Balcony People
(Series: Reimagining Church; Message Twenty-Four)
Acts 11:19-30

A. Joseph Barnabas and Edward Kimball are soul mates
B. Both had a servant's heart; both were bridge builders

BARNABAS

A. We first meet Joseph Barnabas in Acts 4:36

"There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the
name, Barnabas, which means, 'son of encouragement.' He sold a field that
belonged to him, then brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet." (4:36)

1. He was born in Cyprus; he is a Hellenist (Greek-speaking Jew)
2. Joseph was nicknamed Barnabas (son of encouragement) by the disciples
3. Barnabas is deeply committed to Christ and His Church

B. We meet Barnabas a second time in Acts 9 shortly after Saul's conversion

"When he came to Jerusalem, [Saul] tried to join the disciples, but they were afraid of
him, not believing he was really a disciple. Barnabas took him and brought him to
the disciples. He told them, how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord...and how in
Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus." (9:26-27)

C. He shows up in Acts 11 after the Cornelius story and Gentile controversy

1. Sending Barnabas to Syria-Antioch is further evidence of the church's
   willingness to embrace Gentiles and to engage the whole world
   "He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith and a great number of people
   were brought to the Lord." (11:24)
2. Barnabas goes to find Saul in Tarsus and brings him to serve in Antioch

D. Acts 13 is Paul's first missionary journey

1. In 13:13, John Mark, leaves; in 15:36, John Mark wants to come back
2. Barnabas recommends a second chance; an argument ensues; Paul leaves
   with Silas; Barnabas goes with John Mark
3. Eventually Paul comes around to realize what Barnabas is doing!
   "Only Luke is with me. Get (John) Mark and bring him with you because he is
   useful in my ministry." (2 Timothy 4:11)

THE BOTTOM LINE

A. Barnabas reflects Jesus who came not to be served but to serve
B. They are labeled Christians: "In Antioch the disciples were first called Christians"

1. It was meant to be derogatory; but the disciples took it as a compliment!
2. We desperately need to rediscover the centrality of Jesus Christ in our
   lives and in His Church; we need to live into the name we've been given
C. Jesus continues to watch us from his balcony at His Father's right hand

1. He longs for us to embrace the grace of His sacrifice, to be transformed
   into a fully devoted follower, and to live into His vision for His Church
2. He considers us worth the investment of His life and death
D. We can count the seeds in an apple; only God can count the apples in a seed