

Amicable Partings

I always define life as the sum of our relationships. But along with relationships there are parting of ways for numerous reasons – some natural and some unnatural, some good and some bad, some joyful and some sorrowful, some spiritual and some worldly. A child grows up, becomes an adult and leaves home to join her husband. Many families emigrate leaving families split in various parts of the world. The Christian is not exempt from the partings of ways that are an integral part of life. However, for the Christian they ought to always be amicable partings.

Genesis 13: 5 – 12

Acts 13: 1 – 3

1) Reasons for parting ways

- Natural Reasons
 - Ephesians 5: 31 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh
 - Teens and adolescents start moving their priority relationships from their families to their peers
- Practical Reasons
 - Abraham and Lot separated due to them jointly having too many flocks for the same place.
 - Interpersonal conflicts can have practical roots that need practical solutions BUT parting ways isn't the solution to all problems
 - Someone gets a job in another city to where they grew up and leave their family and friends to pursue it.
- Spiritual Reasons
 - Paul and Barnabus were sent out from the church at Antioch to fulfil God's calling on their lives – to take the Gospel to the Gentiles.
 - God calls people to do various things in various places
- Relationship Problems
 - Acts 15: 36 – 40 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.
 - Sometimes our disagreements aren't a matter of right and wrong but a matter of different perspectives that are both right.
 - When we went to India we had decided to work in Karnataka State. When our friends arrived they wanted to go to North India. We disagreed on the matter and we stayed and worked in Karnataka whilst they went to North India where they served for 8 years.
 - Often church splits are caused by disagreements within the church.
- Reasons for parting ways can be a combination of these
 - A man might have not get on with his father and so gets a job somewhere else to move far away from him but always talks about the job as the reason for moving away and not his bad relationship with his father.

2) Benefits and consequences of parting ways

- All amicable partings are mixed with joy and sorrow
 - Acts 20: 36 – 38 When he (Paul) had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.
 - But along with the sorrow of seeing a loved one parting ways with us we also rejoice that they are moving towards all that God has called them to be and to do.
 - There is joy at finding a practical solution to a practical problem as with Abraham and Lot where they each went their own ways allowing each to flourish without hindrance from each other.
 - There is joy at knowing that our children will part ways with us to work in his own career and be a benefit to society
 - There is joy when someone leaves for the mission field knowing that people who may never have heard the Gospel will have an opportunity to receive salvation
- On the other hand parting of ways for negative reasons leaves us with only sorrow
 - We think of how the father must have been hurt by the way his prodigal son took his whole inheritance and went off and squandered it.
 - So many children go wayward leaving home and their parents are left hurting and disappointed
 - There must have been sorrow and hurt between Paul and Barnabus after their argument over Mark
 - People who have been involved in big church splits after strong disagreements often carry the hurt with them for years afterwards which affects their future relationships with people

3) Relationships are priority

- We need to have pure motives for our parting of ways
 - Are we leaving because it is the right thing to do or because we have bad relationships that we aren't willing to work out?
- Abraham and Lot parted company but did not break their relationship
 - When Lot was in trouble Abraham went and got him out of trouble
- Paul and Barnabus parted ways on disagreeable terms but obviously reconciled afterwards
 - Both Barnabas and Mark are mentioned in a number of Paul's letters in amicable terms
 - 1 Corinthians 9: 6 Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?
 - 2 Timothy 4: 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.
- Paul and Barnabus were sent out from Antioch and retained a good relationship with the church as they were welcomed back there on their return
- Jesus went to the cross to reconcile us to the Father
 - If we have parted on bad terms with someone to what extent will we go to reconcile our relationship?