

Acts 11:19-23

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[0 : 00] So we've seen the need for encouragement, and last week we looked at the practice of encouragement. This evening what I want to do is look at a kind of flesh and blood example, an example of encouragement. The best example I think we have in the New Testament is that of Barnabas.

Medical students, you've looked at your textbooks, and you've lectures, but then it comes to the point where you've got to get on the ward, and you see real life examples of what you've learnt in the classroom and in their books. I imagine that's quite thrilling. And we've looked at the theory of encouragement, and now I want to see that encouragement is embodied in a living human being. He's introduced there in Acts 4 verse 36. Can you see that? Joseph, Acts chapter 4 and verse 36. That's Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas, which means son of encouragement, a Levite, a native of Cyprus. Barnabas was a cousin of John Mark, we know that in Colossians chapter 4 and verse 10. And the early church met for prayer in the home of John Mark's mother in Jerusalem. Mary. Barnabas had relatives in Jerusalem, and his name was Joseph. But no one knows him by Joseph, do they? Are they knowing by his nickname? That's quite reassuring, the New Testament nicknames. And that name was attached to him by the apostles, because of the man he was and the way he lived. And it means a son of encouragement. When the Jews spoke of the son of someone, and they met all his character, and was summed up in that word. It was as if they were saying, this man's father and mother are encouragement. Wherever he went, whatever he did, he was Mr. Encouragement.

He was always encouraging people. And this man, Joseph, became known as the encourager. Now I wondered about how did you do this? Do we list these virtues? Do we classify them? But I think that the easiest way is to look at kind of six references in the New Testament to who Barnabas was. It's not a particularly neat way of instructing a sermon, but I hope to leave with it. These aren't all the references to Barnabas, but I think they are the main ones. The first one is in Acts chapter 4, verse 37. Barnabas sold a field that belonged to him, and he brought the money, and he laid it at the apostles' feet. So that's the introduction. I'm just encouraging. He sells his land, he donates the money to the church, and this is the context.

I'm sure you know, in the early church there's this tremendous outburst of love and generosity. We're told about it in Acts chapter 4, verse 32. Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. Occasionally you hear that the early church practiced a kind of rudimentary form of communism. That what we're being told is that Christians all had a giant sale, they put out everything that they had, they realized all the proceeds, and they put all the money into a common pot, so that all the possessions were merged into one. I think that's a misunderstanding. I don't think that's what the early church did at all.

I think they did something prudent, practical, and sensible. Look at Ephesians 34. There was not a needy person among them. For as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold, and they laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. They sold them, they brought the proceeds, and they laid it at the apostles' feet. Now all those mirrors are what is called iterative, perfected, I'm sure you knew. I didn't even know that from the beginning of this. We'll go there soon.

[4 : 03] And we all know what that is. This is what they are. That when a need arose, when occasion demanded, a member of the church would sell some of his property and help a brother and sister in time of need. And then again, perhaps there would be a further occasion, another crisis.

And there would be a young widow, maybe with a family, with no property or money, and again on that occasion, a member of the church would sell a land or a house or give the money as it was needed. And the apostles would give it in the case of need. The NIV is a better translation. It says, from time to time, those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet. From time to time. They were ready to give out everything they possessed if it was needed. And in this context, Barnabas is an outstanding instance. And I think he's meant to contrast this to the Ammonias and Sapphira in the next chapter. Do you remember, they were, well, of the appearance, so religious, didn't they? They say, we've sold this house, they bring the money in a kind of massive charity check. But they're hypocritical, unselfish and dishonest. Their pretense of Christian love is contrasted, I think, with Barnabas, who sells his property, gives all the money to the apostles for them to use. In other words, Barnabas is not self-protective.

That's the first thing the Bible tells us about him. He is able to face personal loss for the sake of others. He's willing to impoverish himself in order to help his brothers and sisters in need. And we saw last week, didn't we, that is an essential quality of an encourager.

But it's not an easy thing. It's not something shallow or trivial. We must be prepared to be givers. You must be prepared to give. To give to other people. Time is so precious, consistent. Your time. Your time that you might have liked to keep for yourself. To give your energy. To helping other people when you're feeling tired. And you would far rather rest to make yourself available. To help other people. To lose. Sometimes. As we'll see later.

Sometimes to face loss, embarrassment, misunderstanding. And you're attempt to help other people. It's costly and it's demanding. An encourager cannot be selfish. The encourager cannot be self-protective.

[6 : 32] And if we're serious about being encouragers, we have to be prepared, don't we, for God's pruning knife. You know the pruning knife that you prune your branches? That God prunes something that we may feel is ours. And I have got the right to keep it. But we have to surrender that right gladly for the greater good to help someone else. Let's turn to the second reference.

It's on your sheet. Acts chapter 9 verse 26. When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples. That's the apostle Paul. When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him. Not believing that he really was a disciple.

But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and how the Lord had spoken to him. And how in Damascus Paul had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them. And moved about freely.

Freely in Jerusalem. Speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. It's one of the most significant moments in the New Testament. Saul of Tarsus has been converted. And he returns through the mother church to Jerusalem. And he wants to join the church. And the disciples, understandably and naturally, are terrified. And they are cautious. And they are suspicious. And Katie, they want nothing to do with this man. So remember, here is the great persecutor of the church. He tells us that he had some of the Christians in Jerusalem put to death. He was responsible for the murder of husbands and sons and fathers. Of some of these Christians in Jerusalem. And now their murderer wants to join the fellowship. And this is interesting that to the end of his life, Paul had such a burden for the Jewish, for the Jerusalem church. Wherever he went. You see that, don't you? He's collecting money for them. And praying for them. And urging the Gentile churches. Remember the saints in Jerusalem. And I'm sure there's a personal element in that, isn't there? I'm sure there was a burden and a grief on Paul's heart. And so he knew why some of those families were poor. He had made them poor. He'd removed the breadwinner.

[8 : 50] And to his dying day, he tried in some way to make up for the wrong that he'd done. But in any case, the church wanted something to do with him. Except Barnabas. But Barnabas took him. And brought him to the apostles. It's like an even more poignant expression, isn't it? In Acts chapter 9 verse 17. Just come with me. It's a little kind of detail but it's alright. Chapter 9 verse 17. Two little words there. Which are incredibly moving.

I don't know if you've picked that up. There's a Saul is blinded sitting in a room in Tarsus. This is the man who's the terror of the Christians. And God speaks to a teenage disciple called Alonais. And he says, I want you to go and meet with Saul of Tarsus. And speak with him.

And Saul is in the room. He's blind. He's repentant. He's broken hearted. He thinks of what he's done. He's done the evil, the murder, the slaughter, the threats. How he has fought against Jesus

Christ. And perhaps he knows that there's a believer coming to see him.

And how will this believer behave towards him? What will be the first words Saul of Tarsus ever hears from the lips of Christian? And Ammonius comes into the room and says, Acts 9 verse 17. Brother Saul. That's the grace of God, isn't it? Brother Saul to the murderer.

What must that word must have meant to Saul of Tarsus? He calls me brother. Oh, he's coming here to kill him. He calls me brother. And Barnabas is the same. He receives Saul. Let's note a couple of things. He's open minded. He did not react instantly like other Christians. Barnabas is willing to listen to what Paul has to say. He's able to explain what happened to Saul. He's seen the Lord on the road. Christ has spoken to him. He's preached boldly in the name of Jesus. He's spent time with Paul. He has been unprejudiced and open minded and open hearted. He is troubled to take time with Saul. He's a discerning man. He sees great potential with Saul. This suspect, isolated, lonely man with a very bad track record. And Barnabas sees his gifts, his energy, his passion, and all these how they could be used for the Lord. He's not naive. Some Christians are very naive, aren't they?

[11 : 20] They're easily taken in. They're imposed upon. They're deluded. But Barnabas is not naive. But he does see the reality of his Christian experience. He sees the marks of grace. And change. He sees the true potential in people, in this person, and he's courageous.

It would be far safer, wouldn't it, and far easier, to Barnabas to join all the other Christians to stay clear of this man and to have nothing to do with him. But Barnabas takes it as a risk. And it was a risk to Barnabas. We're reading now, aren't we, two thousand years later. Put yourself back then. It was a risk, isn't it? The risk of sponsoring this man. Of going bail for him in the church. Saying, I believe in him. I think he's genuine.

And when I just stand with him. We say, can we, I think we can do this. I think we can say in human terms, what if there'd not been a Barnabas? Suppose the whole Jerusalem church had stayed clear of Saul and no one had anything to do with him. Suppose if he hadn't found any way into the Jerusalem church. How different his ministry would have been? And I think God is showing to us that if we're truly going to have the spirit of Barnabas, we will be ready to listen. We will be ready to listen to that awkward and promising, difficult individual.

We'll be ready to befriend the outsider. We'll be ready to be patient with the person who might have strange views and very incomplete knowledge. We'll be ready to try and help them fit into the group. We'll not always be concerned with playing it absolutely safe. And I know we're a Presbyterian church. And the problem with Presbyterians is we so easily get into the mentality of don't make any mistakes. And don't take a step out of line and make sure that your back is covered. Make sure that you're not exposed in any way. And we become terrified of making mistakes. Let me say to you the biggest mistake in Christian ministry is to do nothing.

The biggest mistake in God's service is to run no risks. To attempt nothing for God. And I think there are times when we have to run these risks with people. We need wisdom, don't we, to pray earnestly that we'll be able to discern the work of how he's spreading people, to see the potential of someone, of that pharaoh or that girl who is so argumentative and every time you talk to them they give you a hard time about the gospel. But think about that person. Think about if the Lord was to win them. And all that ability and all that incisiveness and all that intellect used for God. Think of the guy in your office. He's a great, he's great fun.

[14 : 00] Everybody loves him. He's very popular. His jokes are inappropriate but he's really bright. And you think he'd never be interested. But just suppose the Lord were to change him. Think about what he could do with young people. Or the girl who is slightly wild. She's a flirt.

She's always out clubbing. It's easy to say, isn't it, but she's shallow and superficial. But think of the attractiveness of that person. Think if that personality was transformed by grace, what could it be done for the work of God's kingdom? The other Christians, they looked at Saul and they said, oh no, no, no. It's better not to risk it. Barnabas says, I will go and talk with him. I will go and listen to what he says. I will spend time with him. And as he did, he was convinced that there'd be the work of God. Number three, Acts 11 verses 19 to 26. There's been a dramatic work of God in Antioch. And many from outside the church have been won to the Lord Jesus.

The city of Antioch is the third largest city in the ancient world after Rome and Alexandria. It's a city at this time of about half a million people. It's a city with street lighting, with paving stones. It's complex. It's sophisticated. It's a metropolis. And amongst this kind of sophisticated Greek speakers, a whole load of people have been won for the Lord. And the church, the mother church,

years about it in Jerusalem, and they're not sure what to think. And they're not sure whether it's a good thing or a bad thing. So try to put yourself in their position.

Let's say a man at O'Brentford, they begin in a few weeks time, and David George goes down to do a book table in Brentford on a Saturday, with Pete Lofthouse and Sue and the gang. And they ring Stuart up and they say, we've had a great morning. And we've had a really great morning. We've been out witnessing, and 250 people have been converted. And they will be coming to church tomorrow, tomorrow morning. Now, I'd be very interested to see what the reaction would be. One would be great joy, but one would be you'll be swamped. Suddenly you've got any background. You haven't got any teaching. I know a church in Tasmania about 15 years ago that saw about 120 students converted over an academic year. She'd been praying for students for years, but actually when they came in, they couldn't handle it. They couldn't handle it. A very funny story about that, that I can't tell, but I'll see what I do to them, I'll tell you. But people come into church with no shoes on. And the people who've been in church for years, they just couldn't handle it. They'd prayed for it for years. These people didn't have any background, they didn't have any teaching. They had all their own ideas.

They were mixed up with the world. Communion, church, discipline was an absolute nightmare. And it's been a tick, it's a lot of time to sort that out. And these conservative Jewish Christians, they hear of this work of God among the Gentiles, but is it sound?

[17:12] Is it biblical? Is it genuine? They're good questions. Are they truly Christians? Calvin says this, he says, Satan's cunning, cunning. Satan's cunning is well known as soon as he sees a door open for the gospel, he writes by all sorts of means to corrupt what is pure.

And so that the result, the result is that along with the teaching of Christ, various heresies proliferate. Calvin is saying there's nothing easier than for growing corn to be ruined in the early stages of growth. When there is a work of God, there's often a degree of disorder and confusion. I think you can look through church history and see those. But actually, when there's a genuine work of God, there's a mixture of things which maybe aren't quite right and things which we shouldn't defend. And gradually they sort themselves out. Growth is always messy. It is always messy. Even the little bit of growth we've known as a church, I think you can point to some of the messiness of that. There's an untidy period. And so the church was assigned to send someone to investigate. Well, who do you send? And they said Barnabas.

And you can imagine coming the anxiety amongst the young Christians in Antioch. One of the big boys is coming down. Presbytery have sent one of their own. One of the top men. He's heard all the great preachers. He's possibly seen the blessing on the great day of the Pentecost, the phenomenal growth of the church. And now he's coming down to our little work. What would you think when he arrives? And we're told that Barnabas came. Barnabas came and he saw the grace of God and he was glad. And he encouraged them all. That with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. Now, I have no doubt that there were many, many imperfections. And those new Christians would have been very raw and very immature. And they had much to learn. But Barnabas saw the evidence of God's grace and he was glad and he was encouraged. And we're not told he found fault. And we're not told that he started criticizing and saying, well, that is wrong and that is wrong and you need to reform. His initial contact with them was gladness. And encouragement and positive reinforcement. Now, I am not saying that unsound teaching doesn't matter. Don't think that. I'm not saying that we should be woolly minded. I am not saying that we should be foolishly enthusiastic and undiscerning. But we do need to have the mentality which will start by encouraging what is good rather than criticizing what is bad. And are you not in danger sometimes of being a fault finder? You show me a work of God and I'll show you what's wrong with it.

Isn't that what's spreading us sometimes? We know that there are things wrong. But that's not the way to put them right. We don't need to be glad at what's been achieved or do we always feel like criticizing what has been accomplished. So let me ask you, you hear a sermon, what do you focus on? What has helped you or the flaws? You go to a church, what do you focus on? The weaknesses or the strengths? You see a bucket of water on your way to the crash and it's what do you see? Half full or half empty. Barnabas was encouraging and he was glad. And where we see the evidence of the real grace of God we can be glad even if it's not our party, even if it's not our group, even if it's something that would not line up exactly where we would line up. When we hear of many genuine conversions in the church which may not be dominantly sound, can we honestly

say praise God and thank God for that and I glorify you Father for your work. Or do we say, God why don't you work with those people over there? Why don't you work with us? We are far sounder. Well that's one of the reasons why

God doesn't work with us. And Acts tells us as a result of this, look at verse 24, a great number of people were added to the church, weren't they? Acts chapter 11, a great number of Acts chapter 11 and verse 25.

[21 : 39] So Barnabas went to Tarsus, he took the sword and when he found him, oh that's not right, it's the next one it says, um, Acts 13, where am I? I've got lots of my notes. Yeah, Acts 13, verse 25 and, um, verse 6.

That's not right either. Anyway, a great number of people rallied to the Lord, take my word for it, alright? Somebody can point out the verse 24.

24. 11. 11. 24. At least someone's listening. Yeah. That's right. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul and when he found him, they brought him to Antioch and for a whole year they met with the church and told a great many people and in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

It's the verse before, isn't it? A great number of rabbits to the Lord. It's amazing. It's not all, anyway. It's positive, isn't it? He has an impact. Now, just notice in the verses I did just read to you which, he doesn't leave them in their immaturity.

[22 : 48] Can you see that? He doesn't just say, oh carry on with all the things that are wrong, he does it tactfully and wisely and positively. He takes Paul with them and they teach for a year. but notice, just notice the huge influence of this man in two crises, when Paul wanted to join the Jerusalem church and in the deputation to Antioch Barnabas plays this pivotal role in the history of the New Testament church an encourager an encourager is far more significant than you imagine you think it's a peripheral thing so that you may think there are the missionaries aren't there there are the church planters, there are the preachers there are the elders and there are the people that can't do much else they're simply the encouragers but actually you look through the New Testament and Barnabas is key and number 4, Acts 13 verse 9 and you may say that's a really strange reference Acts 13 verse 9 it says this but Saul, who was called Paul filled with the Holy Spirit looked intently at him it's the point in the New Testament where Paul takes over the leadership and from now on

Paul is not called Saul anymore Saul is called Paul so just notice the change look at verse 2 look at verse 2 there were in the church of Antioch prophets and teachers Barnabas and Simeon in the end can you see verse 2 set apart from me Barnabas and Saul can you notice who's in the leader's role and then look at verse 7 he was with the proconsul so she is Paul a man of intelligence who summoned Barnabas and Paul again Barnabas is in the driving seat isn't he but look at verse 13 now Paul and his companions from now on it's Paul and his party and Barnabas has merged as he into the supporting group it's the moment the protege surpasses the teacher who befriended him here's the moment when the one who is encouraged outstrips the encourager and he begins to leave him far behind in usefulness and they move out of the Gentile world to Cyprus

Saul's asses is far more qualified by birth and educating him so from now on Paul takes over that so I like encouraging people I like encouraging people because they owe something to me I like people who owe something to me I like people who depend on me and look up to me and admire me I'm not so keen on people who expect me to admire that I wonder why that is we can feel good can't we have having people under us if you like it feeds our ego but when they outstrip us when we realise that the younger Christian is far more gifted than we are when we see someone that we helped now the Lord is using in a way that he's never used us well that's what happened to Barnabas that's what happened to this encourager and how easy it would have been to be jealous and say wait a minute I brought this man into the church where has all this Paul and his party come from but this is what has happened

God is tactfully warning us of the realities of encouragement that we will see God willing some of us some of whom we knew as spiritual toddlers going far beyond us and of that we should be glad we should be ready for that Calvin again says no matter whom the Lord has used to make his name illustrious the faithful servants of Christ ought to follow the example of Barnabas and rejoice at the success of the gospel perhaps the best way is for those who are children when we think of our children what do we want for our children we want our children to go beyond us don't we nothing would make your parents happier children than for you to kind of surpass them we pray that our children will be far better Christians than us don't we we pray that our children will be far more used

of the Lord than we are we pray that our children will far surpass us in gifts and graces we won't feel jealous of that will we our nose won't be put out of joint I hope not we will feel nothing but gladness and thankfulness to God and that is the way that we have to learn to feel about people whom the Lord uses us to help and so if they go to Brentford and 350 join in a few weeks and it becomes a kind of marriage we've got to be thrilled haven't we and we can trickle down with them that's alright the story is all positive

Galatians chapter 2 Galatians chapter 2 and we see the frailty of Barnabas you remember the incident Paul was being a hand job and he's Peter was being a hand job and he's really been happy to eat with Gentiles there he's disregarded the Jewish food laws but then a party of friends come down from Jerusalem kind of ultra-conservatives right wing of the church very extreme and then they come to Peter and Peter withdraws and he separates himself he fears those in the circumcision party and the rest of the Jews and he plays the hypocrites Galatians chapter 2 verse 11 when Kephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned for certain men came from James he was eating with the Gentiles but when they came he drew back and he separated himself from the circumcision party and the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him so that even

[28 : 33] Barnabas was led astray by the hypocrisy the details don't matter so much to us tonight the chronology of that passage is quite difficult but clearly Barnabas is indefensibly in the wrong he shouldn't have done what he did it was hypocritical he knew better than that he was being manipulated by public opinion in the church and you can hear Paul's surprise that he had pain in that little expression even Barnabas I would have expected better from Barnabas now I'm not excusing what he did I'm simply reminding you of something that I find enormously encouraging tonight and that is that we don't have to be perfect to be an encourager that is used by God we say don't we in our church circles that we don't believe in sinless perfection I hope we don't and yet the way we react when somebody points out our faults it's almost as if we did believe in sinless perfection and we can get very edgy can't we when people point out our faults and very irate when someone comes and puts their finger on a sore point we get very defensive even angry and many many Christians struggle because they think

I've got to be perfect and sometimes people who seem perfect they're not actually the most encouraging people to be around are they and again I'm not excusing Barnabas mistaken imperfection he shouldn't have done it he was wrong but there's something encouragingly human about it he made a wrong decision under pressure hands up if you've never made a wrong decision no hands up we all do it we do it in the church and here's a man and perhaps it's part of his quality as an encourager he's made his own share of mistakes and I'm not using this as a apology for his sin at all but there are times when it is of the utmost encouragement to put your arm around someone and say look I've done what you did I've made that mistake and I understand and the Lord forgave me and I was able to start again that is wonderfully encouraging isn't it and people felt close to Barnabas because of that last thing last one Acts 15 36-39 and it's the time when Paul and Barnabas have a bitter angry quarrel about Barnabas his relative

John Mark and John Mark has fallen by the wayside he went on the first missionary journey and he quit he'd given up he'd gone home and they're about to set out on the second missionary journey and Barnabas wants to take John Mark with him again and Paul doesn't and Barnabas urges that he be taken and Paul refuses Luke says the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another they split up here were mates here were friends close friends they'd walked over a thousand miles together in the cause of Christ they'd been stoned together by stones they'd preached together they'd suffered together they loved each other they were indebted to each other and yet those two Christians they have a violent quarrel the word literally is a very very bitter quarrel it's the word for a fever you have a high point of a fever there was an angry feverish shouty quarrel between two godly Christian men what was it about was it about doctrine was it about theology was it about the substance of the faith let's be honest it was about a minor detail of practical missionary strategy and they reached such rage with each other that they actually split up and they couldn't agree it's quite interesting to read the commentators on this verse

Howard Marshall is a New Testament scholar says the reason for the contention between Paul and Barnabas has seemed so trivial that some deeper cause has been suspected two Christians couldn't fall out could they on something as trivial as this there must be something deeper there must be something theological well let me say to you when Christians fall out it is almost invariably

over a trivial detail disagreements amongst Christians and sadly there are many of the estrangements coldness separation breaking of fellowship they are not often about the great pillars of faith they are not often about great doctrine they are normally about something practical some matter of common sense I think it's wise to go this way I think it needs to go the other way it's not important and Satan uses that and we have to be very very careful things escalate under control although something very small can divide Christians who was right in this controversy it's very hard to say the Bible doesn't go his clear direction it says Paul was commended by the church it doesn't actually say that about Barnabas but again was Paul too harsh or was he too critical of John Mark was Barnabas too soft it's possible to say it's hard to contradict somebody who you've been befriended with and it must have been hard for Barnabas I brought this man into the church I was his friend when no one else was I took the risk and how does he repay me he repays me by quarrelling with me and following a different course that we can't assume we can't assume that the people we befriend and help and give ourselves to and sacrifice ourselves for we can't assume that they will always be our friends that they will always stand with us that they'll always be grateful for us that they'll always agree with us and follow our lead we have to face the possibility don't we in church life that as we open ourselves up to people they may let us down and they'll take a different path a different path of doctrine I find that hard a different path of understanding christian service we've got to be ready for that we've got to be willing to let them go we can't claim that they have to be dependent on us that is a wrong thing we can't say you owe me and after all

[34 : 28] I've done for you this is the way you repay me he wasn't to help people just to help people knowing that they might disagree with you in the future are you still willing to help still willing to be thankful for them and it's wonderful in the new testament we see how wonderfully God overruled the situation that the quarrel between Paul and Barnabas led to two missionary groups instead of one and sometimes it is far better for Christians to go their own way when they cannot agree than for there to be a split W.M.

Taylor says the quarrel may have been the making of John Mark he says Paul's disapproval might have broken Mark's spirit Barnabas partiality might have made him soft but together together that is the beauty of the body of Christ I think on every eldership you want to have good cops and bad cops you want to have people who are soft hearted and generous to a fault than others who are maybe not so much you need both you see both in the New Testament and at the end of Paul's ministry the split and the friendship has been restored here is the path of a typical encourager in the Christian life as we see in pilgrims progress there are ups and downs there are joys and sorrows there are successes and failures and in many ways to be an encourager is a very only human life it's an easy calling to be an encourager but it is very very significant I don't think that there is a more attractive more likeable more winsome figure in the New Testament church than Barnabas and Luke says this is the secret of it all he was a good man full of the Holy Spirit and of faith may God give us in this church many encouragers we're going to sing to Christ