

Key Men at Key Times

Acts 9:26-43 – Evening Service – January 31, 2010

II Timothy 4:3

Proverbs 3:6

➤ **The _____ of a Key Man**

Acts 9:26-29

What impresses us about Barnabas

1. He believed that God was able to change great _____ into _____
2. He manifested great _____ to vouch for Paul
3. Barnabas was highly _____

Proverbs 10:11, 20, 31, 32

Proverbs 11:23; 16:13; 28:1

➤ **The _____ of a Key Man**

Acts 9:29-31

Philippians 1:12-18

5 things happened after Paul left

1ST – There was a _____ in persecution

2ND – The church _____
Ephesians 4:15-16

3RD – They were not _____ in their spirituality

II Chronicles 16:9

4TH – They experienced supernatural _____ after persecution

5TH – They _____ in _____

Key Men At Key Times

Acts 9:26-43 – Evening Service – January 31, 2010

Intro: The name of the book we are studying is known as the Acts of the Apostles. I think it may be more accurately entitled ... the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the agency of the Apostles. The book of Acts gives us the history of God's working in the first century. But there is an important application from all this as well.

Application

We are looking at the **HISTORY** of the working of the Holy Spirit ... but it should also be on our mind what the Holy Spirit is doing **CURRENTLY**.

Baptism's are one of the ways in which we hear what the Holy Spirit has done in the life of people in a current setting. Let's always be mindful that the Holy Spirit is still very active today ... and be acknowledging how He is working in your life and in the lives of others. One of my greatest joys as a pastor is to hear testimony of God's transforming work in the lives of our church family. And as I just said – baptisms are at the top of my joy-producing list. God is in the business of changing people. And the change He works and does is via the work of the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 3:6

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Transition: No one's life better describes II Corinthians 5:17 than Saul of Tarsus

II Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Salvation results in a changed life. If you do not see this changed life – you better examine yourself – examine to see if the Spirit of Christ dwells in you for if He doesn't – salvation has not occurred.

Review: A twist of experience ... Saul the **HUNTER** becomes Saul the **HUNTED**

But Saul's conversion was received with skepticism by the Jerusalem church. And we can understand why. He was the scariest – most feared person among believers. He was the equivalent of the Nazi Gestapo. No one in their right mind would trust the Gestapo. And trusting Saul, knowing his history and mission of persecution, would keep him from readily being trusted. God would have to bridge this mistrust with a special-saint - Barnabas

➤ **The ACTION of a Key Man**

God's man for the hour – Barnabas

Acts 9:26-27

When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

9:27 But Barnabas 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.

Barnabas was a super-saint!

- ✓ He bravely took the time to hear Paul's story and check him out.
- ✓ Afterwards he boldly put his arms around Saul
- ✓ He brings Saul to the apostles ... and says ... this man is the real thing. He's genuinely saved
- ✓ He shared Paul's salvation story ... and gave it credit

What impresses us about Barnabas

1. He believed that God was able to change great **SINNERS** into **SUPER-SAINTS**

Application:

Never under-estimate the power of God in saving the unlikely.

2. He manifested great **COURAGE** to vouch for Paul

He did not back down even though just about everyone else was opposed to a loving welcome and quick acceptance of Paul

He was willing to support a new believer though he knew that not all professing believers were genuine believers

3. Barnabas was highly **CREDIBLE** – highly esteemed – a righteous man

He was highly esteemed by the church. Barnabas was a leader among leaders. When he spoke – the church listened. He was a righteous man and recognized as a righteous man. And the Bible has much to say about the counsel of a righteous man.

Proverbs 10:11

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life ...

Proverbs 10:20

The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver ...

Proverbs 10:31

The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom ...

Proverbs 10:32

The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable ...

Proverbs 11:23

The desire of the righteous is only good ...

Proverbs 16:13

Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and he who speaks right is loved.

Proverbs 28:1

The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion.

ALL OF THESE THINGS ARE SEEN IN BARNABAS ... and in the eyes of the early church.

Transition: Once Barnabas defended Paul and vouched for him ... Paul was welcomed into the fellowship. And the church there quickly got to see Paul in action.

Acts 9:28-29a

And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord.

9:29a And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews ...

Having seen him in action further convinced the church in Jerusalem that Barnabas was right. Paul was their brother in Christ. Paul's former enemies are now his closest friends ... but his former friends now become his most hated enemy.

➤ **The ABSENCE of a Key Man**

Acts 9:29

And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death.

9:30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

Observation: At times the church loses a key leader ... and growth follows.

John Calvin

"The genuineness of {Saul's} conversion is shown by the fact that, having been himself a persecutor, he can now endure persecution with calmness."

Acts 9:31

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Undoubtedly Paul rejoiced when he heard that the church flourished in his absence. And it probably made him realize that the Spirit's work is not dependent upon its most gifted leaders. There was another time when the gospel spread when Paul was off the scene for a while

Philippians 1:12-18

Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

1:13 so that **my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known** throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

1:14 and that **most of the brethren**, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, **have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.**

1:15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;

1:16 the latter do it out of love, ...

1:17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

Transition: We do not hear from Saul for a while ... but the gospel continues to spread and the church continues to grow strong.

My friends ... God knows when to cause the winds of adversity to blow and when to make them cease. Apparently this lull in resistance to the gospel allowed the church a time to get a needed break from persecution. It was a time to repair and strengthen their sails before the next storm.

5 things happened after Paul left

Acts 9:31

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

1ST – There was a **LULL** in persecution

“the church ... enjoyed peace” – for a season!

Application

- ✓ God knows exactly when it is time to give us a break from the struggles of life
- ✓ Since he is the One who must approve our trials ... He knows when we need a break and when we need a test.

This pastor’s perspective

An absence of persecution in the church has been a great blessing to the church in America – and a curse. The church has gotten lazy and complacent in the absence of persecution in the U.S.A. But I also believe things are changing our in society with persecution on the rise. Cheer up ... things are going to get worse in our nation... is my take on things.

2ND – The church **MATURED**

“the church ... being built up”

Ephesians 4:15-16

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

3RD – They were not **COMPLACENT** in their spirituality

“going on in the fear of the Lord”

If you fear the Lord ...
You’re mindful of Him constantly

II Chronicles 16:9

“For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

When you fear the Lord ... your heart is completely His. He’s on the throne of your life. You constantly seek His approval and His glory in your life.

4TH – They experienced supernatural **COMFORT** after persecution

The Holy Spirit provided this. Persecution was great for a season. But God brought about a lull in persecution. The storm passed for a season.

“in the comfort of the Holy Spirit”

5TH – They **GREW** in **NUMBER**

Acts 9:31

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, *it continued to increase.*

This pastor’s perspective:

Sometimes health is visible in the church when the church grows numerically. Unfortunately all kinds of weak churches and questionable ministries are growing rapidly.

II Timothy 4:3

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires

Numerical growth in the church is encouraging when the people are doing what we see in Acts 2:46-47.