

THE GOD OF A SECOND CHANCE  
ACTS 15:36-41

Introduction:

1. As the Apostle Paul felt led of the Holy Spirit to begin another missionary journey, he and Barnabas agreed to visit the churches that had been established during their first journey.
2. It was during this first journey at Pamphylia that John Mark, Barnabas' nephew, chose to go back to Jerusalem.
3. We have no particulars of what happened, but it caused Paul not to trust Mark, and so, we see Barnabas wanting to take Mark with them on this second missionary journey and Paul, remembering the first, said absolutely not.
4. Paul felt that Mark's ministry was ruined and he wanted no more part with him.
5. Barnabas, on the other hand, wanted to see Mark be used of God again.
6. The discussion became an argument. **Verse 39** tells us the argument led to a heated discussion, one of intense anger, between the two so that they separated from one another.
7. So what became of John Mark? Did Paul forgive him? Even more, did Jesus forgive him?

I. DOUBLING THE WORK OF GOD. **vv. 39-41** *Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.*

- A. When Paul came to Jerusalem, Barnabas was the first to trust and welcome him. They were both devoted to the work among the Gentiles, and had shared the dangers and the glories of the first missionary tour.
- B. These two had confessed at Lystra that they were men of like passions with us, but now each seems to have forgotten that. Neither will make allowance for the other.
- C. As a general rule there is nothing more miserable than to dwell upon others' short comings.
- D. The contention was not about Jesus. Paul and Barnabas did not take two different views of doctrine. It was based upon trust. Barnabas could trust his nephew, Paul couldn't.
- E. As a result the work of God was doubled. Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus while Paul and Silas went back to Syria and Cilicia.

II. THE MINISTRIES OF BARNABAS AND PAUL AFTER THE SEPARATION.

A. Barnabas's ministry is not given much space in the Bible. In fact, the only hint we have of success is found in **Acts 21:16**. *Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge.*

B. On the other hand, Paul's ministry is given great coverage in the Word. **2 Timothy 4:7-8** *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

- C. If Paul and Barnabas had both gone to Cilicia, Cyprus would have lost out; or if both had gone to Cyprus, Cilicia would have lost out. Now they were able to propagate the faith of Christ both by land and sea.
- D. The most godly men are still liable to sudden falls. A man never becomes so advanced in holiness as to get beyond the danger of the old nature and that of temper.

### III. THE GOD OF SECOND CHANCES.

A. Paul wasn't about to give Mark another chance to disappoint him, Barnabas was.

B. Did Paul ever change his mind about Mark? Let's look.

1. **Colossians 4:10** *Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him)*

2. **Philemon 23-24** *Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.*

3. **1 Peter 5:13** *She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.*

4. **2 Timothy 4:11** *Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.*

C. We can mess up our lives so much that we think that God can't forgive us.

D. Ungodly relationships, drugs and alcohol, criminal activity, and even turning our backs on the Savior, all cause us to think less of ourselves and believe that even Jesus thinks less of us.

E. But what does the Lord say?

1. **Matthew 9:6a** *But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins...*

2. **Acts 26:17-18** *I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'*

3. **Ephesians 1:7** *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace...*

Conclusion:

1. The God of second chances is waiting for you to turn to Him for salvation. Perhaps you've rejected His invitation to be saved many times, but that doesn't change His love for you and His willingness to save you. He has given you another opportunity. Will you take it?

2. The God of second chances is waiting for you to turn back to Him. Perhaps you once were serving Him but you have allowed the evil one to take control of your flesh and turn you away from your Lord and Savior.

3. **John 6:37** *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

4. You have to make the choice to turn to Jesus. He's waiting.