

We have been naming the characteristics of Easter People. The first character of Easter People is resilience—bounce back up repeatedly by fully relying on God when we fall because we, Easter People, are the successful failures. The second character of Easter People is contentment. We can be content with our weakness because of God's grace.

Today we will look at another character of Easter People—encouragement—through the life of Barnabas. Actually, the name “Barnabas” is a nickname for one of Jesus' followers, Joseph. However, nobody called him by his real name. He was always building others up and encouraging others. So, his friends nicknamed him “Barnabas,” which means “son of encouragement. What is your nickname? What are you known for?

When others were in need, Barnabas gave generously. When others were struggling, Barnabas immediately helped. When others were feeling discouraged, Barnabas was always there with an encouraging word.

In today's scripture, Barnabas is the only believer who encouraged others to accept Paul. Everyone was critical of Paul, but not Barnabas. Barnabas accepted Paul and even spoke on his behalf.

Our parents always speak on their children's behalf. Today at the 8:30am Worship, we recognized our high school graduates. The parents blessed their children and encouraged them with their spoken words. That was a fantastic moment for the children, parents, and also all those who witnessed.

First, I congratulate our graduates for their achievements and best wishes for their next adventure. I pray for God's protection and guidance for them.

Second, I would like our graduates to know that they are who they are because of the love and support they have received from their parents, grandparents, and many others. They had many “Barnabas” who encouraged them all these years. I pray that they will become “Barnabas” to others as they share what they have received as Easter People. Thank you, all “Barnabas,” who encouraged our graduates and

helped them be who they are now. They are such fine young men and women of God whom I love dearly.

Words have the power to influence others. With our words, we have the power to encourage or discourage others. We, Easter People, are called to be encouragers—“Barnabas”—to build one another up. Who needs the encouragement this week? Who needs Barnabas? If you do, contact me if you cannot think of anyone to be your Barnabas. I am more than happy to be your “Barnabas.” We, Easter People, are encouragers. Our nickname is “Barnabas.” So, let us encourage one another today in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.