

MORNING MEDITATION

Saint Barnabas, Apostle

Be content with what you have and are. You will find serenity.

Acts 11:19-26

The good news of Jesus reached the Greeks and a large number of them believed and were converted to the Lord. Barnabas was sent, from Jerusalem, to minister to them. He was a man full of the Spirit, who encouraged and brought Saul for Support in his ministry. For the first time, here in Antioch, the disciples of Jesus were called Christians.

Be gracious and accept, gratefully, the support of others in your ministry!

Psalm 98

**Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;
make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,**

Mathew 10:7-13

Jesus instructed his disciples to go out and proclaim the presence of God's Kingdom. They were to do everything - all their service, all their ministry - to proclaim the presence of God's Kingdom. The disciples were given a God-directed mission and not a self-fulfilling, self-directed mission. There was urgency about fulfilling this mission because the mission was the proclamation of the presence of the Kingdom of God – it was about the presence of the kingdom and not about some future reality.

So, disciples of Jesus were called to live a simple life, travel light and not be burdened with stuff that weighs them down..... They were not sent out to acquire, to collect or to possess, but to give...the gift you have received, give as a gift.

Disciples of Jesus were and still are called to be bearers of good news, of peace, of God's forgiving love, of God's healing presence.....and never to become a burden to others.....

They were to stay close to.....be in touch with "worthy" people, good, decent and noble people and reach out to all.

Saint of the Day, June 11 - St. Barnabas and 14 other saints are remembered this day

Barnabas, a native of Cyprus and a Levite, is first mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as a member of the early Christian community in Jerusalem, who sold some land that he owned and gave the proceeds to the community (Acts 4:36-37). Barnabas was not his birth name (Joseph was). It was his nickname meaning "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36). He was so encouraging that it became his name.

He was closely associated with Paul. When Paul returned to Jerusalem after his conversion, Barnabas introduced him to Peter and the other apostles and served as a kind of mediator between the former persecutor (Saul) and the still suspicious Jewish Christians (Acts 9). When a Christian community developed at Antioch, Barnabas was sent as the official representative of the Church of Jerusalem to incorporate them into the fold. He and Paul instructed in Antioch for a year, after which they took relief contributions to Jerusalem.

Later, Paul and Barnabas were sent by Antioch officials to preach to the Gentiles. Enormous success crowned their efforts. After a miracle at Lystra, the people wanted to offer sacrifice to them as gods. But the two said, "We are of the same nature as you, human beings. We proclaim to you good news that you should turn from these idols to the living God" (Acts 14:8-18).

Barnabas participated in the Council of Jerusalem, which dealt with the admission of Gentiles into the Christian community, a crucial problem in early Christianity. Paul and Barnabas proposed that Gentiles be allowed into the community without being circumcised.

Church tradition tells us that certain Jews coming to Syria and Salamis, where Barnabas was then preaching the gospel, being highly exasperated at his extraordinary success, fell upon him as he was disputing in the synagogue, dragged him out, and, after the most inhumane tortures, stoned him to death. John Mark, who was a spectator of this barbarous action, privately interred his body. Although it is believed he was martyred by being stoned, the apocryphal Acts of Barnabas states that he was bound with a rope by the neck, and then being dragged only to the site where he would be burned to death.

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