

BY ALL MEANS

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Running Time: Approximately 10 minutes.

Theme: Christ's Church is made up of people with a wide variety of personalities and gifts. These differences make the Church more effective, but they can also cause friction. Love has the power to keep the body focused and functioning ... in spite of conflicting personalities.

Setting: The biblical story of Paul and Barnabas set in modern day Antioch.

Cast:

PAUL: Middle-aged with an abundance of energy. Extremely organized and efficient, feels very strongly that everything should be done properly and in order. Task oriented, aggressive and stubborn by nature, he is focused and appears driven to reach the goals set before him; your basic Concrete Sequential* or Type A personality.

BARNABAS: Middle-aged with a laid-back approach to life. Although he, too, has definite goals, he has no need to accomplish them within set time limits; everything will be done when it gets done. He is accepting of those who are different from himself and attempts to solve life's problems creatively. His well developed sense of humor keeps him from taking himself too seriously and is often used to diffuse stressful situations. Officially classified as a Concrete Random* personality.

JOHN MARK: Late teens or early twenties with a contagious enthusiasm for whatever he does. He has spiritual goals, but would have difficulty saying exactly what they are. His mind is capable of running on several "tracks" simultaneously. Easily excited and distracted, his emotions lie close to the surface. He has trouble organizing and sticking with a task until it is completed. He is people-oriented and likes to keep everybody happy. Definitely an Abstract Random* personality.

(* NOTE: based on the *Mind Style* research of Anthony F. Gregorc. An Adult's Guide to Style. Maynard, MA: Gabriel Systems, 1982.

(Follow spot on PAUL as he energetically strides down aisle to platform. He sings "Bringing In the Sheaves" or other missionary-type song with great gusto. He wears conservative style suit and red "power" tie, carries briefcase. Manner is very brisk and business-like. He lays briefcase on small table or music stand center stage. He opens case and takes out legal pad and pen as song comes to end..)

PAUL (*speaks to himself*): Let's see; itinerary, passport, visa, letters of introduction, maps, address book. Okay, that's all here. And, of course, (*looks in case*) eye medication, writing supplies, money, needles and thread. (*nods*) Yes, everything's in order.

Except ... (*looks around, exasperated*) for one missing item. (*looks at watch, shaking head*) Now where is he? I told him 11:15 and he's already three minutes late. Again. (*disgusted*) It's a wonder we ever get anything done!

(BARNABAS *enters from back of sanctuary dressed in casual clothes, sailor's hat and jean jacket. He carries large knapsack with bulky odds and ends dangling from the sides, i.e. baseball glove, golf clubs, roller blades, pots, pans, toilet paper, etc.*)

BARN (*sings boisterously*): Sailing, sailing, over the ocean blue! (*calls cheerfully*) Hey Paul! You want to come help me with these things?

PAUL: Barnabas, where have you been? You're late again.

BARN (*cheerfully*): As usual!

PAUL: It's not something you should be proud of.

BARN (*teasing*): Oooo. A bit "testy" today aren't we?

PAUL (*irritated*): I'm not 'testy.' You're late.

BARN (*laughs cheerfully*): Whatever! You going to help me with this stuff or not?

PAUL: Not. You know the rule: don't pack more than what you can carry yourself.

BARN: That's right! And you know what I always say: rules were made to be broken. (*laughs merrily*)

PAUL (*warningly*): Barnabas ...

BARN: Just kidding; just kidding! See? I can carry it! No problem! (*Lugs it all onto stage and dumps it.*) There. It looks pretty heavy, but remember, looks can be deceiving. Unfortunately, in this case ... (*straightens back*) they're not. (*rubs back ruefully*)

PAUL (*grins in spite of himself while shaking head*): What are you going to do with all this junk?

BARN (*in mock horror*): Ah! Junk?! This is not 'junk.' It's my "things-to-do" bag. Keeps me from getting bored on long trips by sea. And you better be nice to me, Paul, or I won't share any of my toys with you.

(BARNABAS takes Gameboy from pack and begins playing it.)

PAUL (*laughs, shaking head; decides to change subject*): Did you get the provisions?

BARN (*absorbed in game*): The what?

PAUL: The provisions. You know; food, supplies, things to live on. It was all on the list I gave you.

BARN (*still playing game*): Oh, yeah; that's right. Not to worry; everything's under control. I gave it to John and he's taking care of it. Should be here any minute.

PAUL: John? (*incredulous*) John **Mark**?

BARN: Yeah, my cousin John. You know - Mary's kid. Said he wants to go with us and offered to help out. Personally, I thought it sounded like a great idea. We can use all the help we can get!

PAUL: Well personally, I don't think it sounds like a good idea at all. That kid's got no business going on a missionary trip. He's totally scatter-brained!

BARN (*grins*): Yeah; runs in the family.

PAUL (*adamantly*): He can't go.

BARN: Sure he can! He's got all the right qualifications.

PAUL: What qualifications?

BARN (*stops playing game*): Same as yours and mine: he loves the Lord and feels called to use his talents to build the Kingdom.

PAUL: What talents?!

BARN (*puts game back in pack*): He's a people person ... Type B personality.

PAUL: A what?

BARN: He's good at relationships ... gets his energy from talking to people and likes to do things for them. We can use somebody like that on the team.

PAUL (*offended*): Are you saying I'm not good with people?

BARN: Now, don't take offense, Paul. I'm just trying to be honest. Your personality is intense and totally focused. That's good for some things - like preaching and

evangelizing. But it also gets us into a lot of trouble because sometimes, you come across as ... well, pretty abrasive.

PAUL (*bellows belligerently*): Abrasive?!?

(BARNABAS *laughs* - which irritates PAUL even more)

PAUL (*angrily*): Are you saying that you're a better Christian than I am?

BARN: No. I'm not saying that at all.

PAUL: Well then, what are you saying?

BARN (*putting Gameboy away*): We all have different gifts. Paul. God made you strong, and aggressive. You're an organizer that knows how to get things done on time. You have an evangelist's personality. And God has used you mightily to build His church.

PAUL: But you're saying I'm hard to get along with?

BARN (*gingerly*): Well, let me put it this way: without me there to smooth things over when you offend somebody, and pick you up when you get knocked down, you probably wouldn't even be around anymore. Somebody would have killed you a long time ago!

PAUL (*somewhat sarcastic*): And I suppose that's your gift: taking care of me?

BARN: Sort of. I take care of a lot of people: pick 'em up, dust 'em off, give 'em a pat on the back. That's me: Barnabas ... the "Son of Encouragement!"

PAUL (*grumbles*): I don't know why those apostles feel they have to change everybody's name. I think Joe fit you a lot better.

BARN: Well, it is easier to spell. (*grins*) But for an encouraging-kind of name, you've got to admit that Barnabas has a more ... **creative** ring to it!

PAUL: Well, 'Son of Encouragement,' (*looking around*) I wish you would have 'encouraged' your cousin to get here with those provisions on time. If he's so eager to do things for us, where is he?

BARN: He'll be here. Trust me, he's totally dependable.

PAUL: But the ship sails for Cyprus in the morning!

BARN: Relax. He'll be here.

JOHN (*shouts from back of Sanctuary*): Yo; Cuz! Where are you?

BARN: See? What'd I tell you? Totally dependable. (*shouts*) Over here, John. Come on up.

(JOHN *enters hurriedly dressed in loud, baggy clothes. He sings a rap version of "When the Saints Go Marching In" with a lot of rhythmic shoo-bop, shoo-bop percussive sounds thrown in.*)

JOHN: Sorry I'm late, guys. But I met this absolutely amazing woman at the market. We got to talking and one thing led to another and ...

PAUL (*interrupts, sarcastic*): And you asked her out to dinner?

JOHN (*puzzled*): No. (*brightens*) I introduced her to Jesus.

PAUL (*totally surprised*): You did?

JOHN: Yeah! And she accepted Him as her Savior.

BARN: No kidding?!

JOHN (*grinning*): Yeah; just like that! Bingo ... we got us another Believer!

BARN/PAUL (*sincerely*): Praise the Lord!

JOHN: I would have been here a lot earlier, except Rhoda, that's the woman I met, wanted to know if there were other Christians around. So I took her over to meet the Antioch church and I, uh, sort of got lost on the way back.

BARN (*to PAUL*): He's good with people, but don't ask him to follow a map. He's got absolutely no sense of direction.

PAUL (*despairing*): Oh great; on a **missionary** trip! (*rubs eyes wearily*)

JOHN: Not my gift, I guess. (*looking around*) So, when do we sail for Crete?

BARN (*amused*): That's, Cyprus, John ... Cyprus.

JOHN: Whatever. When do we sail?

PAUL (*irritably*): First thing in the morning. And the 'we' doesn't necessarily include you.

BARN: Come on, Paul. Give him a chance. Can't you see he's a natural-born missionary? Besides that, he spent all day getting our provisions for us.

JOHN: Your what?

PAUL: Provisions. You know; food, supplies, things to live on?

(JOHN *looks blank*)

BARN: The list, John. What'd you do with the list I gave you?

JOHN (*timidly*): List?

(PAUL and BARNABAS *stare silently at JOHN*)

(*remembering*) Ahh; the list! Ha; thought I forgot, didn't you? Naw, I remember. I gave it to the woman at the market. (*struggles to bring it back*) And she ... she filled it ... okay? ... and ... (*triumphantly*) and I paid her!

BARN (*encouraging*): Good! So, where are the things you bought?

JOHN (*looks around in surprise*): Oh. There're not here are they? (*frowns in concentration*)

(PAUL *rolls eyes, shakes head, glances at watch*)

JOHN: Well, I had them at the market when Rhoda and I started talking ... before she accepted the Lord, I mean. (*brightens*) Man, I wish you could have seen the change in her face as soon as she said, "I believe!" She was so filled with joy! (*gets sudden idea*) Hey; I know: why don't you both come back with me and you can meet her for yourselves?!

(PAUL *rubs eyebrows and sighs*)

BARN (*patiently*): We'd love to, John; but we've got a boat to catch. Remember?

PAUL (*deliberately*): Food, John. Did you bring any food back with you?

JOHN: Naw, but that's okay. I'm not really very hungry; I ate at the church. See, they decided to have a little potluck for Rhoda, but they didn't have anything to put in the pot. So I gave them this sack of food I was carrying and ...

PAUL (*explodes*): **Our** food?! Our **provisions**??!

JOHN (*understanding dawns*): Oh. So that's what happened to 'em. (*cheerfully*) Tell you what; (*takes out wallet and checks inside*) I've got a little spare cash of my own. Why don't I go back to the market and buy us some provisions!?

BARN (*amused*): That's a good idea, John. Have you still got the list?

JOHN (*pretends with exaggerated dumb expression*): The what? (*Laughs suddenly and flips the list out of his shirt pocket, holding it up to the glowering PAUL.*)

Just kidding! (*starts to exit*) Hey, I'll be back before you even miss me. Don't go anywhere without me! (*starts to exit up aisle, singing.*)

Oh when the Saints,
Go off to Crete ... (*whirls and points at Paul, grinning*)

(*spoken*) That's ...Cyprus!!

(*exits singing*) Oh when the Saints go off to Crete, Cyprus, Crete.
There'll be be joys and halleluias;
When the Saints go off to Crete ...
Shoo-bop; shoo-bop bop ... (*ad libs percussion until gone*)

(*Other two watch him go; BARNABAS chuckling, PAUL glowering.*)

PAUL (*deliberately*): He can't go.

BARN (*pointing upward*): Somebody bigger than you says he can.

PAUL (*angrily slams lid of briefcase shut*): Barnabas, why do you always oppose me?

BARN (*very serious*): I don't always oppose you, Paul; we're on the same side, remember? Most of the time, I'm your strongest supporter, and you know it. I just happen to disagree with you on this one issue.

PAUL: What is it that you see in him?

BARN: Potential, Paul ... potential. God has gifted me with the ability to help others find their spiritual gifts and enable them to be used. With a little encouragement, I believe John can grow into a mighty warrior for God. But without our support, his gifts may wither and die.

PAUL: What about me? Don't you think I need encouragement, too?

BARN: Yes! Right now, I'm trying to encourage you to see past your own "Type A" personality. Just because someone is different than you doesn't mean they can't be part of the team. You don't want him to go because he's **different**. I want him to go because he **is** different.

(*PAUL starts to turn away*)

Come on, Paul. You're the one who said that we're all part of the Body of Christ. You may be the mouth; but John just might be the heart, and maybe I'm the hands. If the Church is going to grow, we have to learn to function together.

(*with great emotion*) Don't you see, Paul? For the sake of the gospel, we must "become all things to all men so that by all possible means (we) might save some." By all means, Paul ... by **all** (*gestures towards aisle John exited*) means. (*I Cor 9:22 NIV*)

(PAUL *gives BARNABAS a long look*)

PAUL (*softening*): I hate it when you're right.

BARN (*grins*): Yeah; I know.

PAUL (*beat, then sighs heavily*): He'll need a passport and visas.

BARN: Yes; I know.

PAUL: We'll have to buy tickets and make arrangements for housing.

BARN: I know. You can do it. (*grins*) You're good at details, remember?

PAUL (*smiling*): Thanks for the encouragement.

BARN: Just part of the job!

(*short pause*)

PAUL: What if he doesn't work out?

BARN: Don't worry about it. God won't allow His mission to be defeated just because the missionaries can't get along. You know as well as I do that if we have to split up, then God will use that to spread His Word in different directions.

PAUL (*seriously*): I'd hate to think of **us** splitting, Barnabas. We've been together a long time.

BARN (*with deep emotion*): Hey, we're brothers, Paul; remember? In Christ. Sometimes we walk together, and sometimes we don't. But as long as we keep our focus on Jesus, we'll always be "family."

PAUL: Even when we disagree?

BARN (*smiles*): **Especially** when we disagree.

(*They exchange a long look*)

PAUL (*crossing S.R. briskly*): Okay; looks like we've got work to do. (*puts legal pad and pen back in briefcase*)

I'll go take care of John's paperwork and you see if you can "encourage" him to get his act together. *(closes briefcase)* If he's forgotten the provisions again, go to the market and get them yourself. Meet me back here in *(consults watch)* ... three hours and twenty minutes.

(BARNABAS facetiously checks wrist to synchronize watch with PAUL'S. PAUL fails to notice that BARNABAS doesn't even have a watch on his arm.)

BARN *(saluting)*: Aye, aye, Cap'ain!

(BARNABAS moves into aisle as PAUL picks up case.)

PAUL *(speaks with back to BARNABAS)*: Oh; and one more thing.

BARN *(turning to look at PAUL)*: Yes, sir?

(PAUL turns and looks full at BARNABAS)

PAUL: I love you, Brother.

BARN *(slowly)*: I know, Paul.

(PAUL turns to exit, smiling with face towards audience)

(smiles) I know.

(Lights out. Both exit.)

THE END

SCRIPTURAL SYNOPSIS OF THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE SKETCH:

Saul, the over-zealous Jew, was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians when the Lord struck him to the ground with a bright light. A voice from heaven said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting... Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." (*Acts 9:5*)

Blinded, and greatly disturbed, Saul rose and was led into Damascus where he fasted for three days. At the end of that time, the disciple Ananias laid hands on him. "Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized." (*Acts 9:18*)

"At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God... After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, but Saul learned of their plan... His followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall." (*Acts 9:20, 23-25*)

From there, he went to Jerusalem and "tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. "Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means, Son of Encouragement)" - heard of Saul's plight. and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul " (had been converted) "and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of the Lord." Because of Barnabas' intervention, the brothers accepted Saul into their fellowship. (*Acts 4:36, 9:26-27*)

While in Jerusalem, Saul, also called Paul, spoke "boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus." (*Acts 9:28-30*) Meanwhile, the church in Antioch was growing so rapidly, the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to encourage "them all to remain true to the Lord." Remembering the boldness with which Paul spoke the Word, "Barnabas went to Tarsus to" enlist his help. "When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people." (*Acts 11:23, 25,26*)

"During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch ... and predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders (in Jerusalem) by Barnabas and Saul." (*Acts 11:27-30*)

While they were in Jerusalem, King Herod began persecuting the Christians. Peter was arrested and thrown into prison. The night before Peter was to stand trial, an angel of the

Lord released him and "he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying." (*Acts 12:12*)

Colossians 4:10 tells us that John Mark was the cousin of Barnabas. After witnessing the miracle of Peter's release, no doubt John Mark was filled with excitement and enthusiasm for the Lord's work. So, "when Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned (to Antioch) from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark." (*Acts 12:25*)

Our sketch begins as Paul and Barnabas are preparing for their first major missionary trip to Cyprus, a trip on which John accompanied them as a helper. (*Acts 13*)