

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## “Cleave to the Lord”

(Jerry Fite)

**B**arnabas “...exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord” (Acts 11:23). God’s people always need an encourager. Barnabas effectively filled this role among brethren in the first century.

His encouraging push in Acts 11 came when the grace of God was spreading effectively to both Gentiles and Jews in Antioch (Acts 11:20). A great number of people were turning to the Lord (Acts 11:21). When he came to the city, he saw “the grace of God” for himself and was “glad” (Acts 11:23). This could have been a time to just sit back and praise God for all the converts to Christ. Why don’t we just be happy for awhile in God’s grace and think about exhorting the new converts later. This might cross the mind of some. But not Barnabas. He quickly went to work.

New converts need teaching and exhortation from the very beginning to ground them in the faith. Why? The Devil is always at work seeking whom he may devour and must be withstood by a steadfast faith (1 Peter 5:8-9). No one was excluded in Barnabas’ exhortation. All needed to “cleave to the Lord.”

Different Greek words are translated “cleave” in our New Testaments. For example, a husband is to “cleave” (*KOLLAO*) to his wife (Matthew 19:5). The word conveys the idea of sticking like glue to convey the closeness of the relationship between the husband and the wife. Barnabas used the term *PROSMENO* which denotes the idea of “abiding with” the Lord.

Abiding with the Lord was not some ill-defined mission. The Christians were to heed the exhortation with “purpose of heart.” The word “purpose” (*PROTHESIS*) means literally to “show forth.” They were to manifest what was clearly set forth in their heart, and that was: abide with the Lord.

How many times have we pleaded, “Lord, be with me!” or, “Lord, stand by me!”? How often have we sung the song, “Abide with me,” without consciously thinking that we have the responsibility to “abide with the Lord?”

We need Barnabas’ exhortation in our day. One way that we “show forth” our heart’s desire to “abide with the Lord” is to be diligent in reading God’s Word. In daily study and meditation, we

stay close to the Lord’s mind, reminding ourselves of what He approves and disapproves in our lives. With this knowledge, we make corrections, and renew an upright walk with Him in sanctifying light.

By taking to heart Barnabas’s exhortation, we refuse to allow the cares of this world to choke out the word in our hearts. We guard our hearts from the deception of riches that so easily sabotage our single-minded mission to abide with the Lord (Matthew 13:22).

God will always be with those who are submitting to His authority and carrying out His work in His way (Matthew 18:20). Therefore, we will do what He says and worship with our brethren on a consistent basis (Hebrews 10:22-25). We will carry out God’s commands in His name, for in doing so we will abide with Him, and He with us (Colossians 3:17, John 15:7). Cleave to the Lord. Its single-mindedness will free you from the impossible and disheartening task of always having to please others. Let it “show forth” and not lie buried in the heart beneath the rubbish heap of good intentions. Heed the exhortation! Cleave to the Lord, today!