

Title: **Fighting Friends: The Separation of Paul and Barnabas and the Sovereign Grace of God**
Text: **Acts 15:36-41**

Find the sermon manuscript to follow along with online at mercyhillchurch.org.



Big Idea

Relationships can go sour sometimes. And, when they do, there's nothing quite so painful. It hurts. But what we learn from this story with Paul and Barnabas is that, even in the midst of the pain, God can be moving for good. He's able to take the mess we make and turn it to something beautiful!

1. The Fireworks

Paul and Barnabas wanted to get back out on the mission field. They wanted to first revisit all the churches they had helped plant in the first journey and they were likely already thinking about expanding beyond that to other parts of the unreached world. Their hearts were in it. They both were excited. But Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them and Paul did not. "And there arose a sharp disagreement . . ." (v. 39) . . . a paroxysm. Barnabas is saying: "Give him grace. Let's take him." Paul is saying: "He had his chance. He bailed. I don't want him." And in the push and pull of that . . . fireworks are set off.

And, for the life of me, I don't know: are we supposed to see one as right and the other as wrong in this conflict? I think both seem to be in the wrong for the way they are handling this initial discussion and debate. We shouldn't be exploding at one another, especially over seemingly secondary matters. But I can see how both bring something quite right to the equation, at least in their principles and perspectives. From Barnabas' side, the gospel we proclaim is one of *grace*. But from Paul's side, as we know, the gospel is not just one of grace. It's also one of *truth*.

I'll tell you, this is some of the hardest stuff as a pastor—bringing together the concerns of both Barnabas and Paul in ministering to a person, because both bring in very important sides of the one gracious and true gospel.

2. The Fallout

Something broke that day. "And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other" (v. 39). It's the fallout that comes after the fireworks. But here's the thing . . . God is not done. The show isn't over!

3. The Grand Finale!

God, in his sovereign grace, is going to commandeer the show, as it were, and steer it somewhere good, somewhere beautiful.

Aspect #1: God Does Not Merely Preserve Their Missional Efficacy—in the End, He Actually Multiplies It!

Aspect #2: God Does Not Merely Preserve Their Relational Connection—in the End, He Actually Deepens It!

CLOSING APPLICATIONS:

Application #1: Be Slow to Anger (You're Not As Righteous As You Think)

Application #2: Be Quick to Listen (You're Not As Smart As You Think)

Application #3: Never Lose Hope (God Can Turn All Things for Good!)



Reflection Questions

- What's one relationship you have that you are tempted to feel the most hopeless about? Why? How does this story of Paul and Barnabas help you forward?
- Which of the closing applications seemed most significant to you personally and why?

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Our Mission & Values

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.

FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate presses our church *upwards* in love

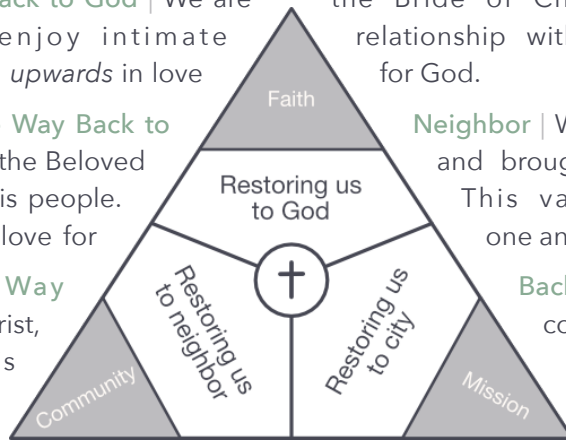
COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. church *inwards* in love for

MISSION: The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his value presses our in love for the

the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

Neighbor | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal This value presses our one another.

Back to City | We are commissioned by the ambassadors. This church *outwards* unbelieving.



Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.
We are so glad you've joined us today!

Announcement Spotlight

Women's Bunco Social Event - This Saturday!

Ladies, mark your calendars! Get ready to have some summer fun, food, and fellowship as we have a social event on Saturday, July 12th from 10:00am to 1:00pm!

We will learn and play a simple dice game called Bunco and have time to socialize and have lunch together. All Mercy Hill ladies from ages youth group and up and friends are invited. A simple lunch will be provided. If you've got that competitive spirit, make note that prizes will be awarded too. This is a great social opportunity to invite friends from outside of Mercy Hill!

Please scan the QR code below to find a link to RSVP by Monday, July 7th, so we have sufficient time to ensure we have enough supplies and food.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Margaret at marhsieh@gmail.com.

All Church Hangout - Today!

All Church Prayer - Tonight!

Covenant Membership Class - Open Registration!

Short-Term Missions Trip to the Philippines - Last Call!

Scan the QR code below for more info!

For clickable content and more announcements,



scan this code to head to our Communications Hub!

Or find it online at mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub.