

Paul & Barnabas Divided

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Acts chapter 15, we'll begin reading at verse 22 and read through the end of the chapter. Remember, this is coming right in the middle of, or right near the end of the Jerusalem council.

Acts chapter 15, verse 22. Then the apostles and elders with the whole church decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

They chose Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. With them, they sent the following letter. The apostles and elders, your brothers, to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, greetings.

We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements.

[1:16] You are to abstain from food sacrifice to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell. The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with a blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them.

But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord. Sometime later, Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preach the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.

Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them. But Paul did not think it wise to take him because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.

[2:21] They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. Some words go together.

We think of salt and pepper. We can think of the music world. And by this, I'm going to date myself and my respondents.

But if you can think of who goes with the first name, you shout it out. Ferranti and Teicher. Sonny and Cher.

I'm running out of names. I've got to look at my notes. Anyway, you get the idea.

[3:23] My mind is shot. I'll bring it to you when I get there. The point is, when I say Paul, who do you think of?

I'm sorry? Oh, do you? For several weeks, many weeks, we've been able to follow this mission team around as they've gone with the gospel and to see the wonderful things God has done.

And it was Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas. I didn't count the number of times. Or Saul and Barnabas. Or Barnabas and Paul and Barnabas and Saul.

But they go together, don't they? To hear of one, you expect the other to be there. And we come today to one of the saddest pages in the book of Acts.

Because we see the sharp disagreement and the division and parting of ways between Paul and Barnabas.

[4:31] Now, unity in the family is something very precious to God the Father. It's something the Lord Jesus prayed for on the eve of his crucifixion.

It's something the Holy Spirit creates in the hearts of his people. Unity is something the scriptures command. It's something the church celebrated in their worship in the Old Testament.

As we will, as we close our service today from Psalm 33. How good and how pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity. Unity is something that commends the power of the gospel.

What is so strong as to overcome our inbred self-centeredness, our differences, our prejudices, and to bring us to live together in loving unity.

That's the gospel. Unity commends the gospel to this fractured world. And therefore, unity is something that greatly glorifies God before a watching world.

[5:35] And so for all these reasons and many more, unity is something that we are to make every effort to keep. Maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, Paul writes.

And for the same reasons, any breach in unity is something to be lamented and repented of and prayed against and watched against and worked against.

There is much both within us and without us to destroy this sweet unity that God has given us here at Grace Fellowship Church.

And so may the Lord Jesus use this portion, these few verses of his word, to sanctify and to equip us to glorify his name by living together, continuing to live together in this sweet unity that the Spirit has created among us.

Well, we ask the question, what was it that led to the division of Paul and Barnabas? So we come, first of all, to the overall plan agreed upon.

[6:50] Now, you remember, as we had read for us in Acts 15, that the Judaizers had come from Jerusalem up to Antioch, saying that Gentiles, it was primarily a Gentile church, and they came up and said, you Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the ceremonial laws of Moses in order to be saved.

And Paul and Barnabas rightly saw this as an attack upon the gospel of free grace, justification by faith alone, in Christ alone, that Christ plus circumcision is no gospel at all.

To add anything to Christ is to destroy the saving gospel of Christ. Because if you are circumcised and think that by your circumcision, it will help one iota in your salvation, Paul says, Christ will profit you nothing.

So we find Paul and Barnabas standing firm, arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder, standing against that legalizing heir up at Antioch.

And they saw its importance was so great that they traveled some 300 miles south to Jerusalem to take it to the other living apostles and the leaders of the church in Jerusalem, that they might make a clear proclamation as to what is the true gospel and must the Gentiles be circumcised in order to become, to be saved.

[8:20] Well, there in Jerusalem at that council, the gospel was preserved. And now Jews and Gentiles alike might be told, whoever you are, wherever you live, whatever you have done, come just as you are, trusting in the Lord Jesus and what he's done for sinners, and you will be saved.

Nothing of your own works is to be added to him. And so now the gospel, defended, can go out into all the world, and it's come to us.

We thank God that it has been defended by those who stood up for that truth of the gospel and did not sell it short. Well, after Paul and Barnabas left Jerusalem and went back up to Antioch with the good news, they continued there in Antioch, preaching and teaching the word of God.

Now, if we could have the map, you see where they were. They were down here for the council.

They went back here to Antioch, some 300 miles.

Now, they're there in the church, primarily a Gentile church there in Antioch. And verse 36 tells us, Some time later, Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preach the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.

[9:47] Remember their first trip? They went all the way there and then all the way back. Now, let's retrace our steps and see how the brothers are doing. Now, how many of you parents dropped off your freshman child at college and promptly forgot about them until you saw them at Christmas?

It just doesn't happen, does it? No sooner did you drive off than you were wondering how they're doing, and you might have texted them or called them right away to find out, How are you doing?

Well, Mom, you were just here an hour ago. But that's the concern of a mother for her daughter, of a father for his son. Well, if that's you, you know something of Paul's deep concern for the well-being of his spiritual children.

He carried them on his heart. He cared what might be happening to them. And in 2 Corinthians 11, Paul lists all the things that he suffered in his gospel ministry.

It's a long list. He was stoned and left for dead, shipwrecked. All those things, whipped, beaten, nearly starved. All these things he lists. And at the bottom of them all, he says, Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

[11:05] You feel the weight of it? On top of all the rest, I have this pressure pushing on me constantly. My concern for the churches.

They live in a pagan world with powerful forces at work to pull them away from Jesus. To pull them back to the world.

To forsake him. There's a busy devil. There's false teachers. There's an alluring world. There's their own indwelling sin. And these baby Christians are so vulnerable.

And it filled him with such intense concern that sometimes he could take no more. He had to sit down and write a letter to them. The Galatian churches founded on this missionary journey in this region here.

He writes to them. And in Galatians chapter 4, he says to them, My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.

[12:07] How I wish I could be with you now and change my tone because I am perplexed about you. I'm again in the pains of childbirth.

Mothers go through a lot of pain in bringing a child into this world. And that was especially the case before pain blocking medications were available. There are machines now that simulate the sensation of labor pains.

For any of you guys who think you're so tough. And I watched as these guys were hooked up with electrodes on their abs. And little electrical charges were given just to tighten the muscle and make it contract.

And it was no big deal, of course, until the charges got stronger and longer and closer, imitating labor pains. And what it shows is that it's enough to make grown men cry.

Now, most of you ladies would be happy if your labor lasted only as long as these men lasted. Most of them lasted two hours.

[13:16] And then they cried for mercy. That's the image that Paul draws up to share with the Corinthians. Something of his concern for them.

His spiritual children. Very dear to him. And he says, you have thrown me right back into those labor pains for you. I'm not satisfied just that when I was there, you made a profession of faith. I want to see you established in Christ. I want to see you firmly planted on the gospel. Not swerving. And I will not be satisfied until I see Christ formed in you.

That's what he says. I'm again in the pains of childbirth till Christ is formed in you. I want to see Jesus' love in you. I want to see his peace, his joy, his self-control, his gentleness, his meekness. I want to see Christ formed in you. And so we see something of his concern then for his spiritual children.

[14:22] And sometimes that concern got so intense that he says, he writes, I had no peace of mind until he would learn how they were doing.

And so sometimes he sent off a co-worker. Better to be left without a helper in the gospel ministry if he can go and fetch some information and see how my children are doing. Other times he would go himself.

And that's the case here in the plan that he proposes to Barnabas. Let's make a second missionary journey and let's go back and visit all the brothers and see how they are doing.

Now, this concern of Paul for his converts, these converts made on the first journey, was no less shared by Barnabas, his teammate.

Yes, let's do it. Barnabas is all in. They're in agreement about the overall plan. But as they say, the devil is in the details.

[15:25] And so we come to the second point. The particular point of disagreement. The point of disagreement was not the overall plan. Let's go back and visit them and see how they're doing and strengthen them.

They both agreed on that. No, the particular point of disagreement was over a believer named John who was also called Mark. And so we might refer to him as John Mark.

Now, what do we know about this man? Well, the first mention he has in Acts is chapter 12 and verse 12. You remember it was the night that an angel sprang Peter free from the prison in Jerusalem.

And as Peter's walking outside and through Jerusalem and the angel disappears and he realizes he's just been brought out. This is no dream. I am alive and I'm free.

It says that he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

[16 : 24] And so we learned the first thing about Mark in Acts is that it's his mother's house where the folks were having their prayer meeting. It was a popular meeting place for the church in Jerusalem where some of them would gather.

And then when the mainly Gentile church at Antioch learned of a coming famine, they decided to send an offering to their brothers living in Judea to ease their need.

And so they decided to send it with Paul and Barnabas. So they sent the offering again from Antioch down to Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas.

And then when their mission was complete, we read that John was with them. I'm sorry. When Paul and Barnabas, Acts 12, 25, had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

So Mark was from Jerusalem and they take him back to the church at Antioch. Well, then came chapter 13.

[17 : 39] And you remember the church at Antioch, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, sent Paul and Barnabas out on the first missionary journey. And chapter 13 and verse 5 says that John was with them as their helper.

So John goes with them and John's with them as they head off on their missionary journey as their helper. Well, they went first to Barnabas' homeland, the island of Cyprus.

You see that? And from its port in Paphos, they went up to Perga in Pamphylia. And there we read in chapter 13 and verse 13, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.

Now, we read right over that. I didn't comment on it and we would think nothing of it. It sounds innocent enough, right? Okay, so they got here and John went back to Jerusalem.

Did he have business there to tend to? Did Paul and Barnabas send him back for someone or something?

[18 : 56] We're just not told. So Paul and Barnabas continued on their missionary journey and then retraced their steps and came all the way back to the home church in Antioch.

Now, it's sometime later and they desire to go back to revisit the converts in each town. Notice in our text, chapter 15, 37, Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them.

But Paul did not think it wise to take him because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. It's only now in chapter 15, at the end of 15, that we learn that John Mark's leaving them did not sit well with Paul.

In fact, he calls it desertion. Now, that's what a soldier does in battle. He's at his post and for some reason or other, either he's scared of the enemy or he misses mom's cooking.

He leaves his post and he goes home. He deserts. And that's the picture Paul draws. Now, that's the cause of disagreement.

[20 : 13] Should we take John Mark with us back on this second missionary journey or shall we not? Now, we need to see that both men had good reasons for their opinions.

Barnabas had good reasons for taking him with them. We find in Colossians that John Mark was his cousin. Now, I'm not accusing Barnabas of out-and-out nepotism, but perhaps it did play somewhat into Barnabas wanting to take him along again.

Maybe he was more apt to see the promising qualities of John Mark because he was his cousin.

Maybe it made him more understanding of his failings and more hopeful for the best in his cousin.

And isn't that in itself right in line with the character of this man, Barnabas? What was the name the apostles gave him? Son of encouragement.

He had a different name. They named him Barnabas, son of encouragement. Why? Because he was always so quick to give encouragement to the weak.

[21:22] Wherever he went, he always left people behind more encouraged than when he found them. And so they said, you need a new name, man. Your new name is Barnabas. And so here he is.

Here's the encourager. And he's not wanting to discourage his cousin John Mark, who may have deeply felt his failure and may be crushed now if he's rejected from going on the next journey. Maybe Barnabas thinks John Mark has learned his lesson. He's grown up. Time has passed. He's now ready to go again with us. Barnabas. It's just Barnabas, isn't it, at his best. He tended to give people the benefit of the doubt. You remember that with Saul himself, don't you, when he was first converted, when he was converted. And the first visit he made to Jerusalem. And the church at Jerusalem kept him at arm's length. This is the guy who'd been murdering their brothers and sisters. And they were afraid of him.

[22:26] They thought, he's not a true Christian and follower of Jesus. Maybe he's a sheep in, a wolf in sheep's clothing, and he's only coming close to the flock so that he can destroy us.

And so they said, no, no, we're not accepting. But Barnabas went out on a limb for him. Barnabas took him and listened to his testimony and prayed with him and fellowshiped with him. And then he went to bat for him. He took him to the apostles in Jerusalem and said, this guy's legit. He's the real thing. Christ met him and has changed him. He is no longer the same Saul of Tarsus. He has a new heart. He's now preaching the gospel he once tried to destroy. Oh, yes. That was Barnabas at his best. Always encouraging.

Always being the one there to seek the better out of people. To see the better in people. And so now, even though John Mark, yes, had deserted them on their first trip, Barnabas sincerely thinks he's learned his lesson and deserves a second chance.

[23:40] After all, did not Peter get a second chance after he denied the Lord Jesus? And so he says, let's take him along on this journey.

Well, Paul has other concerns. And he has good reasons for not taking him along. He seems to have held John Mark to a higher standard than his teammate Barnabas.

He sincerely believes that his desertion on the first trip disqualified him from going on the second trip. I mean, they had just barely got started.

Okay? They went to the island of Cyprus. And then, as soon as they land in mainland Asia, he goes home to Jerusalem.

So he's barely got his uniform dirty. And he's gone. And Paul is thinking about that.

[24:43] He had not gone with them to the work. The greater part of the work was yet in front of them. They had barely met opposition to that point.

Did just the threat of it scare him off? Paul felt that the call of the gospel work had not gripped the heart of John Mark like it needed to.

That other considerations had weighed more heavily upon him so that he had deserted them before the real burden of the work had begun. He quit and went home. Such that Paul thinks it unwise to take him along.

He failed us once in a crucial time. He left us without his help. We took him along as our helper. We needed help. And he bailed on us. We spent that rest of the mission without his help.

What if he did it again? We can't afford to get out in the heat of the battle and have our helper desert us. We can't trust him. He's unfaithful.

[25:46] Is there not a proverb that says, Proverbs 25, 19, like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble? The house is on fire.

And you say, No problem. I'll just run out. But you've got a lame foot. And you can't. You're in sad shape if in time of trouble you've got a lame foot.

Or when you need to eat a big meal, a steak, you've got a bad tooth. You're in big trouble. Or if you're out there on a mission and your helper is unfaithful.

Paul gets it. The work would suffer without our needed helper. He'd also be a bad example to all those new converts. If they saw him turn and run in the face of opposition and danger.

Can you see that there are good reasons on both sides? You're ready to agree with Barnabas?

Yeah, he should go. And then we hear something of Paul's thought. No, he shouldn't go. Someone suggested perhaps Paul thought more about what was best for the mission.

[26:52] Whereas Barnabas thought more about what was best for John Mark. That may have been true. But it just as likely may have not been true. Perhaps Paul's concern was as much for

John Mark's good as for the mission's good.

If he had deserted us before we even hit the really hard times. The stiff persecution. How will he be able to handle what we can expect to meet with as we go back through these places where they wanted to kill us?

Where they stoned me and left me for dead. And they sent men wanting to kill us that ran us out of town. How is John Mark going to handle that kind of trial? It may be just too much for him to bear. It might be trying him beyond what he can bear. Putting too much on his plate too soon. He's not ready for this yet. It could ruin him for good.

He needs to grow a bit. Gain stronger faith. Greater stickability. So it wouldn't be wise for his own good to take him on this trip. Now you see some of this is just speculation.

[28:07] We're just not told are we? But we know this much. That both men had their good reasons for their opinions. On whether to take him or leave him.

And we also know. That they both held their convictions so strongly that neither one of them backed down. Neither one was convinced by the other. And they continued to hold to their own opinion. Now the disagreement is rightly described as a sharp disagreement in our translation. Paroxysm is the English word.

It comes from the Greek. The word used may suggest that it had some bite to it. This disagreement. That there was a bit of heat behind it. I say it may suggest that. As both held their convictions strongly.

And neither would budge. Well we know it had to be a sharp disagreement. Just because of what happened next. And it leads us to our third point.

[29:10] The result of this sharp disagreement was a parting of company. Here's the sad words in verse 39. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company.

Paul and Barnabas. The dream team for evangelism. Friends for nearly 15 years. Worked together for 6 years. For the salvation of lost sinners.

For the building up of Christ's church. For the defense of the gospel. They were working hand in hand. Shoulder to shoulder. In sweet unison. Now separated.

It's almost unthinkable. It's Paul and Barnabas. It's Barnabas and Saul. It just sounds like that.

These two names. It's Simon and Garfunkel was the other name.

Thank you. Paul and Barnabas. Now broken apart. This team that belongs together.

[30:11] That works so well together. Is now broken apart. Over a sharp disagreement. Now I want to jump right away into the fourth point. Lessons for us. And the first lesson is that the best of men are but men at best.

I don't know who said it. I put it in quotes because it's not me. But it's true. That the best of men are but men at best. I'm thankful that Luke doesn't give us a whitewashed version of church history. You know. With all the snags and problems conveniently edited out. And all we see are the victories. None of the problems. Some biographies are like that.

Aren't they? They hide all the faults of our heroes. Not the word of God. It gives it to us straight. It presents men in their true colors. And so this sad incident between Paul and Barnabas.

Is included in scripture. For our instruction. It's here for us. That we not put our leaders up on a pedestal.

[31:19] And think more highly of them than we ought. That our expectation of spiritual blessing. Come not from them. But from their God. Who picks up such poor and pitiful instruments.

And uses them. For the salvation. And building up of his church. That we realize that the best of men. Are but men at best.

Fallen men. That's what they are. They're fallen men. And they're yet imperfectly redeemed men. Yes they're redeemed. But imperfectly so. Didn't we just sing it? Take away the love of sinning.

I have to pray that. I haven't got out of my heart. All the love of sinning yet. Neither did Paul. Neither did Barnabas. We are imperfectly redeemed men. Men with flaws. And faults remaining. And sins to confess. And to mortify. And sometimes men's faults.

[32:23] Lie so close to their greatest strengths. It is a strength. To have strongly held convictions. To not be wishy-washy. Blown about by every wind of doctrine.

And opinion. But those strongly held convictions. Have some weaknesses. That could very easily. Pull them down.

So here are two of the world's best men. The son of encouragement. Without equal.

Barnabas. And the apostle who wrote a third of our New Testaments. Paul. Both eminently godly men. And yet as they looked at the same situation.

To take Barnabas. Or to leave him. They came to different conclusions. Indeed. To opposite conclusions. Such a sharp disagreement.

[33:23] That they parted ways over it. Now we might have hoped better from such men. And yet there you have it. And one of the lessons is that we might not glory in men. What are men after all?

But those who sow. And water. But it's God who gives the increase. So we might not glory in men. But in Jesus Christ.

Who's able to build his church. Using flawed and imperfect instruments. You know the Bible doesn't take sides. It just leaves us hanging there.

So it's hard for us from a distance then. To try to tell who is in the wrong here. Perhaps both. Could it be that both men held to their opinion too strongly.

And express them too warmly. That both were too unwilling to consider the other viewpoint as better than their own. Or to at least set aside their own.

[34:21] To defer to the other. Even as they held to their own conviction. I mean after all this was not a matter of giving up an essential doctrine. Of the faith.

It was not one of those black and white matters. Just how much time is needed. If someone has failed. How much time does he need to prove himself faithful.

Before we give him kingdom responsibilities again. There's no chapter and verse on that one. It just requires a lot of wisdom. It requires a lot of wisdom. And it's something that not all good men will agree upon.

And let me tell you those kinds of decisions come up all the time at Grace Fellowship Church. They're not essential doctrines.

They're not black and white issues. And we have to make a decision. These differences are painful reminders of the remaining darkness of our understandings.

[35:33] That even the greatest minds are imperfect. No one. No one sees 2020. Yet. We still look through a glass darkly.

So. We will have differences of opinion on a thousand such matters as these. Even strong differences of opinion. So let's not be surprised when such differences surface among them.

Let's rather expect them. We find it here. And such sharp disagreements by the best of friends. Paul and Barnabas. And so.

On such non-essentials. We ought to give each other liberty. We ought to give each other the freedom to agree to disagree. And when we do differ.

Let's be careful to maintain love and mutual respect. And when you must disagree with your brother or sister. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart. Since as members of one body.

[36:34] You were called to peace. And be thankful. And when you agree to disagree. Let brotherly love continue. That will show this loveless world.

That we're disciples. Of the most loving person who ever lived. The Lord Jesus Christ. Who loved me and gave himself for me. A guilty, vile, and wretched sinner.

Who had major disagreements with him. Not minor, essential disagreements with him. Like who deserves most to be served and lived for.

Christ or me. And I said me. You hit the road. Essential differences. Like whose way is the best way.

Yours Lord Jesus or mine. And I said mine. Great differences. And yet he loved me. And he gave himself for me. And he saved me.

[37:39] And now he says. John it's by this. That all men will know. That you are my disciple. If you have love for one another. What's the mark.

That we're disciples. Of the most loving person. That's ever lived. It's love for one another. In the body of Christ. It's not by this all men will know.

You're my disciples. If you agree with one another. Over every matter. No it's. If you. Don't let your disagreements. Stop.

The flow of your love for one another. That's the mark. It is possible to love one another. Even while we disagree with each other.

Even strongly disagree with each other. And that love does not have its source in us. But comes directly from God. Who is love. From Christ himself. And the fruit of his Holy Spirit.

[38:38] So this second lesson for us then. Is in essentials. Unity. In non-essentials. Liberty. But in all things.

Charity. Now we might wish that Paul and Barnabas. Would have come to some compromise. But what would have that looked like? Taking half of John Mark with them.

And leaving the other half home. That would be difficult. What could have they done to compromise? It was a different. A difficult situation. It was a sticky wicket.

Indeed. And I'm not saying that it was a nasty split. Between Paul and Barnabas. With loss of temper. And angry words flying. There simply is not enough evidence.

To prove that. It rather seems that they agreed to disagree. And it does seem that they agreed.

[39:33] To divide. Since they couldn't agree. Over what to do with John Mark. And that they also agreed. On the division of the work. For what happens. Barnabas.

Leaves with John Mark. And goes back to Cyprus. That's his homeland. That's where he grew up. And by the way. That's where the less persecution was. And Paul.

Takes. Silas. And goes back this way. Over by land. To cover these. Places. Where the stiffest. Opposition was.

But there was a division of the work. Seemingly it was worked out between them. An agreement. To go their different ways. There was plenty of work. For both.

To be active. So what do we see? We see divisions have separated the very closest friends. You know some. Even as I say that.

[40:32] I'm sure. Of people who are the closest of friends. And they are. No longer. They divided. Paul and Barnabas were best friends.

And again. We don't know the degree of this. This fallout. But. But they had been joined at the hip. The very first time they met. And Barnabas saw something in this.

Saw. This converted saw. And he. He said. He's a kindred spirit with me. He was ready to. To risk. His own reputation.

To identify with Paul. He went out on a limb for him. Causing Robertson the commentator. To say. Paul owed more to Barnabas.

Than to any other man on the earth. So those tight. Bonds of friendship. Were forged between them. Very early. Barnabas too. Early on.

[41:27] Saw. The. Lord's hand of blessing. Upon Paul. As he preached. He saw that the Lord's hand. Was on him. In a unique way. There was none like this. Apostle Paul.

So willing to be spent. To spend and be spent. In the work. So mighty. In the scriptures. So driven. For the glory. Of Jesus Christ. That he had sought.

To destroy. And they'd been through. So much together. They found themselves. In perfect harmony. In so many different issues. Issues.

Like what is the gospel. And do we have to have Gentiles. Be circumcised. And all the rest. They. They. They stood up. For free grace. Together. They. They traveled together.

They taught together. They suffered together. They prayed together. They triumphed together. Together. They marveled at God's. Work. Done. In deep. Gentile.

[42:21] Territory. Where Satan. Had had his sway. And yet in the end. It was the relatively little matter. Concerning John Mark. That divided them. And sent them off.

In different directions. Isn't that often the way it is? So much. Of the important stuff. In agreement. But one smaller thing.

Indifference. And it becomes the dividing thing. That should make us yearn for the day. When we will all see clearly. When we will all see. And understand.

With 20-20 vision. Perfect harmony. Perfect peace. Perfect love. But until then.

In essentials. Unity. In non-essentials. Liberty. And in all things. Charity. The third point. This morning. The third lesson. Is that Satan rejoices. To see the church bogged down.

[43:15] In division. Wherever we find ourselves. In the book of Acts. We always need to pause. And say. How does this fit. Into the bigger picture. That Luke is portraying.

In the book of Acts. What is the big picture? It's the spiritual warfare. That's going on in the world. Jesus Christ. Is building his church. And Satan.

And his hellish crew. Are doing everything they can. To hinder him. To keep people. From coming to Jesus. To tear down. What Jesus is building up. That's the big story.

Line of Acts. Jesus has said. He would build his church. Will he? Or will Satan triumph? And here we have. Another chapter. In that.

Struggle. And we are not ignorant. Of Satan's devices. He's the great disturber. Of the peace. He loves dissension. And disorder. And it was he.

[44:13] Who introduced. Disorder. And dissension. Into God's. Peaceful world. And now seeks. To introduce. The same. In his church. And it's no mystery.

As to why. Why would Satan. Want to stir up. Disorder. And division. In the church. Because as long as. We're fighting. One another. We're not fighting him.

We're not fighting against. The kingdom of darkness. Our real enemy. And if he can keep us. Preoccupied. With internal matters. Well then the great commission. Invasion.

Of his kingdom. Comes to a standstill. So be sure of it. This is one of his strategies. To slow the work. Of evangelism. And the building up. Of Christ. Church.

Division. In the church. And it also invites. The world. To malign the gospel. To write it off. As impertinent. As unimpressive.

[45:08] Because. At the end of the day. They're no different. Than any of us. Look at them. Fighting. With each other. So let's not give the devil. A foothold.

At disturbing. The peace. Of Christ. Church. Let's grow. In the graces. That promote peace. Like humility. And gentleness. And meekness. And forbearance.

And love. And self-control. And let us not do Satan's work for him. By striving against one another. Rather. Let us strive together. For the work.

Of the gospel. The last lesson. What Satan means for evil. The Lord Jesus works for good. So here's Satan.

He hates this gospel team. Of Paul and Barnabas. He's had his kingdom invaded. He's had many of his people. Stolen right out from under his nose.

[46:04] By Jesus Christ. Through this team. And so he tries to break up. This gospel dream team. Of Paul and Barnabas. By way of disagreement. But his strategy backfired.

Because the result. Is two missionary teams. Instead of one. You see that in verse 39. Barnabas took Mark. And sailed for Cyprus.

Paul chose Silas. And left. Commended by the brothers. To the grace of God. The grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria. And Cilicia. Strengthening the churches. Two teams.

Now going in different directions. Doing twice the amount of work. It's another chapter in Jesus Christ. Building his church. Satan opposing.

But the gates of hell. Not being able to resist. And to withstand him. It's Jesus Christ the king. Thwarting the devil's plan.

[46:59] And fulfilling his own. Even using Satan's plan. To further his plan. What a victorious reigning. Sovereign savior.

We have over the church. That he can even use the faults. Of his servants. To advance his kingdom. And use the plan. Of Satan. To build his church.

The multiplying. Of gospel teams. For the salvation of sinners. And the building up of his church. But that's not all. What Satan means for evil.

The Lord Jesus works for good. And so. Through. Though Luke's account. Follows Paul's team. As we go on reading. In the book of Acts. In weeks to come. We're going to follow Paul's team.

As he goes back. And revisits these. We're not going to hear. About Barnabas. And. And his team. To Cyprus. And that should not be. Of any. Surprise to us.

[47:57] We don't hear about. Thomas. And Peter. And. And all the rest of the apostles. Either. And the ways that they were going. All over the world. With the gospel. It's just that Luke's. Account.

Follows. Paul. And not Barnabas. And not Peter. And. And all the rest of the apostles. And so. Though. Though.

That is true. This is not the last word. That we have on John Mark. The tenacious grace of God. Has more to write. On John Mark. And more to do.

In him. And through him. And this fallen. Gospel soldier. Is reclaimed. Even as Peter. Was reclaimed. And he does valuable. Work. In Christ's.

Kingdom. And in no small part. Because of the. Patient. Mentoring. Of his cousin. Barnabas. Isn't that something? Seven or eight years.

[48:53] After this division. Paul's in prison. He's writing to the Colossians. And. In verse 10. Of chapter 4. We find that Mark. The cousin. Of Barnabas. Is with him. Hmm.

He's with Paul. Whom he. Wholeheartedly. Commends. To the church. At Colossae. And tells them. Welcome him. If he comes. Around the same time. He writes his letter. To Philemon.

In which he refers. To Mark. As his fellow worker. Who is with him. And then. That touching. Last letter. Of Paul. To Timothy. Second Timothy.

Chapter 4. He's in chains. He's waiting execution. At the hands of. Roman Emperor Nero. 14 years. Had passed. Since the parting. Of ways. With Barnabas.

Over John Mark. And Paul writes. Only Luke. Is with me. He's writing. To Timothy. Only Luke. Is with me. Get Mark.

[49:49] And bring him. With you. Because. He is helpful. To me. In my ministry. He's useful. To me. In my ministry. You see.

Barnabas. His patient. Work. With his cousin. Had paid off. And here. Is Paul. Openly.

Acknowledging. That. Paul had long ago. Changed his opinion. Of Mark. Because Mark.

Had changed. His conduct. And had proven. Himself. Even to. The apostle Paul. To be a faithful servant. Of Christ. What a sweet ending. To Paul's life.

And to this sad event. That took place. 14 years earlier. The apostle Paul. Now longing. To have with him. The very man. That he once. Sharply.

Refused. To have with him. Mark. Did not remain. A sideline. Servant of the Lord. But it. Was now found. And even many years. Before this.

[50:43] The end of Paul's life. Was found to be useful. To Paul. A co-worker. With him. He was also useful. To Peter. As we find in Peter's first letter. Chapter 5. And verse 13. Whom Peter calls.

My son. And who. Also. Mark. Who also. Was to. To inspire. Be inspired.

By the Holy Spirit. To write. The second. Of our four gospels. Which we call. The gospel of Mark. Yes. We marvel again.

At what Christ can do. With misfits. With those who have failed. Whom he rebuilds. And restores. By his grace. Is that you? Take hope. In the savior. He.

He takes a fallen mark. And he makes him. Such a sweet servant. To his church. And to the salvation. Of sinners. He.

[51:37] He profitably served. Three of the primary leaders. Of the church. Of Jesus Christ. Barnabas. The apostle Paul. And the apostle Peter. And he gave.

To all of us. His gospel. That has been. The instrument. Of the salvation. Of thousands. Of people. Yes. The Lord Jesus. It's his triumph.

It's the wonder. Of his grace. There are no works. Like his. And so this second. Missionary journey. It seemed ready. To fizzle on the launch pad. But Jesus Christ.

Is too determined. To save sinners. And build his church. And so he worked. For good. What Satan. Meant. For evil. Well may the Lord. Help us. As a church.

Then. To treasure. The unity. Of the spirit. To pray. Hard. For it. To work. Hard. For it. To be growing. In the graces. That promote it. Let's not.

[52:32] Be Satan's helper. In sowing discord. And if you have sins. To confess. In this area. If you have divisions. To heal. People to visit. Grace.

To give. Commit. To doing so. Just now. A lost person. Do you see. The Lord Jesus. Is behind this story. He is so determined. To bring his gospel.

To needy sinners. Like you. That he will take. What Satan meant. To destroy. A gospel team. And he will multiply it. That this. Saving good news.

Could come to you. That whoever you are. Whatever you have done. If you will come to him. This morning. He will receive you. He will in no wise. Cast you out. Why should this not be the day.

Of your salvation. That will forever change. Your eternal destination. Jesus is ready. If you are. Just renounce your rebellion.

[53:28] Throw yourself into his arms. He receives. Sinners. He loves. To show mercy. Let's pray. We thank you Lord.

For this account. Of the troubles. That arose. Between Paul and Barnabas. We thank you. For the warnings. That it holds for us. We thank you. Most of all.

That it reveals. To us a savior. Who reigns as Lord. Over his church. And can take even. Our bumblyings. And our faults. And our failures.

And work them. For the greater glory. Of Christ. And the salvation. Of sinners. And the building up. Of his church. How we thank you. For the unity. You've given us. And we're reminded here. Though. That if. Paul and Barnabas. Could have such a sharp. Disagreement. As to part ways. That we too. Need so much. To be growing in grace.

[54 : 25] Growing in that spirit. And likeness of our savior. May he be formed in us. More this day. To your praise. To our good.

To your glory. Throughout the earth. We ask in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.