

ACTS: A Parting of Ways

Acts 15:30-41

You've Got Mail (v. 30-33)

- Paul, Barnabus, Silas, Judas, & others are sent to Syrian Antioch with the letter from the Apostles & Elders
 - Hand-delivered letter writing formed the main basis for communication between groups
 - The rest of the New Testament are letters between Apostles & congregations or individuals
- The Antioch church is glad for the letter's encouraging message
 - When Gospel truth and love are promoted, there is joy among all those who would live in such an attractive fellowship
- Judas & Silas encourage the Church through their prophetic preaching
 - And then return to Jerusalem

A Sharp Disagreement (v. 35-41)

- After Paul & Barnabus had spent time teaching the Church in Antioch for a while, they decide to revisit the congregations that they help plant
- However, Paul & Barnabus have a strong difference of opinion about bringing John Mark with them again
 - Barnabus' cousin had come with them on their first trip, but had left them in Pamphylia and didn't finish the trip
- Paul doesn't want John Mark coming with
 - Perhaps because he thought John Mark wasn't spiritually mature enough
- Barnabus wants to bring his cousin with
 - Perhaps to help him grow
 - Barnabus was an encourager who invested in people, like Saul/Paul
- The disagreement is so heated that they part ways
 - Barnabus taking John Mark and returning to Cyprus
 - Paul taking Silas and returning to Syria & Cilicia
- This separation, even though fueled by human reason and emotions, was used by God
- Silas/Silvanus became instrumental in Paul's ministry (Acts 16-18; 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1)
 - And Peter's as well (1 Pet. 5:12)
- And so did John Mark (see Col 4:10; Phm 1:24; 2 Tim. 4:11b)
 - He became Peter's scribe, writing down his teaching about the life of Jesus known to us as the Gospel of Mark

So What?

- God uses different perspectives to build His Kingdom in ways that we do not always see
- Who are we investing in?
- Are we trusting Him to do something greater than we can understand?

Meditation Verse: Romans 8:28