

Fan Into Flame, pt.2, 1.31.10

A Heart For Others

Intro.

1. One of the quickest ways to determine if your heart is aflame for God is by looking at your heart towards others. 1 John is clear that love for God is primarily determined by your love for others.
2. The purpose of this series is to look at some smaller characters in the Bible and learn from them on how to fan into flame God's activity in our own hearts.
3. We're focusing today on Barnabas and his fiery heart for others.
 - I. He encouraged Christians in their time of need – Acts 4.32–37
 - a. The church was growing and the needs were expanding. The poor were very responsive to the gospel and the believers had a big need. On top of this, they were being persecuted. People like B stepped up and met the need by giving sacrificially. This greatly encouraged everyone. Sometimes there is nothing that can cheer our soul any better than money.
 - b. B love for was very practical. It fostered stability in this young, burgeoning movement. Church planters will tell you that one of the main reasons churches never get off the ground is b/c of the lack of financial resources. The early church grew rapidly and sustained itself, b/c of people like Barnabas who gave.
 - c. His name was Joseph, but he was given the nickname, Barnabas. “Bar” – son of; “Nabai” – prophet. Translated in Greek, “son of encouragement”. Encouragement is derived from the Greek word “paraclete” which we get HS. He is the one who comes alongside as an advocate. This is exactly what B did.
 - i. Nilta Hill at Compass Bank retired. We were talking about faith. She felt a little guilty for not sharing her faith. I said, “You never had to say a word to me. I

could tell by your attitude and how you dealt with people that you were a believer.”

- d. Appl – People should be able to tell by our attitude towards others that we are believers. We are to be a source of encouragement to our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially in their time of need.
 - e. Who is in a time of need and the HS highlighting for you to encourage?
- II. He reached out to the rough and young – Acts 9 & 11
- a. Acts 9.20–25: Background to the story.
 - i. No one wanted to touch Saul. They might have thought it was a ploy, so he could infiltrate the Christian community.
 - ii. 9.26–30: Barnabas took a risk and reached out. He didn’t allow Saul’s past to temper his response. He knew what Saul was, but more importantly he knew what Jesus could do. The others were skeptical, but B was grace-filled. He knew God could change a heart.
 - iii. Appl – God is calling you to reach the hardened, hostile and unpolished.
 - 1. What if no one had reached out to Saul? He might have remained a Christian, but he never would have made the impact on Christianity that he has!
 - 2. Judge Bob May. He has reached out to the rough and hostile from his bench. My conversation with a lady in the community. Bob sentenced her son to prison. She said, “He treated my son with such respect and love. He encouraged him that he could turn his life around if he would turn to the Lord and seek him.”
 - 3. We can do the same with the rough that God brings in our lives. Often, we want them to get cleaned up before we’ll do anything, but God is calling us to be a part of the clean up crew.

- a. Renetta was sharing with me about a young person who recently wrote and expressed his appreciation for she & J's persistent love

b. Acts 11.19-24

- i. B is sent to Antioch. This is a hinge point in history. The gospel had almost exclusively been preached to the Jews, but from this point forward it expands into the Gentile world.
- ii. Religious groups are not to keen on change. Even those who are Spirit led don't always embrace the current move of God. It's critical that whoever is sent to inspect this new move is understanding and sensitive. B arrives and saw the evidence of God's blessing, he was filled with joy and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. He looked for fruit and not style.
- iii. He didn't have a prohibitive or controlling spirit (that's not the way we do it at FB Jerusalem). He didn't have a prideful spirit. In fact, he called upon Saul to assist with the work (11.25f). This gave Saul the opportunity to grow.

1. Appl - Older Christians we can often suppress the new move of God in a younger person's life.

- iv. Appl - We are to encourage the young in their faith to seek the Lord. Bless them to pursue God in the ways, styles and revelations that He gives them. We don't want to be the ones that stamp out the fire of God in your heart; we want to be like B and fan into a hotter flame. We want you wild and radical for the Lord!

- III. He had a heart for his people and foreign cultures, Acts 13 - 15.
 - a. They were the first commissioned missionaries of the early church. Their pattern was to go to the Jewish community in a city first and then speak to the Gentiles (13.46).

- b. He had a genuine love and concern for his own people. They were his family.
 - c. Appl – we have the same call to reach our family and community first. It is up to us to reach them with the Good News of the Kingdom of God. (Luke 14 – Parable of the Great Feast). Your desire to see your family and community saved is a thermometer of your spiritual temperature.
 - i. Bob May’s book the Outreach Wheel will teach you how outreach can be a natural part of your life.
 - ii. Top 10 List
 - iii. Harvest Unlimited
 - d. He also reached out to those who weren’t like him. He was a Jew and it was probably hard for him to make some of the cultural adjustments to reach the Gentiles. Their food, practices and family structures were different than his. He didn’t let those things impede his love. He reached out.
 - i. Appl –
 - 1. Pray – specific places and ministries
 - 2. Give – to missions & missions sending group
 - 3. Go – every person needs to do short term mission project, Bimini, Haiti
 - e.
- IV. He gave people a second chance – Acts 15.36–39
- a. Background: Acts 13.4f; 13.13. Mark abandoned them.
 - b. Paul didn’t want to give him a second chance, but B saw something in him.
 - c. Appl – We can’t be pious on those who blow it. They need to be confronted by the truth in love and called to repentance. But even if they don’t respond, we still need to have an attitude of hope. Paul wrote Mark off, whereas B didn’t. the same spirit that led him to reach out to Saul led him to reach out to Mark.
 - d. Later in life – Paul writes in 2 Tim.4.11, Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is helpful in my ministry.

- e. What if Barnabas had not given him a second chance? Paul would not have had him when he needed him the most; Peter would not have had him to pen the Gospel of Mark.
- f. Who in your life needs a second chance?
- g. B had a deep love for others.

Story of John G Lake

By reaching out to others, you can make a difference for eternity.

- Barnabas sustained the early church by giving financially.
- He shaped the course of Christianity by embracing Saul
- He transformed the world's understanding of the gospel by giving Mark a second chance.
- His missionary journeys with Paul were the first that led to the evangelization of the entire Roman Empire.

One man made a difference by loving others. You can make the same difference too. Fan into flame a heart for others.

Who is God speaking to you about?

Bob May's book, "The Outreach Wheel"