

Sermon Notes: June 9th
Scripture Readings...Luke 5: 27-32, Acts 4: 32-37

OUR MOST BASIC NEED...it is our most basic human need and the one thing we all have in common: we need encouragement. With it, we thrive; without it, we give up and quit too soon. Encouragement isn't flattery, advice giving, or just making others feel better about their lives. In the New Test, it means to put heart/life in" By encouraging, we put heart/life in others; we build them up. We find good in them, the hidden potential that they may not know that they have. In Acts, we meet a man who put heart/life into the Early Church, Barnabas. After selling land to support the Church, he got pinned with a nickname "Barnabas, son of encouragement" If ever a name fit the person, it was Barnabas who brought out the best in others. He saw the hidden potential that they didn't see in themselves.

LOOKING FOR THE GOOD...Jesus found good in unlikely people: sinners, beggars, lepers, Zaccheus, a woman caught in adultery. He even called Levi, a tax collector who collaborated with Rome, to join his team. He found the best in people because he was looking for it. Are we looking for the good in others? Not always! Why? Because we often see other people not as they are, but as we are. Other people need us to find the good in them; the bad they already know all too well.

HIS TRAIL THROUGH ACTS...if we follow Barnabas' trail in Acts, he pops up in tense situations when his presence is most needed. A humble man, Barnabas always kept his ego in check. He stood by Paul when others were skeptical of his come-to-Jesus conversion. How could a former killer of Christians switch sides? Then, the Early Church got hit with a crisis: most new converts were GENTILES, non-jews. This created anxiety in the Mother church in Jerusalem. When they needed someone to go check it out, they sent Barnabas. What he found took his breath away: God was at work. Barnabas didn't view it as a threat but as a blessing.

BREAKING UP A TEAM...even encouragers like Barnabas have limits. Paul was once his assistant; over time they switched roles. They were a good team till it blew up over a rift a young recruit named John Mark who bailed on a Mission trip. Barnabas found him and asked Paul to give Mark a 2nd chance, but Paul refused. They parted company. Paul wouldn't have been the man he became if it weren't for Barnabas.