

## QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2015

THE BARNABAS WAY (2)

Encouragement builds partnership in ministry

For three weeks we are looking at the ministry of encouragement through the eyes of a remarkable church leader who was such an effective encourage, he received the nickname – Son of Encouragement.

- Note the call to encourage one another this week in **Hebrews 10:25**
- What form of encouragement does the writer emphasise? How can it work out in practice at WBC?

Alan shared the picture that the effect of encouragement is like a boat moving through the water that leaves a wake touching all other boats in the vicinity. It is as though everyone receives something - the closer you are to the boat the more you feel.

The background to our study today is the way persecution commenced as the gospel was proclaimed There was one person who was at the forefront of this persecution and it was **SAUL OF TARSUS**. [In your small group do not spend long on the Paul section – it's the principles of the Barnabas Way of encouragement that we need to reflect upon.]

**Paul - an angry Christ opponent.**

- What do you think it would have been like living in Jerusalem when persecution came and someone like Stephen (Acts 7) was killed by a mob who took him away and stoned him to death. Acts 8:1 indicates that *'Saul was there giving approval to his death...'*
- Saul spreads his net wider to those who had left Jerusalem and so it was onto Damascus in order to detain believers and haul them back to Jerusalem.. Acts 9:1-2; Acts 22:4

**Paul - an amazing conversion – Acts 9:3-5**

- He met the crucified and risen Lord...he is baptised and filled with the Spirit and now on fire for Jesus.

**Paul - an authoritative communicator**

- In Acts 9:20 Saul begins speaking in the synagogue in Damascus. The reaction of many is captured in 9:21.
- There was a time spent in Arabia (Gal 1:17)
- Then he returned to Damascus where there were Jews who conspired to kill him – Act 9:23 He escapes over the wall in a basket at night!

**Principles from Barnabas regarding encouragement that builds partnership.**

- **Encouragement can often be risky.** This is where Barnabas stands alongside Paul in Jerusalem – Acts 9:26-29. Encouragement reaches out with friendship and support. Think about someone you could encourage. Why do we not find it easy to accept and believe the best in some people because of their past track record? Even in Jerusalem there was an unplanned departure to Tarsus, Acts 9:30.
- **Encouragement is about being grace-filled.** When he was sent to Antioch, he saw the grace of God and became a source of encouragement to this fledgling church. Why was Barnabas the best person to send? Barnabas saw encouragement as about building bridges not barriers.
- **Encouragement goes the second mile** – This is in Acts 11:25 where Barnabas needs help in Antioch and instead of going back to Jerusalem he goes to Tarsus in order to find Paul. How do we spot spiritual potential and encourage it in a person?