strengthen the churches.

Theological Idea: The mission of God continues as the grace of God redeems internal conflict among his people.

Homiletical Idea: The Lord's grace redeems the breaks.

Introduction:

No man is an island,
Entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.

Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

John Donne, 1624

Partnerships shape our world. We can all list famous duos. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak invented Apple. John Lennon and Paul McCartney transformed rock music. No man is an island. Laurel and Hardy. Jordan and Pippen. Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin.

The story of these partnerships have shaped our world. But there is something every single one of these has in common. There are accolades, history is made, and in some way these partners change the world, but then comes the break. No matter how close, connected, or successful, breakup seems inevitable. The band breaks up, the friendship falls out, the complexity of the mission fractures otherwise ideal partnerships. Things break. The world is broken, and we are broken, so breaking inevitably comes.

How about in the church? How about among Christians? Do things in the church every break? What about in Christian leadership?

Is your Christian life or church story filled with breaks? Loose ends? Mine is. If only... if only it could be like it was in the early church. If only we could live that perfect church life, that idyllic story of gospel mission with no relational complication.

READ Acts 15:36-41

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. ⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

I. Sometimes relationships fall apart. (36-39a)

1) This is NOT a doctrinal issue.

2) This is NOT a sin issue.

3) This is NOT a simple issue.

1) This is a REAL issue.

Acts 9:26-28 And 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. ²⁷ But 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. ²⁸ So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.

2) This is a PERSONAL issue.

3) This is a WORK issue.

Kent Hughes “Our judgment goes with Paul, but our hearts go with Barnabas”

RE-READ Acts 15:39b-41

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.
⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

II. When relationship breaks, God’s mission continues. (39b-41)

Commended: to entrust for care or preservation, give over, commit.

HI: The Lord’s grace redeems the breaks.

Conclusion:

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),”

And in his final letter to the church, just before his death, Paul writes, “Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. 2 Timothy 4:11