

Embracing Brokenness

Part 2: Painful Misunderstandings

2 Corinthians 1:12-24

Have you ever been misunderstood before? Have you ever intended to communicate and express something that was ultimately not interpreted as you initially desired? Well, rest assured of this, you are certainly not alone. Chances are, if you have any number of relationships in your life then you have been misunderstood at some point. Paul is no more exempt from this than we are. Paul through integrity and sincerity, with expressed emotions, pursues restoration towards the Corinthian people with love and grace.

Consider / Contemplate

“O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.” – Saint Francis

“Most of our brokenness cannot be simply taken away. It’s there.” – Henri Nouwen

“We all have broken hearts. Somewhere, people did not love us the way we want to be loved. Somewhere, we feel rejected, abandoned, and misunderstood.” – Henri Nouwen

Thinking It Through

1. In 2 Corinthians 1:12 Paul says that they he and his ministry companions have conducted themselves with “integrity and godly sincerity. What do integrity and sincerity look like in our relationships?
2. Allowing limited windows of information to inform our assessments of others or situations can create misunderstandings. Is there particular person or group who you most commonly arrive at determinations about too quickly with limited information?
3. Have you ever experienced or witnessed the pain a misunderstanding can cause? How was the misunderstanding navigated, and did it result in restoration?
4. What does it mean to live in grace towards others look like in the middle of a misunderstanding? Does our extension of grace have a limit?

5. Paul was clearly hurt by the Corinthians' misunderstanding, but his response was not simply to prove that he was right. What do you think is the difference between desiring to be right and desiring restoration?
6. Paul expressed his emotional struggle as "great distress...anguish of heart" and "many tears". What does this tell us about the depth of his relationship with the Corinthians? How does this challenge the idea that mature Christians should "get over" relational pain?
7. Can a relationship be forgiven without immediately being fully restored? What might healthy forgiveness look like when trust has been damaged?
8. Is there ever a danger in becoming so focused on being understood that we stop trying to understand the other person? What would it look like to pursue both truth and love in a difficult conversation?

Prayer Points

- Pray for relationships in our church that are experiencing misunderstanding or unresolved hurt.
 - Pray for wisdom to know when and how to pursue restoration.
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