The Week of August 21, 2022
The "Martyr" or the Encourager
Elijah vs Barnabas
Conversation Guide

This Week's Take-Aways

- **I engage in the missionary task wherever I am:** (Matthew 28:18-20) Through both my words and actions, I engage in gospel conversations with those around me. I take the gospel around the world by going, give, pray and send others
- **I place God's priorities above my own:** (Matthew 6:33) I will place God's priorities as described in the Bible ahead of my own.

Intro Questions

- Think of someone you know that "plays the martyr." (DO NOT name names or make eye contact).
    - What are their characteristics?
    - How do they treat you?
    - Do you like being around them?
- Who is your #1 encourager?
    - What are their characteristics?
    - How do they treat you?
    - Do you like being around them?

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The Martyr: Elijah

1 Kings 19:1-18

Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don't make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!"

Then Elijah became afraid and immediately ran for his life. When he came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, but he went on a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. He said, "I have had enough! Lord , take my life, for I'm no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree.

Suddenly, an angel touched him. The angel told him, "Get up and eat." Then he looked, and there at his head was a loaf of bread baked over hot stones, and a jug of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. Then the angel of the Lord returned for a second time and touched him. He said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. He entered a cave there and spent the night.

Suddenly, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life."

Then he said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the Lord 's presence."

At that moment, the Lord passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the Lord , but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Suddenly, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

"I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies," he replied, "but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they're looking for me to take my life."

- Do you know what happened right before this passage? Skim chapter 18 if you need.
- What were Elijah's complaints? List them out.
    - How do these complaints compare to how God had been moving and using him just days before?
    - How was Elijah playing the martyr? What does that phrase mean?
- Did God really not know where Elijah was? Why do you think He asked Elijah where he was multiple times?

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The Encourager: Barnabas

Acts 4:36-37

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus by birth, the one the apostles called Barnabas (which is translated Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 11:19–26 (ESV)

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When 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, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and 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 live up to his nickname? What actions did he take that showed him to be an encourager?

Acts 15:36-41

After some time had passed, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit the brothers and sisters in every town where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they're doing." Barnabas wanted to take along John who was called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take along this man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone on with them to the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed off to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and departed, after being commended by the brothers and sisters to the grace of the Lord. He traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

- How does Barnabas serve as an encourager in this passage?
- Is being an encourager always easy?
- How did Barnabas's faith fuel his gift of encouragement?

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1 Thessalonians 5:8-22

But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled and put on the armor of faith and love, and a helmet of the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.

Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to give recognition to those who labor among you and lead you in the Lord and admonish you, and to regard them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we exhort you, brothers and sisters: warn those who are idle, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See to it that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all. Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Don't stifle the Spirit. Don't despise prophecies, but test all things. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil.

- List all the ways we should encourage each other given in this passage.

Philippians 2:1-4

If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, make my joy complete by thinking the same way, having the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.

- What is the source of our encouragement? Is it our good nature? Or something more?

Next Steps

- Who do you know that needs encouragement now? Who is your John-Mark?
    - How can you serve and encourage them this week? Don't just think about it- do it!
- Memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing*) and apply it every chance you get.

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