

SERMON OUTLINE:

Mark the Man - The first thing to note about Mark is that he had three names: Latin name: 'Mark/ Marcus,' which means 'Warlike' (and that tells us his family had Roman connections maybe even Roman citizenship). His Hebrew name, because he was Jewish was: 'Yohanan / John,' which means: 'God is gracious'.

His Family: His mother was a well-to-do Jewish lady of Jerusalem; her name was 'Mary,' or in Hebrew 'Miriam'. Our text tells us the early church used to meet in her house to pray. So, 'home groups' are not a new thing, they are actually quite old fashioned!

His attitude – Whenever Mark is mentioned in the New Testament, it is always as a number two, never the main player. He is always someone's assistant.

Leonard Bernstein, the late conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, was once asked to name the most difficult instrument to play. Without hesitation, he replied: "The second fiddle". He went on to say; "I can get plenty of first violinists, but to find someone who can play the second fiddle with enthusiasm – that's a problem; and if we have no second fiddle, we have no harmony."

John Mark played the second fiddle for three of the great leaders in the early church: Barnabas (His uncle), the apostle Paul, and Mark also assisted the apostle Peter.

Acts chapter 12 verse 25 and chapter 13 verses 1-3. "When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark."

We read Paul and Barnabas were going on a journey, • And they took along John Mark as their helper. :

Now it's easy to be idealistic when it comes to journeys:

- Idealistically:
- Family trip, pleasant time, enjoying company, views, relaxing.
- Reality:
- Traffic jams, or kids arguing & fighting or sick, even getting lost!
- TRANSITION:

- Well for John Mark it was an ideal start, a good beginning:
- He started on his missionary journey with Paul and Barnabas,
- In a way that many missionaries never experience:

(2a). He Had Church Support (vs 3).

"So after they (that is the Church at Antioch vs 1) had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off".

- The church at Antioch was a;
- Praying, supportive, encouraging (and I would suggest a giving church).
- So John Mark started on his missionary journey,
- With his local church's support and blessing and good wishes.

Everything was going well...

Now here is where reality really kicks in:

- John Mark is fresh from Jerusalem,
- He still got those memories of that last commendation meeting fresh in his mind.
- Then suddenly he is in a new culture.
- Among new people.
- After experiencing a long physically tiring journey of 150 mile.

- Where they have seen zero response,
- Not a single convert or any other encouragement to their preaching.
- And now they are 'eye to eye' with spiritual, satanic opposition. He had a crises of faith.

"John Mark left them to return to Jerusalem". Now that doesn't seem to bad; But if you want the full picture you need to read chapter 15 verse 38: Where we are told that John Mark had actually: "Deserted them" (strong language). He let the intimidation and the pressures of that situation get too much for him: And he took the only way out he could see. He abandoned them and ran back home.

- One of the great and unique things concerning the God of the Bible is this:
- He does not wash his hands off us when we fail him.
- Or when we let others down, or completely blow it.
- And John Mark's story does not end in failure:
- Barnabas gives him a second chance,
- Later on he will take him on another missionary trip back to Cyprus,
- He will give him the opportunity to;
- Confront his fears and grow stronger in the Lord.

"Barnabas wanted to take John also called Mark, with them".

- Barnabas wanted to encourage,
- Give John Mark a second chance.
- Another opportunity to get things right.
- But in verse 38: the apostle Paul said, "No"
- After all he had deserted them,
- And he had embarrassed them by his actions, he let them and the Lord down!

But, because Barnabas stuck with John Mark, because he was willing to invest time and effort in him, John Mark's story goes on. He does leave the N.T. pages in defeat, and disappointment. In fact the opposite is true! God works through the care of Barnabas to pick John Mark up, brush the dust off him and train and disciple him and make a man of God out of him.

Colossians chapter 4 verse 10: When Paul writes his letter to the Colossians, He is writing from a prison in Rome, and to our surprise Mark is there with him. They are friends once again, he says sends greetings from him. "My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas."

In another prison letter, this time to Philemon, Paul describes Mark as a "Fellow worker." John Mark had won back Paul's respect.

Second Timothy chapter 4 verse 11. "Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry"

- At this point in time,
- The apostle Paul is in a prison cell awaiting death,
- This is very near to the end!
- He says to Timothy his right hand man;
- "Get Mark and bring him with you, he is helpful to me in my ministry".
- This is a long way down the road from when:
- Paul contemptuously dismissed John Mark as a quitter,
- At the end of his life Paul wanted John Mark with him!
- (4), John Mark went on to write one of the books of the Bible;
- The Gospel of Mark, a book read all over the world.