

MENDING **the** **FRACTURES**

The Week of July 10, 2022
Mending a Fractured Friendship
John Mark & Paul
Conversation Guide

Intro Questions

- How many friends, schoolmates, peers have you had over the years?
- Did you have any friendship break-ups?
- Has a friend betrayed you or let you down and you haven't gotten over it?
- Has the pandemic and disagreements over it affected your relationships?

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Building a Relationship

Acts 12:6-15

When Herod was about to bring him out for trial, that very night Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while the sentries in front of the door guarded the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. Striking Peter on the side, he woke him up and said, "Quick, get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. "Get dressed," the angel told him, "and put on your sandals." And he did. "Wrap your cloak around you," he told him, "and follow me." So he went out and followed, and he did not know that what the angel did was really happening, but he thought he was seeing a vision. After they passed the first and second guards, they came to the iron gate that leads into

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the city, which opened to them by itself. They went outside and passed one street, and suddenly the angel left him.

When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's grasp and from all that the Jewish people expected." As soon as he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was called Mark, where many had assembled and were praying. He knocked at the door of the outer gate, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer. She recognized Peter's voice, and because of her joy, she did not open the gate but ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the outer gate.

"You're out of your mind!" they told her. But she kept insisting that it was

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true, and they said, "It's his angel." Peter, however, kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were amazed.

- Our first mention of John Mark is found in this passage when Peter was miraculously delivered from a high security prison. How did this and other amazing events of the early church affect young John Mark?

Acts 12:24-13:13

But the word of God spread and multiplied. After they had completed their relief mission, Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem, taking along John who was called Mark.

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called

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Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

As they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off.

So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. Arriving in Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. They also had John as their assistant. When they had traveled the whole island as far as Paphos, they came across a sorcerer, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man.

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This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (that is the meaning of his name) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

But Saul—also called Paul—filled with the Holy Spirit, stared straight at Elymas and said, “You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery, you son of the devil and enemy of all that is right. Won’t you ever stop perverting the straight paths of the Lord? Now, look, the Lord’s hand is against you. You are going to be blind, and will not see the sun for a time.”

Immediately a mist and darkness fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

Then, when he saw what happened, the proconsul believed, because he

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was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia, but John left them and went back to Jerusalem.

- For a young leader, how impactful was joining Paul and Barnabas in their work as the church grew rapidly?
- How do you think the dramatic events and extensive traveling affect him? (look up a Bible map with Paul's journeys)
- When did John Mark leave the team and go home?

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A Rift in Relationships

Acts 15:36–41

After some time had passed, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit the brothers and sisters in every town where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they're doing." Barnabas wanted to take along John who was called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take along this man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone on with them to the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed off to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and departed, after being commended by the brothers and sisters to the grace of the Lord. He traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

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- What was Paul and Barnabas' disagreement about?
- Luke is transparent in his recounting of the events of the early church and reveals the good and the bad. The Greek word he uses in verse 39 for "sharp disagreement" means "a sudden, violent outburst." What does that tell you?
- Who was right or wrong, Paul or Barnabas?
- What good came out of a bad situation?

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A Restoration of Relationships

Colossians 4:10-11

Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you greetings, as does Mark, Barnabas's cousin (concerning whom you have received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), and so does Jesus who is called Justus. These alone of the circumcised are my coworkers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

Philemon 23-24

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my coworkers.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

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2 Timothy 4:9-11

Make every effort to come to me soon, because Demas has deserted me, since he loved this present world, and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you, for he is useful to me in the ministry

- We do not have an account of Paul and John Mark being reconciled, but what do these passages tell you about their relationship?

1 Peter 5:12-14

Through Silvanus, a faithful brother (as I consider him), I have written to you briefly in order to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings,

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as does Mark, my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

- John Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark based on the first-hand accounts of the Apostle Peter. Toward the end of his life before his martyrdom, what is Peter's relationship like with John Mark?
- What does this tell you about his progression in his faith and Christian leadership since immature abandonment of the mission team?

2 Corinthians 5:18–21

Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ,

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God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- What does this passage from Paul tell us about the gospel?
- How does our relationship and reconciliation affect how we find the motivation and the power to be ambassadors to share the gospel?
- How does the truth of this passage empower us to seek reconciliation in broken relationships with our friends?

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Next Steps

- Our past mistakes don't have to define our future. God constantly works within us to make us more like Him. Memorize and meditate on Philippians 2:13

For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose.

- It's never too late to reconnect with someone you've let down. We've all failed someone in our past. Make plans to talk to them this week and seek forgiveness and restoration.
- It's never too late to forgive someone who let you down. Sometimes people go years without speaking because of a falling out. Irregardless of their response, take the initiative this week to let them know you have forgiven them.