

- *When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. (Acts 12:12)*
- *"When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark." Acts 12:25*

Introduction

- **Book bashing slide!!**
 - quite a contrast with last week - length of passage, content of the passage!
 - but disagreements are all too common, sadly
- John Mark, son of Mary, in whose house the Prayer Meeting was that Peter gate-crashed when the angel sprang him from prison!
 - **(inter-relationship slide!)**
 - his cousin is Barnabas, who sold a field and laid it at the apostles' feet (and which prompted Ananias and Sapphira to get into a spot of bother), and who brought Paul to the apostles in Jerusalem. It was Barnabas who was sent to Antioch to investigate the Gentiles coming to faith, and who sent then for Paul to help him teach in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas became quite a team, transporting money to Jerusalem for the churches, and then in Acts 13:2 being set apart together by the Holy Spirit to go preach. Did missionary journey together.
 - along the way (12:25) they picked up John Mark as a helper, taking him from Jerusalem out onto the mission field; Acts 13:5, **"John was with them as their helper."**
 - key moment comes in Acts 13:13: **"From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem."**
- He's got good credentials and background, he's come and joined them, but he's then deserted the work:
 - we don't know what "spin" to put on that!!
 - Paul and Barnabas continue together...
 - but when Barnabas suggests in our current passage, back in Jerusalem again following the big council meeting, that they take John Mark with them, Paul says **NO!**

Our heroes are imperfect

- This is Paul and Barnabas (son of encouragement) we are talking about!
 - they've fallen out, **sharp disagreement**
 - Luke is often quite understated - this was a major row!
- Our heroes, our examples in the faith are likewise imperfect:
 - forgiving when they fail
 - don't leave our hopes set on them, since they will fail - that shouldn't rock our faith, since it should have firmer foundations

The work goes on

- They did not allow their disagreement to stop them **"putting their hand to the plough"**
 - we are all too familiar with folk who've disagreed with something, and gone off in the huff...
 - **very, very understandable reaction!!**
- **Neither** Paul nor Barnabas are drawn into that response
 - Barnabas and John Mark head for Cyprus
 - Paul chooses another helper, Silas, and heads for Syria and Cilicia
 - some see the omission of the commendation of the brothers as a judgement by Luke on what happened - Paul good, Barnabas bad! Hard to be clear; equally likely that Luke was simply concentrating on Paul as the next strand of the story, so mentions the brothers commending him...

- They **both** go on to serve:
 - and notice they both continue the same model of working - leader takes younger helper along to develop their ministry...

Reconciliation is possible

- *"Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry." (2 Timothy 4:11)*
- *"My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)" (Colossians 4:10)*
- People do grow and change; God can even use failure to forge new strength
 - there is hope here
 - there is also a caution against writing people off, dismissing them
- The churches were still strengthened