

# HOW TO HANDLE MISUNDERSTANDING

2 Corinthians 1:12-22

Calvary Church of Pacific Palisades

January 22, 2012 ♦ Sunday Morning Worship

## Introduction:

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**, speaking from experience ... **"to be great is to be misunderstood".**

**Imagine how great young men and women must have been misunderstood by mothers ...**

**Mona Lisa's** mother: *After all that money your father and I spent on braces, Mona, that's the biggest smile you can give us?*

**Mozart's** mother ... *Amadeus, stop banging on that harpsicord and go out and play on the playground with the other kids. You are going to end up being a nerd.*

**Steve Jobs** mother ... *Why are you always talking about apples? You are never going to amount to anything.*

Few things harder to endure. Misunderstanding leaves us dazed and confused; collision, climb out of the wreckage asking the question "what happened"?

## Ill. Story of well meaning grand-father.

Misunderstanding cannot be escaped, it is part of life. **"No good deed goes unpunished."** Motives, actions, unfulfilled promises leave others thinking we are arrogant, selfish and fickle.

Biblical understanding of **How to Handle Misunderstanding.**

Please open ... **2 Corinthians 1:12-22. Page 817.**

Transparent and vulnerable, sharing his heart; reminds them that life is not going to be a "bed of roses".

- Correct misunderstanding - Comfort not deliverance from pain, but strength to endure it.
- Remind - God gives us more than enough comfort, so much that we have enough to give away.

vv. 12-22 Correct another misunderstanding; misunderstanding related to Paul ... a misunderstanding that was tearing their relationship apart.

**HOW HAD THEY Misunderstood Paul's Motives ... accused him of being arrogant, controlling, moralistic. Harsh, punitive, legalistic.**

## **What to do when motives are questioned? vv. 12-14**

**1<sup>st</sup> ... v. 12 Take the criticism and consider it carefully.** He had been a good listener; he heard their accusations, now he was responding. Examine and cleanse your conscience. **1 Cor 4:4 Conscience**

**2<sup>nd</sup> ... v. 13 Restate or clarify your motive** (explain rather than prove). Not trying to trick you. Not trying to control/bully you. Not speaking one thing/doing another. Clear, plain, simple. Communicate

**3<sup>rd</sup> ... v. 14 Believe the best about others.** Notice the word **BOAST**. Instead of accusing others of sinful pride ... work to UNDERSTAND so we can brag about each other and leave judging of motives to God.

ACCUSATION ... Motives were evil, to trick, to harm, to punish them.

**1 Cor 4:4,5.** <sup>3</sup>I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup>My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup>Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Accused Paul of being prideful, arrogant. They were talking behind his back.

**Let the Lord be the judge.** Motives matter ... Jesus will reveal motives.

When motives are misunderstood; rather than sweep criticism under the rug. Examine conscience.

Encourage greater understanding. Communicate clearly, don't back down, restate. At risk of defensive

Not only did they misunderstand his motives, attributing selfish motives to him ... THEY ALSO Misunderstood Paul's Actions ... FICKLE OR DELIBERATELY AVOIDING THEM?

**What to do when actions are questioned? vv. 15-17**

1<sup>st</sup> ... vv. 15,16 His plan was to visit them. He shares his itinerary with them.

**Remember that our plans are not always God's plans.**

**Remember in Acts** when he wanted to go north into Bythina and the hand of God, the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7) prevented him from doing so.

Ill. My plans – Michael Jordan's Bulls, came down with the flu. 103 temp; bathtub.

2<sup>nd</sup> ... vv. 17 Did he say one thing and do another? Could his word be trusted? Was he just stringing them along? Did he change his mind out of fear? Is he really that fickle? Double minded?

**Reserve the right to change your mind.**

When you say you are going to do something, do it. PERIOD. Unless God has something different in mind.

**When God changes our plans ... when we change our plans to do as God leads. Not a lack of integrity.**

How to handle MISUNDERSTANDING... MOTIVES - examine conscience, clarify, work toward understanding. ACTIONS - Leave room for God to alter plans.

And in the process don't misunderstand God ... question motive or action.

**Does God really love me or is He indifferent, does He have good plans or is He punishing me?**

**What to do when questioning God's promises?**

**vv. 18-19 In Jesus Christ, God's promises are always YES,**

When God makes a promise the answer to fulfilling it is always YES.

God makes promises ... Jesus guarantees fulfillment.

**ILL. WHAT ARE THEY.** I will be with you, I love you, you will do greater things than I have done, you will be my witnesses, I will make you fishers of men, I will put my Spirit in you, I will come back for you.

Answer to God's promises is always YES ... Jesus guarantees God will say YES to every promise He's made.

**v. 20 We must reach out and embrace the promise.** How? By saying YES. AMEN ... saying Yes to God. I want that. That promise is for me, I want it.

Ill. I want that peace, purity, power. I want that confidence, even when misunderstood ... I know how God feels about me.

**vv. 21,22 Rest assured that God's promises are guaranteed.**

We may question His motives (must be punishing me), or His actions (must not like me).

God is a God of His word. Anointed = we belong to God. Sonship.

**1 John 5:11,12 ... "And this is the testimony, God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."**

**Spirit is the seal that guarantees the promise.**

Conclusion ...

How to handle misunderstanding ... Inevitable part of life that leaves us dazed and confused?

Examine conscience, work to understand, believe best about others, focus on God's promises, not man's.

Live with confidence ... God's motive = Reveal himself to Bless us. God's action = Came to Save us. God's promise = Make us like Christ.

Don't let misunderstanding trip you up; remember, God's Intentions for us are only good all the time.