

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 the, 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)

BALCONY PEOPLE

A. A "balcony person" is someone who cheers you on as you run the race

1. They don't need to be on the ground floor, or be the center of attention

2. We need "balcony people" because the world is full of "basement people"

3. Who are the balcony people in your life? Who are you a balcony person to?

B. What exactly does a balcony person, "a son of encouragement", look like?

1. A balcony person sees the grace of God where ever they look

"When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God (i.e., his goodness poured out into a life), he was glad..." (Acts 11:23)

2. A balcony person believes one can change into a fully devoted follower

3. A balcony person provides comfort in the midst of crisis, storms, and failures

4. A balcony person has a better vision of you than you often have of yourself

"I urge [lit. exhort] you, in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God which is your spiritual service." (Romans 12:1)

5. A balcony person lives by the inversion principle (i.e., downward mobility)

6. A balcony person believes you are worth their investment

7. Balcony people encourage us simply by the way they live their lives

a. They think differently; they speak differently; they live differently

b. They are willing to risk everything for the sake of Jesus...

C. The Church desperately needs more balcony people

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