CAMPUS
BIBLE CHURCH

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Pastor Wil Staley

"Broken Ships, Different Shores"

Acts 15:36-41

Acts: The Unstoppable Gospel

Intro: God uses broken people and imperfect ministry partnerships to advance His kingdom.

Acts 15:36-41 – "After some days Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.' Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along, who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches."

I. <u>The Proposal: Shepherding Heart</u>

Acts 15:36 – "After some days Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us return and <u>visit</u> the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.'"

"visit" – *episkeptomai* – in the Greek. It speaks of care and looking after.

Starting a church or ministry is a sprint, but sustaining it is a marathon.

II. <u>The Problem: Clashing Perspectives</u>

Acts 15:37-38 – Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along, who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

Acts 13:13 – "Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem."

Individuals are often "let go" because the task they are expected to be able to do, does not match their gifts, talents, or skills.

Deeply committed leaders can experience severe friction and clashing perspectives over strategy, accountability, and past track records.

Acts 9:27 – "But <u>Barnabas</u> took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus."

III. <u>The Reality: Conflict Among Leaders</u>

Acts 15:39a – "And there occurred such a <u>sharp disagreement</u> that they separated from one another…"

"sharp disagreement" – *paroxysmos* – in the Greek. It indicates a harsh, violent collision of convictions.

John 17:22-23 – "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."

Despite our human failure, Jesus prayed for unity so that a divided, dark world can witness the undeniable love of God through our oneness.

IV. <u>The Result: Multiplication Through Division</u>

Acts 15:39b-41 – "and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches."

<u>Biological Parallel</u>

- <u>(Mitosis):</u> a living cell builds tension and divides down the middle to grow rather than suffocating as a bloated blob
- <u>(Antioch):</u> a hard split doubled the missionary footprint

God's sovereign blueprint works through broken people and imperfect partnerships.

Conclusion: Who was right?

Is Paul being too strict, or is Barnabas being too soft?

"Paul looked at people & asked 'What can they do for God's work?' while Barnabas looked at people & asked 'What can God's work do for them?'" – Warren Wiersbe

2 Timothy 4:11 – "Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service."

Our hope ultimately is in Jesus, who never compromised the standards or got distracted from the mission, yet absorbed our failure, called us by name, & restored us when we deserted Him.

<u>FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:</u>

1. Reflecting on ministry care, what are some of the challenges with cultivating genuine, long-term relational care for the people around you?
2. Can you share a time when you experienced a sharp disagreement over strategy or leadership? How did you balance truth/accountability with grace/restoration?
3. How have you experienced a painful setback or closing door in your own life that ultimately redirected you toward where God wanted you?
4. Who is someone in your life that might need a "Barnabas" right now to help restore them or give them a second chance?
5. Where do you need God's grace today – whether dealing with a painful relational split, recovering from being "sidelined" or "fired", or trying to extend a second chance to someone who let you down?

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