

Acts 11:19-30 Barnabas

Into the Lesson:

Did you have a nickname when you were a child?

Do you have one now?

Was this a family nickname or something your friends gave you that you couldn't escape even into adulthood?

What are some examples of nicknames that were less than complimentary?

Names like, "Nose" and "Boat head" were a couple that were probably not appreciated by the recipients.

Into the Word:

After reading Hebrews 3:13 comment on some of the events that were happening to the early Christians that could have "hardened" them.

As you read Acts 11: 19-20, list the cities or towns that are mentioned. How many are there?

If you have maps in the back of your Bible, find as many of the towns listed and the distances between each location.

Assuming they had limited cell phone coverage and travel was limited to foot traffic or horseback (If you were really rich) what can we surmise about the amount of time that has transpired for all these events to have occurred?

We can only speculate, but how much must Saul's contenance have changed from when he was breathing out murderous threats (Acts 9:1)?

Despite that, how hard was it for the believers to open their arms and hearts to Saul (v.26)?

Enter Barnabas-What would the Bible look like if Saul had said, "if this is what this Christianity is all about, who needs it"?

How courageous was it for Barnabas to reach out and embrace this person?

Into Life

Keeping in mind the mileage covered by the early church, how wide do we need to be thinking about our spheres of influence?

Have you ever considered what it is like to live in a world with instant access to loved ones, information and all our shopping needs?

How is it possible that despite all our communication technology people can feel isolated and alone?

How can we become more deliberate in our efforts to encourage those we encounter daily?

How important is prayer in preparing for these encounters?

What might our lives look like if we prayed each day for the Holy Spirit to keep us aware of the "Divine Appointments" He has in store for us?

What will the church look like when we write encouragement in the margin...

And let God write encouragement
on our hearts.

