Pastor Richard Allen Farmer

The Crossroads Church

5587 Redan Road

Stone Mountain, GA 30088

770-469-9069

Begging Barnabas

Text: Acts 13:42-52

The setting:

With its [spice trade](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spice_trade), the [Silk Road](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk_Road), and the [Royal Road](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Road), Antioch eventually rivaled [Alexandria](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria) as the chief city of the Near East. It is in this thriving city that we find Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas was in Antioch preaching and having significant impact. He then went to Tarsus, got Saul and took him to Antioch. For a full year, Barnabas and Saul ministered in Antioch and believers were first called Christians there (Acts 11:22-26).

Paul was, apparently, not only persuasive in his delivery of the message about Jesus. He was equally persuasive in his follow up (v. 43).

There are always mixed reviews when we minister. There is an increase in the number of people who are interested in Paul’s proclamation (44).

*...the Gentiles begged that they words might be preached* (42)

*...when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and contradicting and blaspheming.* (45)

Paul and Barnabas are not *discouraged*. Rather, they are *emboldened* (46).

The Church is that body of people with a specific message that we long to share. We proclaim Christ to every person. If one person or group rejects the message, we take it somewhere else. We don’t give up (46-47).

The Gentiles in our text are the ideal audience. They were glad when they heard the Word and when they heard that Paul’s commitment was to be a light to the Gentiles. The gospel will always get mixed reviews. Some receive it gladly. (Cf. The Bereans in 17:10-11) Others reject the gospel.

Verse 48- Gentiles were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. The same wording is used in Paul’s prayer request to the believers in Thessaloniki.

2 Thessalonians 3:1

*Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it when I with you.*

Verse 50- The Jews raised up persecution and ran Paul and Barnabas from the region. Paul and Barnabas moved on ninety miles, to Iconium (v.51).

**Application**

**So what???**

1. Let’s do our ministry in such a way that people beg for more. Let’s create a hunger and thirst in others by the way we model and proclaim Jesus. As they begged Barnabas and Paul to keep on preaching, may they beg us.

**Illus.**

Tom Skinner reminded us, in one of his sermons, that in a bar you will *never* see sweets on pastries on the bar. You only see beer nuts, pig’s feet, pretzels and other salty items. Why? because the bartender’s job is to create thirst in you so that you’ll buy a drink. Likewise, our task is to preach and teach and model Jesus in such a way that it creates a thirst for the Living Water. We make people want Jesus. I want to preach in such a compelling way that people yell, “encore’ encore’”. I want people to beg for more of our ministry like they begged Barnabas and Paul (v. 42). What makes our ministry compelling, desirable and contagious is that it is centered on the word of God (4:31; 13:5, 7). Barnabas and Paul were not merely rhetoricians who could spark a good debate or bring up provocative ideas in the public square. No, they preached Christ so clearly and persuasively, that hearers clamor for more. May it be so with each one of us.

2. Let’s be so spiritually sensitive that we know when a season of ministry is over. That takes Holy Spirit-given discernment. Lord willing, I will address this in more detail next week, in a sermon titled, “Do I Go or Do I Stay?” For now, let me note v. 51. We need to know when it’s time to move on to Iconium.

**Illus.**

A young, arrogant tenor was singing in an Italian opera some years ago. After his last aria, the audience, very familiar with the body of work this tenor was taking on, began to yell, multiple times, “encore, encoré”. With feigned humility, the tenor would bow and sing another bit of the aria. After the third time the tenor asked, “How many times must I sing it for you?” A voice piped up from the rear, “Until you get it right!”

I am not sure that was the motivation of these Gentiles in the text, but they clearly wanted Paul to preach an encore (v. 42). Do we present Jesus to a watching world so compellingly that they clamor for more? Is the world begging you, Barnabas? Is the world prodding you, Paul?

Let’s ramp up our ministry, in style, substance and passion, that those who receive it may do so with gladness and enthusiasm. In fact, my prayer is that we’ll be so good that the world will cry to the Church, “encore, encoré”... and may we get it right.

Amen