

A Sharp Disagreement
Message 8 in the series, "Faith under Fire"

"After some time Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let's go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing.' Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work. Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus. Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord's gracious care. Then he traveled throughout Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches there." Acts 15:36-41 (NLT)

1. Discipleship is an ongoing process.

"And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness." Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT)

2. Paul measured Mark by his failure; Barnabas measured him by his future.

- a. Paul was locked in on the mission.

"But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God."
Acts 20:24 (NLT)

Note: There are times we have to be careful about who runs with us.

"Putting confidence in an unreliable person in times of trouble is like chewing with a broken tooth or walking on a lame foot." Proverbs 25:19 (NLT)

"But Jesus told him, 'Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.'" Luke 9:62 (NLT)

- b. Barnabas saw what Mark could become.

Note: There are times we look past someone's failure and see what God still wants to do.

"When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' 'Well,' they replied, 'some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.' Then he asked them, 'But who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.'" Matthew 16:13-19 (NLT)

"'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, 'Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Then feed my sheep.'" John 21:17 (NLT)

Note: We all need a Barnabas — and we all need to be one.

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins."
1 Peter 4:8 (ESV)

"Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8 (NLT)

3. God can even use conflict to fulfill his purposes.

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Romans 8:28 (NLT)

"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 (NLT)

4. Failure is not final in the kingdom of God.

"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns." Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV)

Note: Mark didn't get bitter; he got better.

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