

Series: How Jesus Acts through Us Today; Sermon: **Finding Encouragement**; delivered by **Josh Moody**, senior pastor, on April 19, 2020

**Bible text explored: Acts 4:32–37**

<sup>32</sup>Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. <sup>33</sup>And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold <sup>35</sup>and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. <sup>36</sup>Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, <sup>37</sup>sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. [ESV]

**Review and application:**

1. After Jesus' resurrection, what is stressed (verses 32-35) about the "great grace" upon the influx of believers?

How do the challenges and opportunities the early church faced compare with today's COVID-19-induced financial downturns and upturns?

2. What action (verses 36-37) put the spotlight on Joseph?

How does his radical generosity enlarge your concept of encouragement?

Why do you think the nickname the apostles gave Joseph stuck?

*The Book of Acts reveals how crucial the "Barnabas factor" is for the church.*

3. How (Acts 9:26-28) was Barnabas' vouching to the apostles for the genuineness of Saul's conversion a *strategic* form of encouragement?

4. When Barnabas was sent to check out the church that had begun evangelizing Gentiles (Acts 11:19-30), how did he initially respond?

What was *strategic* about his recruiting a sidelined Saul to join the outreach to this major multi-ethnic Roman city? (See Acts 9:29-30.)

How (Acts 11:27-30) did Barnabas and Saul encourage the beleaguered church in Jerusalem?

How (Acts 12:25) did Barnabas encourage the growth in service of John Mark, his young nephew? (See also *Colossians 4:10*.)

5. At the Holy Spirit's leading, the Antioch church assigned Barnabas and Saul to make an evangelistic foray (described in Acts 13 and 14) to Cyprus and the Asian mainland. What (Acts 14:27) was the unprecedented result?

6. What (Acts 13:5 and 13) was a downside to the first missionary journey?

How (Acts 15: 36-41) did this play out when a follow-up tour to the new churches was planned?

How did Paul eventually respond to the way Barnabas stood by John Mark? (See *2 Timothy 4:11*, *Philemon 1:24*.)

Who became a colleague of Peter and the compiler of the first Gospel? (See *1 Peter 5:13*.)

7. Scottish evangelist Henry Drummond said "the people who influence us are those who believe in us." How can we *pastorally* encourage others by tending, guiding, and guarding?