

Acts of Jesus – part 13

When I say the name Joseph in conjunction with the Bible, who do you think of?also Joseph of Arimathia, but there is one more Joseph who is a major player in the N.T. and in the early church...who is he?

Chances aren't good that you would know this person by the name Joseph...you would know him better by his nickname: **Barnabas.**

How many of you go by a nickname?: Bill,Stinky (she was a girl), Red (my dad).

--Nicknames aren't new--among the Jews, someone might receive a nickname to describe some character trait.

--They would start out by calling them "son" and then "son of" --- like James and John were called "sons of thunder" --- **Joseph** was called "**son of encouragement**"

1. We are going to be taking a look at why he got this nickname.

I wonder, if our church family gave you a nickname what would it be?

--First, let me give you the recipe for a sour Christian experience and church life: Come to church for yourself, think only of yourself, gather spiritual things solely to expend on yourself.

--The Dead Sea is dead because it only takes and never gives---Dead Sea Christian is no different

--We've got to be about giving ourselves away to keep the living water flowing in us.

--When a pastor makes a statement like that it is usually followed by some exhortation to get involved in a particular ministry and I'm going to do the same except the particular ministry I want you to get involved in is not typical.

--The particular ministry I want you get involved in is called the "**Open eyed Ministry**" which is simply a ministry in which you keep your eyes open.

--If you'll keep your eyes opened to people and their needs, you'll be amazed at the ministries you'll find to be involved in.

2. What got Joseph the name Barnabas was the fact that he constantly had his eyes and his hands open to help those in need.

--We are first introduced to him in the minutes of the early church in Jerusalem. **Acts 4:32-37**

--He had his eyes open,

"There are lots of needy people here: Jews from other countries apprehended by the Gospel, widows without relatives, Jews who lost their source of income because they've been kicked out of Jewish society because of their stand for Christ." "I have excess property I'm not using...why not sell it and convert it into an eternal estate?"

--What we do with our possessions says much about our relationship with the Lord.

The next place we see Barnabas in Scripture we again see him with his eyes open.

--In Chapter 9 of Acts we read of the incredible conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus.

--Saul was of course a horrible persecutor of believers prior to his conversion and believers were quite reluctant to let him enter their ranks. **Acts 9:26**

--But Barnabas instead of seeing a murderer he saw through what caused fear and skepticism in others and saw someone who needed mercy and a friend. **Acts 9:27-28**

--Who believed in you when others would have written you off?

--Who are you currently believing or investing in today whom others would like to write off?

--Got to keep your eyes open!!

The third place we come across Barnabas in Acts he again demonstrates the need for this Opened-eyed ministry.

--In Acts 11, Barnabas is sent by the church in Jerusalem to investigate reports of a new church that has been started in Antioch and they send Barnabas.

--He found God moving in great ways in Antioch and applied himself there so that the ministry there flourished: [Acts 11:23-24](#)

--But then he does something not many preachers would do [Acts 11:25](#).

--God is blessing his ministry and with his eyes open he immediately says, “[who can I share this blessing with?](#)”

--Paul didn't just get blessed—he advanced to into a position of prominence beyond Barnabas!!

--When things are going well for us we need to immediately think of others we can share our success with.

--You're on the inside of church i. e. – you know everybody and are enjoying our community, then look around for those you can take with you—introduce them to people you know – take them into you friendships.

--Successful in ministry?—who can you mentor?

--Walked long with the Lord? -- who can you encourage to hang in there and give away your success to?

--Have a happy marriage and family find another you can encourage share your success with.

A final place we find Barnabas he gives us yet another lesson about keeping our eyes open:

--On Paul and Barnabas' first missionary trip they take a long a young man named John Mark, but when they reached Pamphylia John Mark left the group and went back home.

--Several years later, when they are about to embark on another missionary trip, Barnabas wants to give John Mark another chance. [Acts 15:37-39](#)

--It goes without saying that we need to forgive people who wrong us, but often times we need to give them not just forgiveness but a second chance.

--How do we treat those who fail? Who fall into sin?

--Do we stand by them and restore them or do we shoot our wounded?

--John Mark turned out to be the writer of the gospel of Mark and even Paul later decided that Barnabas was right about Mark: [II Tim. 4:11](#)

There are people all around us who need someone who will help them restore their vision and usefulness.

--**It will require** us to keep **our eyes open!!**

Are your eyes open to the needs around you?

Do you come to church not just to get but to give?

If your church gave you a nickname, what would it be?