



REFLECTIONS

June 27, 2010

And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Encouragers

Without Joseph, Paul might have been nothing. Joseph was a go-to guy. Everyone knew that. When something needed to be done, he was the one to look to. Even without being asked, Joseph would share his caring spirit and forgiving heart to help someone in need of a fresh start. That's what he did for his new friend, Paul.

Paul was a man in need of forgiveness. He needed forgiveness for his harsh treatment of followers of the Way. His intentions to serve God had been good, but the way he had chosen was not what God had in mind for him. The Damascus road experience corrected all of that. He found new purpose for his life and he wanted to share it with the apostles. He wanted to learn from them and be like them; but they were wary of his reputation. That's how Joseph was able to help. He introduced Paul to the apostles and they received him. And that was only the beginning.

Joseph was a Christian man, a very committed one. When he became a Christian he sold everything he had and joined the community of other believers. He was committed, caring, protective, and compassionate; but most of all, Joseph was an encourager. That's why everyone called him Barnabas. Barnabas means Son of Encouragement, and Joseph was not through encouraging Paul.

But Paul was not the only one blessed by Joseph's attention. Mark was another. When Joseph encouraged Paul to join him on a mission trip to Cyprus, he offered Mark the opportunity to join them. And he encouraged Mark to go on other mission trips too.

Paul and Mark were blessed to have had Barnabas in their lives. We all need encouragers like him in our lives. We need encouragers to help us through our difficult days. We need encouragers to provide for us when we are in need, to prepare us for challenges ahead, and to praise us when we do well. We need encouragers to promote our causes, and to protect us from danger. That's what Barnabas did; and when there is an encourager like him in our lives, God has blessed us.

But we must also be encouragers to others too. Someone nearby is in need of provision, of help in preparation, and of praise. There is someone who needs help to promote their cause, and there is someone in need of protection from danger. That's what encouragers do. And when we are encouragers like Barnabas was—God has blessed us.

“You are the light of the world.”

Richard +

www.reflectingthesavior.org.

Permission is hereby granted for reproduction and redistribution of this edition of *Reflections* provided all applicable copyright laws are properly observed.

Your comments are welcomed and encouraged. Richard may be reached at richard@reflectingthesavior.org.