The Gospel spreads

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Preacher: Prof Donald Macleod

[0:00] We shall turn now to Acts chapter 11 and verse 23. Acts chapter 11 and verse 23.

Barnabas who when he came and had seen the grace of God was glad and exalted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.
Now at verse 19 in this chapter Luke goes back to where he was at the end of chapter 7. This account of the story of the early church.
In that seventh chapter we saw the martyrdom of Stephen. And it seems that after that incident the whole church of Jerusalem was under enormous pressure and in very grave peril.
And we see from verse 19 that many believers fled for fear. And yet the persecution and the ensuing flight were themselves part of God's great overall purpose.
[1:17] Because those who fled brought the gospel with them. They fled we are told preaching the word. They fled speaking the gospel.

It wasn't anything very formal or very official. It was simply informal conversation in which they spoke the word about the Lord Jesus Christ.
Now to begin with they spoke only to Jews. But after a while some of those early disciples ventured to bring the gospel to those who were called the Grecians in verse 20.
I assume that these were simply Gentiles. There is some debate about that. But they were in my view anyway those of non-Jewish background.
And through this persecution and the ensuing flight as I said. The gospel was carried to those who weren't Jews. It came to those of Gentile origin.
[2:25] And the result was that in the great city of Antioch. There arose a church. A church mixed in its composition. A church of Jews.

But a church also composed of a large number of Gentiles. The church at Jerusalem heard this news.
And they at once sent someone to look at the situation. They sent Barnabas. They sent him not only to inquire and to monitor.
But they sent him above all to encourage. It's a moralist example of what was meant in the New Testament by fellowship.
Those churches weren't independent and autonomous and self-contained congregations. The churches had a deep interest in one another.
[3:29] And so this church of Jerusalem. It sent as a delegate. To express its solidarity. And to offer help and encouragement to this new church of God.

Adantioch. Adantioch. And the man they sent is Barnabas. And I'm going to focus for a moment this morning. On what this man did and what this man was.
We're told in our text. That he came. That he saw the grace of God. That he was glad. And that he exalted.
Now this word exalted is in fact a more general term. It's a term that reminds us that Barnabas encouraged the church of God.
Adantioch. He came as a delegate from the apostles in Jerusalem. And what he brought to the church was this great gift.
[4:33] This great privilege and ministry of encouragement. And I've become very, very aware in recent weeks and months. Of the enormous importance of this ministry.

Not only at the level of our own experience and your own need. But at the level of New Testament teaching. The sheer weight of emphasis upon this ministry.
Upon this gift. Upon this need for the people of God. To encourage one another. So often we mention that we can only motivate.

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By criticism. By admonition. And by correction. By pointing out faults. And defects and deficiencies. By showing the shortcomings.
In what we all do. And I descend from that to the great perspectives of the New Testament. Where I find that so very often.
[5:40] The Holy Spirit. And the risen saviour. And the apostles. And all the members of the church. They made it their overriding concern. To engage in a ministry of encouragement.

And that's why this morning. I want to turn to this man Barnabas. And what he did for the church of God did unto you. It was a church that faced very grave.
Parish and very serious problems. It was said that he was a very valuable to discouragement. And a despondency. And fragmentation. And this man came.
And he brought encouragement. He filled them with courage. He filled them with self-esteem. He filled them with confidence.
In the presence and in the promises of God. And he made them feel that they could do things. They could climb mountains. They could carry great burdens.
[6:40] They could overcome great difficulties. He made them feel so big. This man. He made them feel so secure. He filled their hearts with strength.

And with fortitude. He is sent all the way from Jerusalem to do this. To encourage them all. I want to ask first of all.
What kind of man he was. Because his whole ministry was a consequence of what he was.
Hence the link with verse 24. He encouraged them. Because he was a good man. And full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.
Now before I descend to look at the details. There is a principle here surely of enormous importance. That what we do must be rooted in what we are.
[7:39] That all our ministry. That all our ministry. All our power to encourage. Every possibility of positive gospel influence.

Of gracious influence. All that depends upon what we ourselves are. And that was being asserted here.
Barnabas was able to do this. Because he was a certain kind of man. And because he had a certain relationship with his Lord and with his Saviour.
And I feel more and more as we come back to the problems of the Church of God in her time. And the absence of enthusiasm and zeal and power.
And the collapse of our influence. That as we talk about all that's wrong with structures and organisation and methodology. That we are so often negligent in this area.
[8:37] So often oblivious to this principle. That at last it's what we are that comes. And if we are right with God.

Not only in some gentle and umbrella sense. But if at this very moment we are right with God. Then out of what we are. Out of the relationship that we have with God.
Will come witness. And will come fellowship. And outreach. Evangelism. Encouragement. And all these other things. And that's why in many ways. The fundamental challenge of the New Testament so often is.
Not what we do. But what we are. And how we ourselves are related to the living God. This man had such a great ministry.
Because he was a certain kind of man. And the challenge to ourselves is. To a large extent. Let's deal with that.
[9:34] Let's deal with ourselves. Let's deal with our own relationship with God. And our own relationship with our fellow men.

And our fellow Christians. Because Barnabas could never have done what he did. Had he not been this. A good man. And full of the Holy Ghost.
And of faith. And I cannot really stress too urgently. The monumental importance of this. We are to be the salt of the earth. And the light of the world. But we can only be that.
First of all. We ourselves have light. If we are light. Then we'll shine. It comes back to what we are.
Well what was this man?
If it's so important that we be right. Then what in detail were the great marks of this man's character? We are told three things. We are told that he was a good man.

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[10:34] And this goodness here is an active goodness. There is another word in the New Testament. Which is very similar to good in this connection.

It is the word we have in Galatians 5. Which means that a man is gentle. Or a man is generous. Or a man is kind.
That's his disposition. That's his inclination. That's the way he feels. And it's a great grace. To be kind, gentle and generous. But Barnabas you see was more than that.
He was that. But he was also a man whose goodness had defined expression. It was active. It was beneficent.
Benevolent. He had to do something. Is it not the problem with ourselves so often that goodness is defined in negative terms? There are things we don't do.
[11:32] We don't go to this and we don't do that. And we don't say this. And our goodness is negative. It's what we don't do. But he was a man who was positively good.

And who was actively good. Whose generous and kind impulses had to find expression. When Barnabas saw need then Barnabas had to do something about it.
We see the end of this chapter that the church of Jerusalem had certain problems. And in verse 29 we're told that they organized a collection at Antioch to deal with the problems in Judea.
That's the kind of thing that Barnabas would do. He wouldn't only see the difficulty and be sympathetic towards those who had the difficulty.
But he would get up and he would do something about it. And when Barnabas saw someone who was discouraged. It touched him and he felt compassion.
[12:33] But unlike so many of us. He went and he did something about it. He was actively good. There was an impulse.

God is good. None is good save God. But God isn't only good. God does good. And that's the way it was with Barnabas. I ask you this morning to look back upon your past life.
Upon even recent days. And to remind yourselves of the many times you have felt there shall need here. You have felt kindly disposed.
You have felt generous. You have had an idea. But you have done nothing about it. It has been stifled and strangled at birth. Well Barnabas wasn't like that.
Barnabas was gentle. He was kind. He was of a generous disposition. But that would find expression in outward behaviour.
[13:33] And when he saw discouragement. Someone disconsolate. Someone grieved. Someone paining and pining. Then he felt what can I do.

And he went. And he did it. I think there is something in our Scottish temperament or our Highland temperament. There is something that really doesn't trust our own good impulses.
We seem to feel that it's a kind of egotism to do something. To feel that we can help. Well Barnabas didn't get tied up in knots about his own motivation.
It wasn't for pride or vanity. He wanted to do good. He got up and he did it. He saw someone bleeding. And he went.
And he bound up the wounds. And again we're told that this man was full of the Holy Ghost. He was full of the Holy Spirit. It wasn't only that this man had been filled at his conversion.
[14:41] Or had been filled on subsequent occasions at times of particular crisis. He had known the Spirit's ministry. I am sure at many a critical point in his own life.

But the thing about this man was that this was his habitual condition. He simply was full. And every day you met him he seemed to be full of the Holy Spirit.
And whatever the situation or the conditions he was functioning in. That seemed to be true it was his habitual state. He was full of the Holy Spirit.
It is almost as if we're being told here that every single area of his life was controlled by the Spirit of God. The way this man thought.
The way this man spoke. The way this man felt. The way he related to other people. All his relationships. These were full of the Holy Spirit. The way this man felt.
[15:44] His emotions. These two were full of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we may be fairly advanced believers. And yet there are tracts.

There are areas of life that the Spirit of God does not affect. It may be our emotions. It may be our relationships. It may be our work.

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It may be our tongues. But this man wasn't like that. Every area of life. And every moment in life. Was full of the Spirit of God.
He was a spiritual man. And that too surely is a great prerequisite of encouragement. Because when we meet the soul that's bleeding.
We need at that point to be in a right relationship with God. We need it because it may require such wisdom and such tact.
[16:45] Our wisdom not of this world. To speak the appropriate word that binds up and that encourages.

Do you not know times in life when suddenly you've met an opportunity? Or you've met a need? And it's right there in your path.
But you simply cannot do anything about it. Because you are wrong with God. You're not in a right relationship with God.
You're not full of the Spirit. You haven't the confidence. You haven't the authority. You haven't the wisdom to deal with a situation. Well this man was full of the Spirit.
Every area of life. Every moment of life. Under the Spirit's control. And when the crisis came or the need arose. He was ready.
[17:45] He was ready because he was walking with the Spirit. He was in step with the Spirit. He was abiding in Christ. He had this living, ongoing, dynamic, constant relationship.

And he was ready for every single crisis. Because of that. And he was full of faith. He was full of the Spirit.
And he was full of faith. He believed the whole of God's revelation. He believed all these mighty promises.
He believed that all things would work together for good to them that loved God. He believed that we could be more than conquerors from the one who loved us.
He really believed that. He believed that nothing could separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus the Lord. He believed that God's word would never return to him void.
[18:49] He believed that the word of God could convert Gentiles. It could save the most hardened sinner. He believed that the Spirit of God could fuse Jew and Gentile into one great organic entity in this new church at Antioch.

He believed that because he had such tremendous faith. Faith in all the promises. Faith in all the offices of Christ as prophet and priest and king.
Faith in the power of God. And faith in the promises of God. And faith in the purposes of God. And he was full of it. And in many ways I'm sure this faith that Barnabas had it was an infectious faith.
I'm sure that in many ways this man's very presence was an encouragement. Because he wasn't shaken or rattled or despondent or upset. He was there strong because he was full of faith.
He knew it could work. He believed that you could really get the apostle Paul to come down and teach this church. Which is what he did.
[20:01] And he believed that if Paul came then great things would follow. And that's what happened. And they taught much people. And many people were added to the Lord.

It wasn't only you see faith in the great general promises of God. But faith in those promises is relevant to the situation at Antioch. I'm sure many folks said to Barnabas.
The word of God can't really get through to Gentiles. I'm sure many folks said to him. You'll never get those Gentiles and Jews to live in peace and harmony in the one church.
I'm sure many said to him. You'll never get Paul here. Not down to Antioch. I'm sure many said even if you did get Paul what good would he do. But this man wasn't having it.
This man believed that great things could be done. He had vision. And he had faith. And he believed in the possibilities.
[21:06] He believed in the possibility of the allegedly impossible things would work. And his own faith spread to all around him. So this man was a good man.

This man was full of the Holy Spirit. This man was full of faith. Let me add this to it. This man had a distinct spiritual gift.
A gift of encouragement. He was known as the son of consolation. The son of encouragement. In Romans 12 where Paul lists the gifts.
Among them is this great gift of encouragement. I'm embracing it because I wondered whether we have any awareness of the Bible's teaching in this area.

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Have we realized that there is a distinct gift of encouragement. And have we asked God to give it to his church in our day.
[22:06] I believe that all the three churches achieved in the 19th century. He owed a great deal to the fact that Thomas Chalmers had this charisma.

He had this gift. I don't think he was a great theologian. But he was a great preacher. He was a man with a great gift of encouragement.
He told people that if everybody gave one penny per week. Then the free church could rise.
And the free church could survive. Well of course everybody said. All the economists said. They said it was nonsense. You can't build a church of God on pennies.
And I'm not sure myself. The Chalmers arguments were correct. But he believed. And he fired these men with enthusiasm.
[23:11] He made them feel they could do it. And John Knox did the same. Time and again we are told that the congregation of the Lord.

It was so discouraged by the turn of events. But then Knox would preach. And they would take on hell itself. Because this man had fired them with such tremendous enthusiasm.
And I want us to go back. To go back to the Lord and to ask him. Lord give us some sons of encouragement. Give us men who will convince us.
That we too can climb mountains. That we too can go through the fire. That we too can overcome.
Who will fill and fill our souls with the vision of these awesome possibilities.
Give us men like that. Let's ask God. Let's ask God. To confer upon ourselves this gift. I believe that we have gone through a great period of self-analysis and self-examination.
[24:18] And I feel in my own life often guilty. That I have maybe encouraged that all. Trained too much. And break too much discouragement.

I don't want it to go any lower. I don't want the church's self-esteem any lower than it is. I want us to rise. I want us to know that we have this potential. We have to ask God to give us the courage.
Give us the man to fill us with courage. And he didn't really have the gift. But he used it. He fanned it into flame. We so often have aptitudes.
We have gifts and potentials. But what do we do with them? They're so often dormant. They're so often unexpressed and unapplied. And unutilized.
Well Barnabas had this gift. And he used it. And he became a son of consolation. That's what we need. So he was a man.
[25:18] A good man. A man full of the Holy Ghost. A man full of faith. A man with a great spiritual gift. which he used and applied.

But I want to say one thing more about Barnabas. And it's this. He was a flawed man. He was a good man and a great man.
And a spiritual man. But he was a flawed man. We might deduce that of course in the abstract from all we know of human nature.
Even in those born again. But we know from the narrative in Acts itself. That he was capable of being petty and egotistical and quarrelsome and bad tempered.
Because we know that he and Paul fell out over John Mark. And that reflects no credit in either of those two great men. But it brings home to us this fact of almost infinite consolation.
[26:26] That those who are flawed are of use in the kingdom of God. And what a great message that is. You go back down through all the pages of history.

You look at the men who have motivated the church of God. At Athanasius. And at Luther. And Calvin. And Knox. And Thomas Chalmers. And George Whitfield. And all these men.
And they've been great men. They've been particularly great. And what is my fundamental concern this morning. They've been great in their relationship with God.
They were close to God. And they were all flawed men. I think of Peter. The church of God built upon this man of rock.
And yet this man of rock is a flawed man. And I'm saying it to you this morning. Because I'm sure every one of you is conscious of this problem. And say it's okay for Barnabas.
[27:25] But he didn't have my shortcoming. I see he wasn't a flawed man. And isn't it great? Isn't it magnificent? This gospel telling us that yes. He was a flawed man.

There were fault lines in his personality. And yet despite that. God used him. And so very often the devil is saying to us. And saying to you.

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Look. You've got a flaw. And because you have a flaw. How do you dare serve the Lord? As if somehow we are torn for the flaw by not serving the Lord.
And what a great thing it is that God can take us. What Paul called out of the depths of his own self-knowledge vessels of clay. God took that.
And God used it. So there he was. He brought great encouragement. Because of what he was. A good man. Full of the spirit. Full of faith.
[28:25] Having the spiritual gift which he found into flame. And yet notwithstanding all that. A flawed man. And maybe part of his encouragement. Was that he could go and speak to other flawed men and flawed women.

And say look. I have a flaw too. You Barnabas have a flaw. Yes. I have my own problems. I have my own temperament. My own nature to cope with.
And God uses me. And that was part surely. Of his whole ministry of encouragement. Well that's what he was. But let me ask what he did.
How did he actually bring this encouragement. To the church of God that was at Antio. Let me go back to verse 23. He saw the grace of God. He was glad.
And he exalted them all. There are three very very simple principles. Operating here. He encouraged them first of all. By accepting them.
[29:25] He came. He saw the grace of God. And he was glad. Well why do I say that? I say because here were Gentiles.

And in a way. In their own psychology. They had no right to be in the church at all. They weren't circumcised. They weren't Jews. They were outsiders.
They were believers. And here is this great man from Jerusalem. He knows all the great men there. He's a great man himself. And what does he do?
He comes and he accepts them. There were at Antioch many believers. Who didn't accept the Gentile converts. Who distanced themselves from them.
But Barnabas came. And he accepts. He was great at that. You remember the story of Saul. The great persecutor.
[30:21] He was converted. I don't think we realize. What a bombshell that was to the early church. You know it would have been no different.

If Judas Iscariot had been converted. It would have had the same emotional impact. And the believers. They simply couldn't accept it. It wasn't possible.
It's marvelous that you know. They had lived through Pentecost. They had seen the pouring forth of the Spirit of God. In unprecedented and cataclysmic.
Epoch making measure. And yet they couldn't believe. That the Spirit of God could convert the Apostle Paul. And so they wouldn't have it. They were so suspicious.
They wouldn't accept him. Until Barnabas came. And Barnabas took him. And Barnabas sponsored him. And Barnabas said. I know his story.
[31:20] I heard his testimony. I accept him. And he was saying. I dare any of you to defy me. I'm sponsoring him. I'm taking him in.

I'm standing by him. You go back again to the prodigal son. That man made his way back to God. From his own wretched past. All the disgrace and shame.
He brought on his home. And upon everyone he belonged to. And he came back. And the father. The father loves. The father longs.
The father runs. And welcomes him. And the father makes his pleasure so extravagantly manifest and evident. And the elder brother sucks. You can't do this kind of thing.
You can't simply accept him. Surely there must be some probation. There must be some apology. There must be some reparation.
[32:18] But to kill the fatted calf. Well that wretched principle has gone right down through the church of God into the present day. And there are still people in all our congregations.

And they know that they are not accepted. And there are people here whom you have not accepted. There are people here to whom you have never extended.
The warmth of welcome. The hand of friendship. There is no acceptance. They are on the periphery. They are marginalized. They are on the edge. But they are not inside.
That's what Barnabas did. You know. He made people feel they belonged. He made people feel they were accepted. He made people feel they were welcome.

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And the great thing was that he did this often when he knew the whole truth. He knew the worst truth. He knew all about the apostle. About Saul of Tarshish. All his persecution.
[33:17] All his antagonism to the church. He knew all of that. And yet he accepted. And that is the most magnificent gift. To be able to accept somebody knowing the whole truth.

Not only about what they used to be. But about what they are sometimes. And to let them know. And to let them know. No matter the truth. No matter what I know.
No matter what I shall know. To offer this invincible acceptance. I go back again. To the prodigal son. The way that the father in that great parable.
The father. The father. Has managed somehow. In the very roots of childhood. To instill in that son. The unshakable conviction.
That this is always his home. And that whatever he does. And whatever he finds himself. He can always come back. And he'll know.
[34:17] That this is indeed. His father's house. That's great. And that assurance. We ought to extend. To one another. We ought to extend. To our own families.

And let them know. That there is nothing they can do. That would hinder. Our acceptance. That our acceptance. Is unconditional. How important it is.
In every caring profession. That everybody we deal with. Knows. That our esteem. And our concern for them. Does not depend. Upon conditions.
Or upon their. Complying with our standards. Or our expectations. But our acceptance. And our care. And compassion. And concern. That these are quite unconditional. Well that's what Barnabas did.
There was a great risk in it. For himself. That word might get back. That he had to. Consult it. With his Gentiles. And his whole standing.
[35:15] Might collapse. But he took the risk. And he offered this. Unconditional acceptance. And then again. There was this. He encouraged them.

By being glad. It doesn't. Maybe. Look like much. But what happened was this. He came. And he saw. The grace of God. And he was glad.
There was a work of God. Going on at Antioch. And Barnabas. Had he been like some of us. Might not have been glad.
He might have said. Well it didn't start in the right way. There was no real missionary. There was no real commission. There was no real ministry.
There was no ordained man. There was no strategy. But people speak in the gospel. He might have said that. Or felt. I wasn't involved.
[36:14] Or he might have felt. Well. Compared to Jerusalem. This isn't much. He would have said. Maybe. You know. There were three thousand. One day. Jerusalem. You have nothing like that. But he was glad.

You know. In many ways. The beauty of this man. Is his simplicity. His naivety. He is guileless. He isn't suspicious. About the motives. Why people preach.
Or about how this work. Origins the credentials. Of those who began it. He isn't envious. No. Here is a work of God. It isn't as great. As some works.
He knows. It isn't as extensive. And yet. It's a work of God. And he's glad. I feel so often.
That I know churches of God. I know them even in the free church itself. And they're going through times. Of great blessing. And yet. They're not aware of it.
[37:13] They don't see things. Like that. They're complaining. They're thinking of the way things used to be in the past. They'll remember something in the past.

Someplace. Some time. When things were better. They'll bring that up. Or they'll say. Ah. But in such and such a congregation. Just down the road. Things are even better there.
And everyone's morale plummets. We're not like we used to be. We're not like the church down the road. But Barnabas came. And he was glad. Things are good here.
He said. There were problems at Antioch. There's no doubt at all about that. As the sequel goes on to show. But he said things are good.
And they were so pleased. Those sinful believers. Because he was pleased. They were probably not preachers of his caliber. They were probably inferior Christians to those at Jerusalem.
[38:11] Maybe all that was true. But he said things are good here. And because he said that they felt real good. He didn't focus on the drawbacks and difficulties and defects.

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But on those things that were good. So he accepted them. He rejoiced in their privileges. And he exhorted them.
I take the word here in its narrower sense. We know that there was a great deal of teaching going on at Antioch. After Barnabas came.
And the teaching itself was encouraging teaching. He gave them courage to cleave unto the Lord. With purpose. With steadfastness of heart.
I came back again to what Barnabas himself was. He was full of the spirit. I would say he was a clinger. He clung to Christ. And he wanted them to cling.
[39:08] He wanted them to hang on. He said look don't lose what you've got. Don't become cold. Don't become lukewarm. Don't lose your enthusiasm. But hang on.

Cling to the Lord. And he exalted them. He told them they must. He warned them of the consequences of not doing it. But I'm sure above all he told them this you know.
He told them you can do it. I know you'll be persecuted. I know you'll be disowned by other Christians. I know you'll have problems.
And you'll have sufferings. I know you're young. I know you're new to this whole thing. You don't have any great tradition. I know all that. But luke said you can do it.
And that is the great thing in an encourager. He made them feel they could climb the mountain. He made them feel they could hang on. He made them feel they could go on.
[40:08] And they really believed. He exalted them. And he persuaded them that they could cling to the Lord. Paul did the same thing in that great word in Romans 8.

Nay, but in all these things we are more than conquerors. In him that loved us. They were saying to Paul, look. We just can't go on in this situation. This famine.
This persecution. This peril. This halt. We just can't go on. We're sinking. And we're going under.
And Paul said, look. Not only can you survive, he said. Not only can you hang on.
But you can be more than conquerors. You can win a magnificent victory. In the situation. They were crying to God. Lord, change your circumstances.
We cry that so often. Lord, take away this problem. Lord, take away this thorn. And we'll be such great Christians. But the Lord is saying to us. I will not take away the thorn.
[41:06] I will not change the circumstances. But I will enable you to be more than conquerors. Well, we can think today, many of us, of men and women of God who are outstanding Christians.

And we just don't know how they cope. Because of their own personal situation. And yet they're more than conquerors. That's what Barnabas did. He made people feel they could do anything. They could cling. They could hang on. They could persevere. They could overcome. So then, here was this man. We've seen what he was. We've seen a little of what he did.
How much it means to extend simple acceptance. How much it means to be glad. And to say to other folk, things are good in this congregation.
How much it means to persuade people that, yes, they can keep on. And they can be more than conquerors. Well, let me bring the whole thing to a close.
[42:09] And I'm down to this question. Whom ought we today to have particularly in mind, as we think, of this responsibility that devolves upon us of encouraging others in the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Let me briefly mention three. I think, first of all, this is something of enormous importance with regard to children.
I say it for this reason. I think of a great word of Paul's in Ephesians chapter 6, where the apostle warns parents against exasperating their own children.
And, you know, behind that, I'm sure, a whole legacy of repressive discipline. And I think it's to a great shame that in the Reformed churches, we have ourselves perpetuated that same legacy of repression.
Keeping children in their place and discouraging them. Discouraging conversation. Discouraging self-expression. Keeping the lid on everything and exasperating by unpredictable discipline.
[43:22] Nothing is wrong today and right tomorrow. By unfair discipline. By extreme discipline. What's the result? The result is that the children are discouraged and they lose heart.

And they become exasperated. I know there's a need for balance. But I do want to say to parents that really, there is great biblical merit in the idea that you motivate children by encouragement.

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I know there's a need now and again. And I mean now and again. I would say two or three times in a lifetime. For maybe some severe measure. But the word of God is saying to us, don't exasperate them.
Don't discourage them. Don't repress them. Don't quench their gifts and aptitudes and aspirations. But motivate them by encouraging.
They make them feel they can do things. I think secondly of those believers who live today in very confined, unrestricted circumstances.
[44:28] I think particularly of gifted people. Of them. And to encourage them. By reminding them of the worthwhileness.

The intrinsic merit. The intrinsic value of what they're doing. And to remind them of the need to see their ministry in terms of God's own assessment.
And God's own view of the situation. There are many, many people. Whose worlds have become so small. They revolve around a problem.
Which in global terms is infinitesimal. But in their terms is enormous. And demands their whole attention. And more than they have.
Too often these people are left by the church of God. Handling that small, enormous problem on their own. You can identify the situations.
[45:27] You work out in the spirit how to bring the word of encouragement. And I think finally. Of Christian workers. All over the world.

In their many different forms. As missionaries. As pastors and elders. As preachers of the word of God. I believe.
Having been away from the ministry now for such a long time. That the church of God. Has a lot to answer for. For the way it treats. Those who lead it.
And feed it. And teach it. There are so many cruel words spoken. There are so many words of unnecessary criticism.
So many words that put a man down. I don't need to go into details with it. I believe we ought. All of us to feel guilty before God.
[46:30] For this area. Of our own personal lives. Let us learn to encourage. Let us learn to give thanks. Let us learn to express gratitude.

Let us learn to highlight the positives. And the strengths. The things that were good. And praiseworthy. It's true for us.
For those at the receiving end. That all criticism. Is valuable. There's a difference between criticism taken.
And criticism given. And I want you. The next time. The word of discouragement. For a Christian worker.
Comes to your lips. I want you to bite those lips. And I want you either. Not to say. What you intended to say.
[47:31] Or to rethink very carefully. How you can say. In an encouraging way. What you intended to say. May God help us so to do.

Can't wait. Do you have any questions. Who is a Christian worker. I To glory. You have a highlight.

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