

HINGE PEOPLE

Acts 11:19-30

INTRO ILLN Castle door

Imagine you are visiting a castle. There is a large wooden door. You push the door and it opens surprisingly easily. How does it open so easily. Turns on hinge. See door. Don't notice hinge. But door would not turn without it.

HINGE PEOPLE

Has anyone heard of **Leon Smith**?

What about **Andy Murray**?

Leon Smith was Andy's tennis coach from the age of 11-17. This was a time when Andy's career could have taken a very different turn. Andy's grandfather, Roy Erskine was a professional footballer and as a teenager Andy also played football. At the age of 15 Andy was invited by Rangers football club to train at their School of Excellence, but Andy declined the offer and went on to be the tennis star that he is today. This was largely due to the influence and encouragement of Leon Smith.

Andy Murray is like a door – the person who is famous – many people have heard of him. Leon Smith is like the hinge – not many people have heard of him, but without him Andy Murray would not be the tennis player he is today.

BARNABAS & SAUL

BARNABAS Jew from Cyprus living in Jerusalem. Levite.

Spoke Hebrew & Greek. Same synagogue as Saul.

Joseph / Barnabas - Son of Encouragement

Ac 4:36 Jerusalem - Sold a field & gave to the apostles for poor

Ac 9:27 Took Saul to Jerusalem apostles & spoke for him

Ac 11:19-30

Christians scattered after stoning of Stephen - Greek speaking Jews left Jerusalem

Men from Cyprus & Cyrene went to Antioch – other Greek speaking Jews

ANTIOCH

3rd largest city in Roman Empire after Rome & Alexandria. Population 500,000

Founded about 300BC by one of the successors of Alexander the Great

Main road 5 1/2 m long paved with white marble

In Syria - north of Palestine.

15m from coast on river Orontes. Sea breezes pleasant climate.

Centre of trade. Prosperous. Cosmopolitan. People from all over world.

Main groups: Native Syrians, Greeks who founded the city, Romans now rulers of the empire, large colony of Jews - Greek speaking - own governing council & way of life

Famous for luxury and wild living

All kinds of sport & gambling.

Chariot races. Blues & greens Cf. Rangers & Celtic

Worship of Daphne - Apollo pursued her & she changed into a daphne bush

Temple - sacred prostitutes re-enacted story in temple groves

"The morals of Daphne" was a proverbial phrase for loose living. One famous general put Antioch out of bounds for his troops on leave & forbade them to visit it

MANY CONVERTS TO CHRISTIANITY - JEWS + GREEKS

News reached Jerusalem. Sent Barnabas - Why?

Knew men from Cyprus. Could relate to Jews & Greeks

v.24 "A good man, full of the Holy Spirit & faith"

Right man to encourage new believers. Not a narrow fanatical Jew.

Saw what God was doing - faith

Sense of joy. Good to be with. Saw best in people. Drew out potential

v.23 "Encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts."

Through Barnabas **"Many people were brought to the Lord." v.24**

He saw potential for further growth. Needed help. Someone with different gifts to complement him & create a team

Thought of Saul. Knew him already.

Went to Tarsus - Saul's home - 9 yrs after Saul's escape from Jerusalem

Saul strong personality. Debates. Powerful preacher. Natural leader.

Jew + Greek upbringing. Roman citizen - could travel anywhere. Barnabas saw potential

Found him. Worked tog for 1 yr in Antioch preaching & teaching in church

Both Saul and Barnabas were needed

- Church needs leaders to challenge & move forward
- Encouragers to enable to put ideas into practice

Needs people who don't care who gets the credit as long as work done and God gets the glory

CONC

ILLN: John Rough & John Knox

Have you heard of **John Rough**? Not many people have. A search on the internet comes up with “no results”.

What about **John Knox**? Many people have heard of him and there is a statue of him at New College in Edinburgh.

John Knox was one of the main leaders of the Scottish Reformation and founder of the Church of Scotland. But he would never have been the person he was without John Rough.

John Rough was a preacher and he persuaded John Knox to give up his work as a teacher and to join the movement to reform the Scottish church. John Rough urged John Knox to help him in his preaching ministry. John Knox responded to the challenge and the rest is history.

QUOTE Warren Wiersbe “God isn’t in a hurry” p.72

Hinge people are special. They may not be recognized and applauded. The important thing is that we accomplish God’s will, not that we become famous. One day in heaven we will discover how God used us to help mould and direct the lives of others. Today we may be discouraged and think our work is futile, but when we see Christ, we will praise him for what he did.

So let’s live in the light of that praise today. Let’s remind ourselves that God is doing far more than we realize and that our “labour is not in vain in the Lord.” We may not be the great door that is seen by others, but we can be the hinge people that help the door to move.