

# Letting Bygones be Bygones

*“Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.”  
2 Timothy 4:11 (NIV)*

The expression in our title is something that has been in common usage in the western world for generations. It means to let the past stay there. Do not drag the negative things that happened in the past into the present.

Too often a potential healing in a relationship will be stopped by someone bringing up the past.

The injured person wants to go over the problem of the past and it stops the healing process and the old wound is infected once more.

Paul and Barnabas had experienced a major fight between themselves over Mark, the man referred to in our verse. Mark had let them down on the first missionary journey and so when Barnabas wanted to include him on the second journey Paul vigorously objected.

The resulting quarrel caused a breach between Barnabas and Paul and there is no record of them ever working together again.

The Lord’s work now had two great men seeking to extend the Gospel message as Barn-

abas takes Mark and trains him to be a dependable and faithful Christian worker.

After the quarrel in Acts 15, Paul warmly refers to Barnabas (1 Corinthians 9:6; Colossians 4:10). So we see that they agree to disagree and the matter is dropped. Luke, the writer of Acts, follows the adventures of Paul and Silas, but Barnabas is not mentioned in Acts again.

Years later Mark will be useful to Peter (1 Peter 5:13) and to Paul (Philemon 24; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11).

So the confidence Barnabas had in Mark becoming a significant man of God was right after all. Mark just needed more time and effort from Barnabas to grow into an exceptional minister of Christ.

What we find remarkable about Mark is that he became such a godly and helpful man of God that the mighty Apostle Paul felt Mark could assist him as he faced death. Paul let bygones be bygones and when facing execution (2 Timothy 4:6) called for Mark the man he rejected years earlier.

It is fascinating to witness the

reunion of these two men. Paul, the elder statesman of the Christian movement finds himself in need of encouragement in the face of death. He has the “beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14) Luke with him, yet he longs to have Mark also. How wonderful for Mark to be called for when Paul dies.

Perhaps you have rejected someone or perhaps, like Mark, you have had a church leader reject you. If you have been rejected work hard, as Mark surely did, and in God’s grace you shall be reunited with the one who has put you aside.

If you are the one who has rejected another Christian do not wait for the appearance of death before reconciling, go and be reconciled now. Have the joy of years of happy fellowship with the one you previously rejected. Let the past stay there. Never bring it up again. Be the peacemaker the Lord wishes you to be. Create the unity of God’s people our Lord so earnestly prayed for in John 17.

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