

The Desertion of John Mark – Part 2

Acts 13:5, 13

Introduction:

1. We live in a culture and time in which it seems to be increasingly difficult to find people who will be faithful.
2. What does it mean to be faithful? Consider a few questions:
 - If I am true to my marriage vows 360 days per year, am I a faithful husband?
 - If your car works 20 out of 30 days per month, is it faithful?
 - If you are at work 3 out of every 5 days, would your employer consider you faithful?
3. I think we all get the idea, don't we? But how does the issue of faithfulness relate to our relationship with God? Does God expect faithfulness from us? Would God consider us faithful? Consider 1 Corinthians 4:2.
 - God does not require that His children be talented, intelligent, handsome, or perfect. But God is looking for one important character trait – faithfulness!
4. In our text, we have an example of **un**faithfulness. It involves a man by the name of John Mark. vs. 5
5. Paul and Barnabas had launched out on their first missionary journey. John quit on them and went back home to Jerusalem. vs. 13
 - The word “*departing*” carries the idea of “desertion.”
6. Have you ever had anybody quit on you when you needed them the most? This is what happened. John Mark quit on Paul and Barnabas and deserted them when they needed him the most. They were really relying on him. They were heading to a rough area geographically, and among hostile, heathen people.
7. John Mark's unfaithfulness was the reason why Paul later refused to take him with them on their next journey. 15:36-41
8. Mark's unfaithfulness had negative consequences both to himself and to others. Every believer must strive to live a life of faithfulness. Why?

First, because unfaithfulness always hurts others

Second, because unfaithfulness reveals a walk in the flesh

Third, because unfaithfulness demonstrates a lack of courage

1. It appears from the timing of Mark's departure that fear was the cause. Acts 13:13
 - Mark sailed with Paul and Barnabas to Perga and then departed.
 - When Mark arrived at Perga, he saw firsthand the dangers that they were about to enter and he drew back.
 - But his companions jeopardized their lives and went forward. The thought of precious lost souls in need of salvation kept them going.

2. Mark returned to Jerusalem, his home town. This is where his mother lived, and where he grew up in the sheltered surroundings of a large and apparently comfortable home. Acts 12:12
3. Serving the Lord is not for weak hearts. Many times God's servants are asked to enter difficult situations which cause even the strongest hearts to fear.
 - If God asks you to do something, and you feel some fear and apprehension, this is not a weakness of character. This just proves that you are normal. You are human.
 - What shows a lack of character is when you refuse to trust God to enable you and see you through the difficulty.
4. When the going gets tough, many believers quit. They miss so much. When things get tough, and the outlook is bleak, and things are scary, and Satan is fighting, that is when we can expect to see the greatest display of God's power.
 - **Illustration:** Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles 32:7-8
5. We are commanded to be of good courage and remain faithful. James 1:2-4, 12
6. Every believer must strive to live a life of faithfulness. Why?

Fourth, because unfaithfulness always causes us to lose so much

1. Mark did eventually get his act together and became a profitable servant of God. A decade went by before he was ever mentioned again.
 - He appears to have been faithful on the next missionary trip with Barnabas.
 - Later in life, Paul mentioned Mark as a fellow laborer (Philemon 24) and declared him to be profitable for the ministry. 2 Timothy 4:11
 - Also, Mark wrote the gospel of Mark.
 - It appears that Peter had much to do with Mark's restoration and return from failure. Peter refers to Mark as his son in 1 Peter 5:13. Peter knew all about failure and restoration.
2. But despite Mark's eventual success, his initial unfaithfulness was very costly.

Mark's unfaithfulness caused him to lose privilege.

- He lost the privilege of traveling with one of the greatest apostles and servants of God who ever lived. Of course, when they first started, Paul was a virtual unknown.
- If he had known that Paul would be the most well-known apostle in the New Testament, write 13 books of the Bible, and pioneer a missions movement that has been going on for 2,000 years, he might have thought twice about quitting on Paul.
- I'm sure that he later regretted giving up such a tremendous privilege.
- Many times we fail to see the great privilege we have in our service because our service seems to be insignificant and unnoticed. Never discount the privilege. Eternity will greatly embarrass us if we do.

Mark's unfaithfulness caused him to lose opportunity.

- Think of all that Mark missed by quitting.

- Mark sat at home while Paul and his comrades were penetrating heathen territories with the gospel of Jesus Christ and winning victories over Satan.
- He missed seeing the whole city of Antioch come out to hear Paul preach. He missed Paul's first recorded sermon. He missed the Gentiles rejoicing because the gospel had come to them. He missed the signs and wonders of Acts 14:3, the healing of the crippled man in Acts 14:8-10, the stoning and resurrecting of Paul in Lystra, the ordaining of elders in each city in Acts 14:23, and the rejoicing with their home church in Antioch in Acts 14:27.
- It was the first pioneering missions trip in history, and he missed most all of it. Why? He quit. He was unfaithful.

Mark's unfaithfulness caused him to lose respect.

- For years, he lost the respect of the apostle Paul.
- Paul spoke harshly about Mark when Barnabas wanted to take him along on the next trip. Acts 15:36-40
- "*Departed*" carries the idea of apostatizing.
- To have such disrespect from a great man of God had to hurt. Paul was hard on him, but it was good for him.
- If the world disrespects you, you can expect it, but if godly saints do not respect you, you have lost valuable blessings.
- Though Mark was restored, his quitting left a blot on his record that can never be wiped away.
- Quitters lose so much. We need to think about this the next time we are tempted to quit a job God has given us to do. One side note: do not allow your children to be quitters either.
- Quitting may seem like the easy way out. But, as Mark discovered, it always makes things harder.

In Conclusion:

- 1 Corinthians 4:2 – "*Moreover, it is required....*"
- Proverbs 28:20 – "*A faithful man shall abound....*"
- Hebrews 3:5 – Moses was not perfect, but he was faithful. He didn't quit. Most people in his shoes would have thrown in the towel.
- One day we will all stand before our Savior and give account of how we have lived our Christian lives. May we hear, "*Well done, thou good and faithful servant.*"