

PPT Title

## Paul & Barnabas

**Main Point:** Encourage one another to follow Jesus.

**Key Verse:** *So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.* - 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NLT

**Props:** Seven candles (with paper drip-guards or in glass containers), a lighter

### BACKGROUND/REVIEW



**Say:** Saul started out as a Pharisee. Saul wanted to please God, but he was completely wrong about how to do it. Saul did terrible things to the people who believed in Jesus. Saul believed that he was right to harm the believers (John 16:2). But then one day, Saul met Jesus! Jesus appeared to Saul when Saul was heading to Damascus to arrest more believers. When Jesus appeared in a blinding light, Saul finally believed the TRUTH that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah. Saul repented of his sins - he changed his heart and mind about the wrong things he had done - and he began to follow Jesus. Jesus gave Saul a new identity and a new name: Paul. Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit.



You can imagine that it took the believers a little while to get used to the idea that their greatest enemy was now one of them (Acts 9:26). There was one man who helped the believers to accept the truth that Saul was a follower of Jesus. The man's name is Barnabas.

### BARNABAS

**Say:** When you describe a person, you usually begin with the most important things first. If you were describing Leonardo di Vinci, you might start with, "He was a great artist." If you were describing Galileo, you would say, "He was a brilliant scientist." Let's look at the first words that the Bible speaks about Barnabas. After God sent the Holy Spirit to live inside of all believers, they were teaching about Jesus and proving His power by performing miracles. Many people were putting their faith in Jesus. All the believers helped each other and shared all that they had. No one had any needs because those who had money or food gave it to those who did not.



*For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed **Barnabas** (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.* - Acts 4:36-37 NLT

From this first mention of Barnabas, we learn several important things. We learn that he was generous. Just like Jesus, he put others before himself. When Barnabas sold his land, he didn't keep the money to buy what he wanted. He gave it to the apostles to share with the other believers. We see that his parents named him Joseph, but he was such an encourager that those who knew him started calling him by the nickname of Barnabas - Son of Encouragement.

**Application:** Does anyone here have a nickname? *Call on a few students to share their nicknames.* **Say:** Your parents gave you your name. But what if people started calling you a nickname based on the way you treated others? Think about that for a moment. What do you think your nickname might be then? *(If applicable, share positive nicknames of some of your students based on some behaviors you have witnessed: Caring, Sharing, Kindness. For example, you might say, "I could nickname Jacob, "Helpful," because he comes early every week to help me set up the classroom.)*

encourage =  
help others

**Say:** Barnabas' nickname was "Son of Encouragement." An encourager is a helper. An encourager helps others by giving them what they need or by speaking good words to them. **Encouragers always want others to do well.** In this case, Barnabas wanted the other believers to follow Jesus with all their heart (Acts 11:23-24). Everything he did and said was done to help others to follow Jesus.

**Application:** Think of a time when someone encouraged you. Maybe your mom or dad helped you learn to ride your bike, telling you that you could do it. Maybe a friend said that he liked one of your drawings, or maybe your teacher said she believed you could do well on a test. Encouragement can make all the difference for someone who is about to give up.

**Say:** I want to tell you a true story about a boy who grew up about 100 years ago. When he was a child, Walter loved to draw, though his parents did not really praise him for this. But Walter's aunt encouraged him by buying him drawing pads and pencils. Walter also had a neighbor, "Doc" Sherwood, who encouraged his talent. The neighbor "hired" Walter to draw pictures of his horse when Walter was only 7 years old. Doc Sherwood and his wife told Walter how wonderful his drawings were. Of course, you all know what became of **Walt Disney**. He grew up to bring us Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and a host of other characters, theme parks, and lots of fun. He won 26 Academy Awards for his beloved Disney cartoons and movie productions. A little encouragement can go a long way!

**Note:** Do not show  
this slide until  
speaker says name:



As believers, the most important thing we can encourage someone to do is **to follow Jesus**, just as Barnabas encouraged his friends to do. Encouragement is so important that the Bible actually commands that we do it.

*So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.* - 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NLT

Hebrews 3:13 says that by encouraging each other, we help keep one another out of the trap of sin. The Bible says that believers must meet together, like we do here at church, so we can encourage each other (Hebrews 10:25). We should encourage in good times and especially in difficult times.

### **BARNABAS SPEAKS UP FOR PAUL** (Acts 9:26-31)

**Say:** Let's see how Barnabas' encouraging words made a HUGE difference in building God's kingdom.



Paul had met Jesus on the way to Damascus. When Paul was filled with God's Holy Spirit, he preached boldly that Jesus is the Son of God. Barnabas saw and heard Paul's love for the Lord when Paul preached in Damascus. Paul's big change of heart made his preaching even more amazing. Many people were talking about Paul's teaching. The Jewish religious leaders in Damascus did not like this at all. They did not want people to follow Jesus. They planned to kill Paul, so Paul had to leave Damascus. He went to Jerusalem.

The believers in Jerusalem were in a difficult situation. When Paul came to town, they were afraid of him. This must have been a difficult time for Paul as well. How could he make the believers understand that he was now one of them? He was not going

to harm them. He had changed from the inside out!



*Barnabas took (Saul) to the apostles. He told them about Saul's journey. He said that Saul had seen the Lord. He told how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Barnabas also said that Saul had preached without fear in Jesus' name in Damascus.*

*So Saul stayed with the believers. He moved about freely in Jerusalem. He spoke boldly in the Lord's name. He talked and argued with Jews who followed Greek practices. But they tried to kill him. The other believers heard about this. They took Saul down to Caesarea. From there they sent him off to Tarsus.*

*Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. The Holy Spirit gave the church [believers] strength and boldness. **So they grew in numbers.** And they worshiped the Lord. - Acts 9:27-31*

Because of Barnabas' encouragement, speaking truth to the believers, the other believers accepted Paul. Paul spoke even more boldly, and the church grew in number.

### **PAUL & BARNABAS SENT OFF** (Acts 13)

**Say:** God's plan was that His kingdom would spread throughout the entire world, and God's plans always succeed! (Psalm 33:11) Does anyone remember what Jesus told the disciples about this right before He returned to heaven? It was our "key verse" two weeks ago. Jesus said:

#### **PPT Verse**

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem. You will be My witnesses in all Judea and Samaria. And you will be My witnesses from one end of the earth to the other. - Acts 1:8*



**Say:** Jesus said that first they would tell people about Him in the capitol city of Jerusalem, then the area around Jerusalem, then everywhere on earth. **Teacher:** Refer to map. (This is like saying they would begin by teaching in Atlanta, then they would go into all of Georgia, then they would go to every other country.) For the last several weeks, we have read about the believers preaching to the Jews in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was where the big Temple was, the city where Jesus was crucified and rose again. Most of the people who lived in Jerusalem were Jewish. Next, the disciples, such as Peter and John, told the truth about Jesus in the surrounding area of Judea and Samaria (the original Promised Land). This area was also full of Jewish people.

Now it was time for the good news to spread out - beyond Jerusalem, to the people who were not Jews, not descendants of Abraham. Part of God's BIG plan for Paul was that he would take the message of Jesus to those who were not Jewish (Acts 9:15).

**Ask:** Raise your hand if you are not Jewish. Aren't we glad that Paul listened and obeyed God?

**Say:** One day when the believers were worshipping and praying, the Holy Spirit spoke to them. He said it was time for Barnabas and Paul to go on a trip - a mission trip. The two men sailed to an island called Cyprus. John went along to help them. They traveled across the island, preaching about Jesus. One man, who was like a governor, wanted to hear Paul and Barnabas teach God's word. But the governor's helper was an evil man. He tried to keep the governor from believing the truth.



*Saul, also known as Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he looked the sorcerer in the eye. Then he said, "You son of the devil, full of every sort of deceit and fraud, and enemy of all that is good! Will you never stop perverting the true ways of the Lord? Watch now, for the Lord has laid his hand of punishment upon you, and you will be struck blind. You will not see the sunlight for some time." Instantly mist and darkness came over the man's eyes, and he began groping around begging for someone to take his hand and lead him. When the governor saw what had happened, he became a*

*believer, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord. - Acts 13:9-12 NLT*

Do you see how God gave Paul and Barnabas the power to do miracles so that those who saw it would come to know Him? From there, Paul and Barnabas traveled to another city, and another. They taught Jews and non-Jews. They told about God's promises to send a Savior. They explained that Jesus was the Savior.



*"Brothers, listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. Everyone who believes in Him is declared right with God - something the law of Moses could never do. - Acts 13:38-39*

**Say:** Wherever the two men traveled, the Holy Spirit gave them the power they needed to speak boldly about the Lord. The Lord allowed them to do many miracles to prove that they were speaking the truth (Acts 14:3). Many Jews and non-Jews believed the message of God's grace.



Sadly, some people did not believe (Matthew 13:3-9). The Jews who did not believe became so angry that they tried to kill Paul! (Acts 14:19) Even though they were threatened and attacked, Paul and Barnabas would not stop preaching the truth. When they were threatened, they went to the next town.

**Ask:** Do you remember the story of Joseph? His brothers threw him into a pit and sold him into slavery. Joseph was lied about, and sent to prison. But God used all of these terrible events for good in the end. God used Joseph to save millions of people from starving to death. Later, Joseph told his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people." (Genesis 50:20) It was the same way now with Paul and Barnabas. God used the plots and threats of non-believers to spread His truth (Genesis 50:20). When the two men were threatened, they left that city and went to the next city, and kept on spreading the truth of Jesus!

**Illustration:** Call up 6 adult volunteers (or 6 very mature student volunteers). Separate them into three pairs. Hand each one a candle. **Say:** We'll let this flame represent the truth about Jesus. Light your candle. Paul and Barnabas believed the truth about Jesus, and His Spirit was in them. Walk over to one pair of volunteers. Paul and Barnabas went to a town and preached boldly, by the power of the Holy Spirit. When those who heard them believed the truth, God gave them the Holy Spirit. Using your candle, light the first volunteer's candle. Then those people would tell others, and they believed. Have the first volunteer light the second volunteer's candle. So that city had the truth of the kingdom and it would continue to spread. Then, when Paul and Barnabas were threatened, God led them to the next city. Walk to second pair of volunteers. Again, they preached, and many people believed. Light the third volunteer's candle. And those people, filled with the Holy Spirit, could tell others. Have the third volunteer light the fourth volunteer's candle. Then God led Paul and Barnabas to the next city. Repeat candle lighting with last pair of volunteers. I could give each one of you a candle and by passing the flame from one to the next, we could light up this room in no time! And so the good news spread throughout the area around Jerusalem like wildfire! Thank your volunteers.



**Say:** The trip was GOOD, but it was not easy! No wonder God sent Barnabas along with Paul on this trip. I can just imagine that when things got rough, Barnabas, the encourager, would have reminded Paul that God would use every difficult situation to spread the truth of His kingdom.

Then, Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities where they had taught, to **encourage** the believers there (Acts 14:21).

*They helped the believers gain strength. They told them to remain true to what they had been taught. "We must go through many hard times to enter God's kingdom,"*

*they said.* - Acts 14:2

**Application:** By the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul and Barnabas taught boldly and encouraged the believers. We have seen that God instructs each of us to encourage each other, just as Paul and Barnabas did. Is there someone that you know that needs a word of encouragement? Remember, the best thing you can encourage someone to do is to follow Jesus. We can encourage a friend or family member by sharing God's truth and His promises - especially when someone is going through a difficult time.

**PPT Verse**

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**PPT Main Point**

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