

Standing Against Misunderstandings

by David Rubio

David Rubio's sermon addresses common misconceptions about the Christian life, emphasizing that believers will face problems and that the Bible provides guiding principles rather than specific answers to every issue.

Duration: 1:18:42

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 4:15, Philippians 4:8, 2 Timothy 3:16, James 1:22

Topics: "Exposing False Doctrines"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses four misconceptions of the Christian life that can lead believers astray. The first misconception is that the Word of God can change, but the speaker emphasizes that its principles remain constant. The second misconception is that if a believer is facing problems, they are unspiritual. However, the speaker points to Philippians 4:8-9, which shows that even true Christians face troubles but are not distressed, in despair, forsaken, or destroyed. The speaker warns against trying to find loopholes in God's principles by renaming things, and encourages believers to allow the Spirit of God to convict and guide them in specific areas of their lives.

Transcript

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A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Let us rise for an opening word of prayer, please. O dear Lord, we come before you with that plea, Lord, that you would use our lives as kindling to light that fire, Lord.

That fire of life in Jesus Christ, that fire that is filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, Lord, lighting upon us. That we would individually here and corporately bring glory to your name. That we would live faithfully, Lord.

That we would live truly and obediently for your glory. Pour into us, Holy Spirit. Pour into us this morning.

Open our ears. Open our hearts. And may we see Jesus this morning.

May we see him high and lifted up. May we see him as the King of Kings that he is. And the Lord of Lords that he is.

Prepare our hearts, Lord. Do not pass us by, O precious Savior. Do not pass us by.

But smile upon us, Lord, and be gracious unto us. That is my prayer this morning, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Amen. You may be seated. I, too, bring greetings to you this morning in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

I'm so thankful of what God has already done this morning. The singing here. The opening.

Pointing us to salvation and what salvation means for each one of us here in this room. And, again, I do marvel that as I contemplated what the Lord would share with us this morning, some thoughts came to my mind. And those thoughts related to what's already taken place this morning.

You see, oftentimes in our enthusiasm to meet with the Lord, we bypass some basic fundamentals of what it means to be a Christian. And that's why I appreciated Dave's reminder to us today. And, you know, in the midst of us forgetting some of those basics of the Christian life, we tend to drift a little bit from the truth and reality of what it means to live as a Christian.

And to be a Christian. And this morning, I would like to share with you a message that I have entitled, Standing Against Misunderstanding. Standing Against Misunderstanding.

And I titled the message that way because, you know, sometimes we believe some things about the Christian life that are not true. They're misunderstandings. So I would like to share, at the beginning of the message here, some basic misunderstandings that we have about Scripture and about the Christian life that many of us know about already.

But it's so easy for us to forget those things and we drift into believing these falsehoods as truth. So that's what I'd like to start out with this morning. Let me start out with the first one.

The first falsehood. And I'm not saying it's a deliberate falsehood, one that someone on purpose tries to convince you of. Maybe I could call it a misconception.

Maybe I could call it something that's maybe fiction, not true. Or maybe in some cases, maybe it is just a lie that the devil puts out there in front of us and perpetuates among us. But one of the first ones is this.

Because you are a Christian, all of your problems are solved. That's a lie. Christians, and may all of us who are Christians know that this is not true, but it's so easy for us to forget, especially in the light of Brother Leonard going to be with the Lord here and leaving a wife and children here and family and fathers and mothers and cousins and uncles and church members that are wondering and in grief and wondering, Lord, why Leonard? He's such a godly man.

But you know, God does not promise Christians a problem-free life. And we oftentimes forget that. Eternally, yes.

Eternally, absolutely, in glory, in our glorified state, absolutely we will have no problems in heaven. There are no problems there. But while we are here on earth, we will face problems.

And it's heresy. It is heresy. It is false teaching to tell anyone that if they come to Christ, all of their problems will be solved.

All of their marriage problems will be solved. All of their financial problems will be solved. All of their emotional problems will be solved.

All of their relationship problems will be solved. And the list could go on and on and on, but we know that's not true. It's not that way in the Christian world.

In fact, as some of us know, when you become a Christian, when you become born again, oftentimes our problems in this world actually increase. And they become more intensified. The fire gets hotter in life.

In 2 Corinthians 4, the Apostle Paul addressed this beautifully in some simple verses. 2 Corinthians 4, verses 8 and 9, he describes not only his life, but he describes the life of any true Christian in this room this morning. And this is what he has to say.

2 Corinthians 4, verses 8 and 9. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed. We are perplexed, but not in despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken.

Cast down, but not destroyed. And you know what we often do when we look at this verse? We look at the, if I can use it, the positive words. We look at things, we're not distressed as Christians.

We are not in despair as Christians. We are not forsaken as Christians. We are not destroyed as Christians.

And praise God, those things are true. But if you look at what Paul is also saying here, there is another side to what he's saying. He is saying we are troubled as Christians.

There's trouble all around us. We are perplexed as Christians, it says right here in this verse. Perplexed means sometimes we get a little confused.

Sometimes we lose our way a little bit and sometimes we wonder, where is God? Why is this happening? We're perplexed. And look at verse 9. We're also persecuted as Christians. And we are also cast down.

Not only cast down physically, but emotionally and spiritually at times. So the Christian life, while it has its victories, you know, we're not distressed, we're not in despair, we're not forsaken, we're not destroyed, it does have its troubled side. And I think it's good for us to remind ourselves of that so that we can know that we need to lean on the everlasting arms of Jesus every day.

That we can't take this life alone. And I think one of the songs that was sung here this morning talked about how often we get so busy with life, we just keep moving on and charging through and we think we can do it on our own. But there's trouble all around.

There's trouble all around. Perplexed. So it's wrong, brethren, to promote that now that we have become Christians, we will no longer have problems.

2 Timothy 3.12 says this, Well, another misconception about the Christian life that I think we need to understand this morning is this. All problems that you will have are specifically addressed in the Bible. That's not true.

All the problems that you will ever have are specifically addressed in the Bible. Well, any of us who read our Bible know that that is not true. Television is not addressed in the Bible, specifically.

The internet is not specifically addressed in the Bible. Specific drug abuse, except for alcoholism, is not really addressed in the Bible. What happens to an aborted baby after it's aborted, that's not specifically addressed in the Bible.

Mental illness versus demon possession, those things are not specifically addressed in the Bible. Specifically. And if we go through the Bible, if we let somebody, lead somebody on, and not meaning to, but tell them, you know, all the answers to life, every little thing, every little detail in your life, all the answers are in the Bible, you're going to be really misleading them because not all of the answers to every specific thing here in the 21st century in America are answered in the Bible.

You know, that perplexes us, doesn't it? Because you might be thinking, well, I thought that we were taught that the Bible is true and the Bible holds the answers to all of life's problems. You know, we hear verses read, like the one that we all read and know, like in 2 Timothy 3.16 that says, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly formed, furnished unto all good works. And we think, and we tend to forget, that the Bible does give us all the answers.

2 Peter 1.3 says this, it says, 2 Peter 1.3 says this, According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue. See, God has given us everything that we need. And everything that we need, yes, it is in this Bible.

But the specifics are not there. All the specifics. But you know what God does give us? And any of you in here know where I'm going with this.

God gives us the principles to live by. He gives us the principles by which we must then trust Him and trust those among us, being accountable to one another, discipling one another, how to apply these principles that God gives us in His Word, how to apply those specifically in every area of our life. And that's why we sit here in the morning and we hear preaching.

That's why you study your Word, the Bible every day. These are not just exercises in futility. They're not a waste of time.

They're to help guide us into those principles that God will use in our lives that we then can apply to specific areas. For example, in Ephesians, you know, we're told to be not drunk with wine. And there's other warnings about drunkenness and about the drunkard in the Bible.

Those same verses regarding drunkenness, they also are a principle regarding drug abuse, whether it's heroin abuse, cocaine abuse, prescription drug abuse. That principle applies there. When you talk about television, when you're talking about, you know, entertainment or different kinds of Internet uses, you

know, the Bible speaks, you know, and has a principle there.

And it's those principles that we need to really look at every day. And that's where we look here. Let's take Philippians 4a.

That's one of those verses that we all know. But it's the principle here that God wants us to learn so that we can apply it in every area of our life. Because, you know, if God just talked about the television here, and if God got really specific in the Bible, we would have nothing but law.

And everyone would be trying to find a way to get around something, renaming the television some different name, so that we could get around the specifics of the Bible. And see, God knows the hearts of men and women, and He knows that that tends to be a tendency of the fallen heart. So God leaves the general principles there, and then allows the Spirit of God to convict us and lead us in these areas.

For example, regarding television, regarding entertainment, regarding Internet use, regarding what your eyes should look upon. Look at Philippians 4a. Finally, brethren.

Brethren means you, us Christians. Whatsoever things are true, so if there's anything false that you're looking at, you shouldn't be dealing with those things. Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

That's a broad general principle, but you know, it applies to so many specific areas of our life. But let's not mislead ourselves or others into believing that the Bible addresses all these areas. It's up for us to trust God and to seek Him faithfully, to understand His principles.

And then as a church, as individuals, as fathers in homes, as mothers with your children, we need to then apply those in the specific areas of our lives. And we must do that with much prayer, seeking God's direction, and will in a reasonable understanding and application, in all wisdom and prudence, in the fear of the Lord in these areas. So don't be misled.

Don't be perplexed. Don't be confused to not holding to God's Word. You can say, well, it doesn't hold specifics there, so it must not apply to me.

No, the principles are all there. And remember Psalm 119.89 says, Forever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in heaven. God's Word is not going to change.

Those principles will not change. Cultures might change. Societies might change.

Technology might change. Forms of entertainment might change. But the Word of God will never change.

And those principles are the ones that we need to be instructing each other in. Romans 3.4 says, and it's a harsh statement by the Apostle Paul, and it's stuck in the middle of a verse, but it's a powerful one, but it's so true. It says, Let God be true, but every man a liar.

The principles are here, brethren. Even though you might not find the specifics, the principles are here. Let us live by those.

And God will hold us accountable to those principles as we apply them in the specific areas of our lives. Well, there's another falsehood that we can drift into that gets misunderstood. And that's this.

If you are having problems, you are unspiritual. If you are having problems, you are unspiritual. Now, let me clarify that statement.

Now, if you are not a Christian, you're unspiritual. You're going to have problems. If you are a Christian, a carnal Christian, a backslidden Christian, a Christian living in deliberate willful sin, then it will be true that, yes, you will have problems because you are unspiritual.

But I'm applying this thought here to those of us who really in our heart sense that we are clear with God, that we're trying to do what's right, and there's no specific sin that we know about. This is the person that I'm talking to. If you are having problems, you are unspiritual.

That's not necessarily true. But yet so often we look at people and we say, oh, they're having marriage problems. Oh, they're having financial problems.

Oh, they're having trouble raising their children. They must be unspiritual. Well, I've just told you there are problems all around us all the time.

The Apostle Paul just addressed them in that 2 Corinthians passage we read just a few minutes ago. So, it's wrong for us to make a blanket, overall, general statement that if someone's having problems, they are unspiritual. Yes, if they're in sin, if they're not Christians, yes, they will have problems, and we could probably then put them in that category, but we cannot make just a general blanket statement without knowing the specifics of that person's life.

The less we hurt people, the less we discourage people and say they're having problems, they're unspiritual. And sadly, we do promote that among ourselves at times, don't we? We fall and we drift from the reality that the Christian, that the life here on earth is very complicated and complex and we can't, sometimes we figure we can just make it black and white. Well, it's not always black and white.

So, we need to be careful when we make that statement. Another way of stating this is that if he or she was really spiritual, they would not be going through their problem situation if they were really spiritual. But, you know, we look in the Bible and it's not always that way, is it? Look at Job.

Job, in the Old Testament. I mean, I was reading last night about how God, people, you know, I've heard commentaries say, well, you know, Job had his problems because there was sin in his life, and you know, his this and that, he was a proud man, and his family must have been out of order, that's why they all got destroyed. I've heard all those little commentaries, but let's see what God says about Job.

In Job 1.9, the Lord God responds to Satan and says this, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? I mean, I've got to tell you, when I hear God's word, God's words directly, you know, my spiritual ears perk up and I listen. And see, God is saying Job was a perfect upright man in God's eyes, and when God says he's a perfect and upright man, I'm not going to question God. And here we are, Job suffered.

Job had big problems. Would we dare call him unspiritual after what God has called him? The truth is that all mankind is living in this fallen world, and in this fallen world we will have problems. Whether you're a Christian, whether you're not a Christian, whether you're a mature Christian, or whether you're a baby brand new Christian, there are problems around us.

And we need to be careful that we just not quickly judge somebody because they're having problems as being unspiritual. They might be, because of these other areas I just talked about. But look at some of the instances in the Bible of men who had major problems, but they were very godly men.

Job being one. How about the Apostle Paul? Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 11. See a little bit about what Paul has to say here.

It's just good for us to be reminded of these things, lest we drift and believe something about the Christian life that it's not. 2 Corinthians 11, verses 24 through 31. Now this is Paul.

This is the Apostle Paul. Powerful man of God. And look at what his life was involved in.

Verse 24. Of the Jews five times received I, that's Paul, forty stripes save one. Thrice, that means three times, was I beaten with rods.

Once I was stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I have been in the deep.

In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils, perils means danger there of course, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness and watchings, often in hunger and thirst, in fastings, often in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak? And I am not weak.

Who is offended? And I burn not. If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern my infirmity. The Apostle Paul had problems.

Would we call him an unspiritual man? Because he had problems. No. No.

He goes on to say, if you turn the page to chapter 12, verse 7 and 8. He says this. See, Paul suffered. He had problems.

He not only had outside problems. He had to carry the burden of the church. He was persecuted for being a Christian.

He was chased down. He had the responsibilities of the church, as I mentioned. Also, he had physical ailments.

So, I mean, how many of us have heard somewhere in our past, crossed paths with some people that say, well, they're sick because they have sin in their life. Many of us have. Well, there are some sins that do cause illness, don't they? I'm not saying that.

But for us to just make that blanket statement about, well, they're sick because they have sin in their life. That's not a proper approach. Okay, so let's be real careful here.

Let's understand. Let's stand against misunderstanding here. The reality of what the Christian life is like.

And look at what Paul's response was regarding his infirmities. And this is really a call for us. Verse 9, And he said unto me, Now listen, read that verse carefully.

So often we read that verse and we forget there's two conversations going on there. He is God. And God said unto me, unto Paul, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

And then Paul says, Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. See, for those of us who are walking in the Lord, walking in true faith, when we have problems, when we have infirmities fall upon us, and we know that there's no sin in our life, we've searched our heart and know we're clear with the Lord. Let's glorify in those.

Because they cause us to lean on the Lord more, and we become more strengthened, and we're refined, and we grow stronger in the Lord. That's what we should be doing. As we suffer these things.

And we will suffer. 1 Peter, in 1 Peter 4.12 says this to us. In 4.12 he says, Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.

In other words, you're going to have problems. Don't think it strange that you're having problems. Don't think it strange that there's death and disease and sorrow.

Anxiety. Stress. Don't think it strange that those things come into your life.

To try you. To test you. To strengthen you.

As though some strange thing happened unto you. But what should be our response? Verse 13. But rejoice.

Brother Dave spoke about that this morning. But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. It's not strange.

It's not unusual for the Christian to have problems, to have challenges, to feel defeated at times. It is the way things are in this fallen world. And even when you feel you are in your most spiritual condition, even when you feel that you're invincible spiritually, you're on top of the game, you know, you've got Bible verses memorized, you've got hymns memorized, you know, you've been fasting and praying, and you think you're in your top form as a Christian, beware.

You also are vulnerable, maybe even more so, because of maybe some unspoken pride. You're vulnerable to problems and to being challenged. Think it not strange, brethren.

Why is this happening to me? I've been reading my Bible. I've been serving in the church. I've been on the mission field.

I've done this. I've done that. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.

It's nothing strange. It's nothing unusual. It happened to Job.

It happened to Paul. It happened to all the apostles. It's happened to centuries and centuries of godly saints.

Not just you. Think it not strange when it happens. But when it does happen, we should be doing these things, shouldn't we? We all know this.

Seek the Lord in prayer and say, Lord, why is this happening to me? Search your heart, and then open your heart up to God's Holy Spirit and let Him shine His light into your life. And if there is sin there, confess and repent of that sin, because these sins are very likely the source of your problem. Maybe you didn't realize they were there, but that trial has brought you to that point where you open your life up to God, and He points His finger right at you and just touches that spot of sin.

If so, repent. But after you've prayed, after you've opened up your life up to the Lord, and you sense, God, that everything is clear before the Lord, then do as Paul did here in verse 13. Rejoice.

Rejoice, and consider it a privilege to share in the suffering of Christ for sharing and preaching the Gospel, for living a godly, biblically obedient life, and living godly in Christ Jesus. Well, look at those things that way. Well, there's a fourth lie that I want to talk about, a misunderstanding that we have.

And this is one that we tend to want to drift into believing this falsehood. And I know Brother Moses and Sister Rhoda have seen this a lot more. Maybe even Dave Asch has probably seen it a lot more than I have, even here in Lancaster County here.

But it's this. Being exposed to sound, solid, biblical teaching automatically solves your problems. And read that again.

This is a falsehood. It's not true. Being exposed to sound, solid, biblical teaching automatically solves your problems.

Just think about how silly that is, really. Just think about how silly thinking that way is. It's like, man, it would be like hanging around a really good welder or a really good carpenter and just standing there and talking and just rubbing shoulders with them, you know, and thinking that that's automatically going to make you a really good welder or a really good carpenter.

It's silly. Or ladies, it's kind of like you wanting to become a real good seamstress, wanting to be able to sew a dress, cut out a pattern, and sew a dress real quick. So you hang around some of the ladies in the church that are really good seamstresses and sew real well, and you talk and you visit with them and you spend a lot of time with them thinking that automatically that's going to make you a good seamstress or a great cook if you're around great cooks, that automatically that's going to make you that kind of person.

And of course you're going to say, well, that's silly. But so often that's what creeps into our lives, that we figure if we're a sound, biblically sound teaching church, biblically sound church, that we're automatically, our problems will be solved. I brought a map today.

It's a map of the United States. And Pennsylvania is kind of over here somewhere, and Dallas, Texas is down here. Across the United States, way from here to here.

Now, you know, I could take this map and I could tape it up to the wall here, and I could study all the highways. And if I had a real specific map, I could find where the bridges were, I could find where the toll roads were at. I could study this map.

I could find where all the truck stops were at for fuel or for bathroom breaks. I could find where any hotel or motel where we need to stay on the trip. I mean, I could put this up here, and I could study this, and I could stay close to this day and night for many, many, many days.

But you know what? Just studying this map is not going to get me to Dallas, Texas. Just being close to this map, and being around this map, maybe even putting it over my shoulder and taping it to my clothes, and me thinking about being in Dallas, Texas, is not going to put me in Dallas, Texas. And so often, as silly as that thought is, we think of the Christian life that way.

We think, well, if we just hang around godly people, if we just put our young people around godly youth, if I put my husband around some godly men who are godly husbands, they're automatically going to be real godly. Well, that's not true. The Christian life doesn't come automatically, brethren.

The Christian life is a battle. It is a race. You must train.

You must run. You must exert yourself spiritually, in faith, and in obedience. It's not automatically going to happen.

How many of us have known people that have moved here to these churches because their marriage is a mess, or they've got rebellious children, and they fear just by being here and having a preacher get up once a week, that automatically their family is going to be, if I can use the word, magically fixed? Well, God doesn't work in magic. God works in reality, biblical reality. And no, your problems are not going to be automatically fixed just by hanging around people.

You know why? I think Brother Dave kind of touched on it a little bit. You know, we also have an individual responsibility. It's not that we want to have an individualistic spirit.

I think that's what Dave was trying to say. We do not want to have an individualistic spirit, because that's a proud spirit. But individually, we are going to be accountable to God.

And He holds us accountable for the things that are preached here. He holds us accountable for the things that you learn. Those are the things that are going to help you in life's way, and help you through some of the problems, and around and through some of the problems that you have in your life.

But they're not going to happen automatically. You're responsible for those. You're the one that's going to stand alone before the Lord someday.

These things don't happen automatically. So don't fall into that falsehood. Don't fall into that falsehood, that just by studying the Bible, just by hanging around spiritual people, studying the Bible like a school book, it will not automatically solve your problems.

Remember, without Christ, you can do nothing. Without the Holy Spirit, you can do nothing. Without a willing, obedient, broken heart before God, you can do nothing.

In your own intellect, your own abilities, you can do nothing. You cannot solve all your problems. That's why in the book of James, there's so much talk about faith and works, about being doers of the Word and not hearers only.

Remember that verse? And what's it say? That you know what? Deceive yourself, right? Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only. Deceiving your own selves. If you think you're just going to automatically become just a better welder by hanging around welders, a better seamstress by hanging around seamstresses, a better Christian by just kind of attending a Bible teaching and preaching church, you deceive yourself.

You must be a doer of the Word. You must live it and live it through. Well, these four misconceptions of the Christian life have challenged me.

You know, we did four baptisms here last Sunday in the creek back behind the church here. And it's just a good reminder to us, you know, what does it mean to disciple and instruct one another, especially young believers? And I think these are some of the areas that we need to really look at carefully. Lest we ourselves drift into believing some of the things I just shared, these misconceptions.

Or we allow a young believer or an immature believer to drift away into these things that are not true and end up in falsehood. Well, the Lord further challenged me that we need to equip and be equipped realistically with the Christian life. And sometimes misunderstandings like these will get into our lives and hinder our growth in the Lord.

But what happens when misunderstandings come into our lives personally? That's another little thing I want to talk about this morning. Not only these big areas that we can get deceived in, but how about misunderstandings between one another? A.W. Tozer once wrote this deep truth. It is doubtful that God can use anyone greatly until he has hurt him deeply.

You see in Isaiah 53:10, speaking of our Lord and Savior, it says this, It pleased the Lord to bruise his son. That sounds a little brutal to us. It sounds a little unfair to us.

But sometimes God can use hard things in our lives to strengthen us. Because it's doubtful that God can use anyone greatly until he has hurt him deeply. And the prime example is our Savior.

It pleased the Lord to bruise his son. Hebrews 5:8 says, Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered. And if Christ was allowed to suffer, God willingly allowing it of his only begotten son, his beloved son, so that he could learn obedience, and in that be an example to us of how to be obedient.

Then it seems only likewise that we too must learn obedience to our Heavenly Father through the sufferings of this life here on earth. Remember Christ did not suffer for his own sins. He was sinless.

He was the spotless Lamb of God. He suffered for our sins. He bore them on the cross for our sins, for you and for me.

So we too, brethren, we too will suffer even when we are not involved in sin. Now, if we are in sin, God has verses to deal with that, doesn't he? If we are in sin, God has verses for that. He has instruction for us there.

For example, 1 Peter 2, 19-21. This is what the Lord says here. See, if you're saying, well, yeah, I'm going to suffer for Jesus, but you have sin in your life, you're proud, you're boastful, you're pushy, you're manipulative, you're rude, you're obnoxious, and you suffer, and you develop problems because of that with people, don't say, well, it's for God's glory, because look what Peter says here.

2 Peter 2, 20 says this. For what glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently? If you're being buffeted, if you're receiving discipline, if you're getting pushback from people because of your own sin, there's no glory in that. That's because of your sin.

But if when ye do well, when you're walking with the Lord humbly, with a pure heart before the Lord, but if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps. So yes, we as Christians will suffer here.

We will suffer here. We suffer from disease, we suffer from pain, we suffer from anguish, from grief, because we live in this fallen world in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation. But you know, there is this specific area isn't there of being misunderstood.

Even when you're doing the best. And we suffer there as Christians often. And I will say, 100% of us in this room, at some point in time, many times, most of us, have been misunderstood.

Misunderstood. I looked it up in the dictionary. This is what it means.

A misconception. A wrong interpretation or conclusion regarding a situation. Let me read that one again.

A wrong interpretation or conclusion, judgment, regarding a situation or event. To take a wrong sense over a situation or a statement or an event. That's what misunderstood or misunderstanding means.

And I mean here by misunderstood in your words. Misunderstood in your actions. Misunderstood even when you are innocent.

Misunderstood even in unspoken words. You didn't say enough. Or maybe you said too much.

Or maybe you're misunderstood because of your actions. Or maybe you're misunderstood because you didn't do enough action. Because of your non-action.

You just can't seem to win. Misunderstood. But you are considered to be the one at fault.

That's misunderstood. And you are to blame. You do what is right for the right purpose and the right motive.

And you are misjudged as wrong. And you might even be attacked. See, Job was misunderstood, wasn't he? Look at his life again.

He was misunderstood by his friends. They thought he was in sin. Even after he had lost everything and he was sitting there in boils, suffering.

Even his wife misunderstood him. She came up and told him to curse God and die. David, in the Old Testament, was misunderstood by King Saul.

David went out and the nation of Israel was being invaded by the enemy and David went out and he slew Goliath. All of us know the story. And Saul got jealous and envious and fearful.

He misunderstood David's actions and he sought to kill David all the rest of his life while Saul was alive. Joseph was misunderstood by his boss, Potiphar, when Potiphar's wife lied to him that Joseph had attempted to commit immorality with her. Yet Joseph had never touched her or sought after her.

Joseph's heart was after God. Not after her. Not after her.

And the evidence of that is right here in Genesis where the passage, that whole passage where it describes that event in Genesis 26-24 this is what Joseph says. I'm sorry here. Genesis 39.

I'm sorry. Genesis 39, verse 9. This is what Joseph said. It's pretty profound.

Joseph said, There is none greater in this house than I. He's speaking to Potiphar's wife as she's trying to convince him to be immoral with her. There is none greater in this house than I, Joseph. Neither hath he, that's the master, kept back anything from me but thee because thou art his wife.

How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? I mean, he was a righteous man. He was a righteous man. And yet, Potiphar didn't believe this righteous man.

He believed the lie of his wife. And Joseph suffered. He got thrown into prison and he was forgotten there.

Seemingly forgotten. By Potiphar. Misunderstood.

A godly man. Misunderstood. The Apostle Paul was misunderstood.

Remember the situation when Paul was speaking to King Agrippa and Fessus the governor was there also. And it's really a fascinating account where Paul in wonder just this marvelous way spreads out the whole gospel message to King Agrippa. And he pleads with the king.

He pleads with the king. And Fessus, who's listening, says this in verse 26. Verse 24.

And as he thus spake for himself, Fessus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself much learning doth make thee mad. We would say today, Paul, you're crazy. You're crazy, Paul.

See, Paul was misunderstood. He was giving these men, King Agrippa and Fessus, the governor there in the presence, he was giving them the keys to the kingdom. And they misunderstood those keys to the kingdom and all Fessus could say is, Paul, you're crazy.

Talk about being misunderstood. And you know, that misunderstanding more than likely costs Fessus his soul. He's burning in hell today.

And same with King Agrippa. He's burning in hell today. That was a very serious misunderstanding.

But Paul was the one that was misunderstood and he was labeled crazy. And you will understand that if you choose to be obedient to Scripture, you will be misunderstood. And you know what? Some will even think you're crazy.

Won't they? How many of us, when we started on our journey, especially some of us here who came from more evangelical type churches or mainstream type churches, people thought we were crazy for getting rid of our television. We were crazy for having our wives not have makeup on. People thought we were crazy for having our wives put those head coverings on.

Mothers thought their daughters were crazy for looking like in these funny dresses, not wearing pants anymore. People thought we were crazy. Crazy for faithfully following the Lord.

That's being misunderstood. Isn't it? You don't vote? You don't vote? What kind of American are you? You're crazy. You have a say in how this government runs.

You're crazy. But see, when you follow the Lord, just as Paul did, just as Joseph did, just as Job did, people think you're crazy. They misunderstand you.

But see, the struggle that we have is so often, we take those things personally, don't we? But you know, we need not take them personally because the most perfect individual that ever lived on this earth was misunderstood. And that's our Savior, Jesus Christ. He created us, yet many misunderstood what He was really trying to do for them.

They questioned His motives. They rejected Him. They mocked Him.

And they crucified Him. Yes, there were a few individuals. The high priest, the Pharisees, the scribes, the Sadducees, the Herodians.

They knew what they were doing. Most of them did. But there were a large number of people that we encounter here in the New Testament that were really somewhat naive.

They were just kind of being led around by the mob, by the group thinking. They actually, I think, really did misunderstand who Christ was. They misunderstood.

Yet our Savior, He endured the misunderstanding by those whom He created. He endured it so well, He even went to the cross for it. And oh, what an example that is for us, is it not? And that's what I want to speak about here as I conclude here in a few minutes.

These misunderstandings, we have an example of how to deal with misunderstandings in our life. Because our Lord, He is the best example for us. He was a man of sorrows.

He was acquainted with grief. He of all individuals ever understood everything and every detail and every pain and every problem. He understood it all.

Yet He Himself was misunderstood by those that He came to save and to set straight. And that includes us here today. You might ask, well, how was He misunderstood? I mean, give me some specific ideas.

Well, let me give you one thought. His birth was misunderstood. You know that there are individuals and you can find the verses, there's one or two in the New Testament, where people actually believed He was an illegitimate child.

He was an illegitimate child. They misunderstood His birthplace. They had a hard time in those days believing that the King who was going to deliver them, the King that they'd been waiting for for thousands of years, their Messiah would be born in such a lowly little place as Bethlehem and then be raised in some backwater or backwashed place as Nazareth.

Remember Nathaniel said this in John 1.46, he said, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Talk about being misunderstood. His birth was misunderstood. The place where He was raised, His pedigree, if I could put it that way, it was misunderstood.

Even His twelve disciples misunderstood Him. We see that over and over and over again in the New Testament. The Lord would take special time with them and explain what was going to happen in His life.

He would tell them about how He would suffer, how He would be persecuted, how He was going to be put on that cross, and how He was going to be raised again on the third day. And they misunderstood Him.

And the evidence is everywhere that they misunderstood Him.

And it's most clearly seen in the account in Mark 7. And it says this here, where Peter is speaking to the Lord. And Peter tells Him that, you know, the Lord is telling him about what's going to happen. And Peter says, No, it can't be so.

It won't happen, Lord. And what did the Lord tell him? Get thee behind Me, Satan. You see, even Peter misunderstood Him.

Even His twelve disciples misunderstood Him. And Peter here actually stood against the Lord. And the Lord had to rebuke him and say, Get behind Me, Satan.

Well, turn to Mark 3. Let's look at some other things where the Lord was misunderstood. He was willfully misunderstood in some instances where people on purpose misunderstood Him. And here's one account.

Mark chapter 3. It's a familiar account, but let's look at it from this part of people willfully, on purpose, misunderstanding our Lord. And then I want to go on to another example where people didn't really get it. They didn't willfully do it.

They just didn't understand. But let's read the one where people willfully did it. Mark 3, verse 1. And He, that's Jesus, entered again into the synagogue.

And there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched Him, whether He would heal on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse Him. Those are the Pharisees watching Him.

And He saith unto the man which hath the withered hand, Stand forth. And He saith unto them, unto the Pharisees, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days or to do evil, to save life or to kill? But they held their peace. And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand.

And he stretched it out. And his hand was restored whole as the other. And listen to what their reaction was.

And the Pharisees went forth and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. See, the Lord dealt, and it says here in verse 5, He looked at them with anger. Why? Because they were so legalistic.

They were so wrapped up in the Sabbath day that they lost the true heart of God. His heart for the souls of men. His heart for the souls of mankind.

And even for their physical needs. And all they cared about was the Sabbath day and their control in the people, their pride and their control. And the Lord knew He was going to get reaction from them.

He knew. But yet, He knew what was right to do before God. And He went ahead.

And He did it anyway. And He healed the withered man. He knew their hardness of heart.

But yet, He knew He needed to do also what pleased His Father in heaven and what glorified His Father in heaven. And He moved ahead anyway. And He was misunderstood.

Misunderstood to the point even when it says in the end of verse 6, they wanted to kill Him. And they sought of ways to do that. And we know they ended up completing their task of hanging Him on that cross.

Even when it is not popular for you and for me, brethren, to do things God's way, biblically, will often be misunderstood by those around us who choose not to see or who are misled from seeing the reality of what is going on in our lives. Go a few verses now. Same chapter.

Verses 20 and 21. Another incident here. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

And when His friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on Him, on the Lord Jesus, for they said, that He is beside Himself. You see, our Lord had been so involved in dealing with people's needs. Their need to hear hope in the true Gospel.

Their need to be healed of their diseases and their infirmities. He was so wrapped up in that, in His compassion upon the people, that He had not eaten. And it doesn't say how many meals He had missed.

But He was so busy, He wasn't taking time to eat. And those around Him, His friends heard of it, and they said, He is beside Himself. Some of the commentaries say, He's becoming irrational.

Again, in common words, we say, He's going crazy. I mean, here is a man, our Lord Jesus, God incarnate, God-man, and He's taking care of the needs of the multitudes, not just a handful of people, multitudes of people. Non-stop.

Obviously, 24 hours a day. And how many days He'd been doing that? I don't know, but He hadn't eaten. And instead of His friends looking upon Him and saying, it's just wonderful what He's doing.

All they could say is, He's beside Himself. He's becoming irrational. He's like going a little crazy.

And they said that of our Lord. And these were some of His closest friends. These didn't say acquaintances here.

It said friends. Go over to verse 31. Misunderstood.

Verse 31, There came then His brethren, that's His brothers and His sisters, earthly brothers and sisters, half-brothers and sisters, and His mother, that would be Mary, and standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him. And the multitude sat about Him, and they said unto Him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for Thee. Why were they seeking for Him? Because, see, it's in this context of the verses that we just read about His friends thinking He was going crazy.

His mother and His brothers and sisters came to convince Him to come home with them. See, they misunderstood also. Mary, His mother, if anyone on the face of the earth should have known that He was about His Father's business.

I mean, the angel had come to her before she conceived through the Holy Spirit, told her what this little baby was going to grow up to be. He was going to be the deliverer of His people. When He got to be 12 years old, remember they went to the feast in Jerusalem and they left and they forgot Him there and they panicked a few days out on their journey and went back and Joseph and Mary found Him in the temple.

And they said, What are you doing to us? And the Lord Jesus, I think in all due respect and honor, looked at His mother and said, I'm about my Father's business. How could Mary have misunderstood? She was closest to Him. Yet, she did misunderstand.

And she said yes, she believed what people were saying about her son. He's becoming irrational. He's beside himself.

He's going crazy. We've got to do something about this man. He's helping too many people.

Misunderstanding. Misunderstanding. And so it is often today, is it not? Is it not that way sometimes today? To those Christians who walk humbly and obediently before God in the fear of the Lord, sometimes their actions will be misunderstood by those closest to them.

By mothers and dads. By brothers and sisters. By relatives.

By their closest friends. They will often misunderstand us. And when will they misunderstand us the most? They'll misunderstand us the most when we enter the narrow path in a serious way.

Look what it says in Matthew 7, 13 and 14. It says this, Enter ye in at the straight gate. That's the call to us Christians.

Enter ye in at the straight gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life. And listen, and few there be that find. In Luke, it's described a little differently.

A few different words, but the same thought. Luke 13, 23, the Lord says this, Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And Jesus said unto them, Strive to enter in at the straight gate for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able. So see, when we start to squeeze into that narrow path, what we call the Christian life, I'm telling you, we're being fed lies constantly, brethren, that that path is wider than what it really is.

I'm here to tell you, it's much narrower. Probably even narrower than maybe where most of us are even walking even today. And God is trying to try us and test us and refine us so that we squeeze more into that narrow path.

And few there be that find it. But you know, as we squeeze into that narrow path, we will be misunderstood by those closest to us. Family and friends, brothers, sisters, mothers, dads, relatives.

Those of you here who have left the Amish traditions to follow Christ, you know what I'm talking about. Those of you here who have left the Mennonite traditions to follow Christ, you know what I'm talking about. Those of us here who have left the Evangelical or Protestant or mainstream churches to follow Christ, we know what that means.

Those of us who have made changes in our family life, in the way we look in obedience to Scripture, we know what it is to be misunderstood. Those of us who have left worldly friends behind who come up to us and say, what happened to you? Why don't you want to have fun with us anymore? Why don't you want to be with us anymore? Do you think you're too good or something? We're misunderstood, aren't we? It's not about being too good for them. It's about being on the narrow path.

How about those of us who have been misunderstood because we left worldly Christian friends behind? And I can't judge whether they're Christians or not, but the direction they were going was not the narrow pathway. And we left them behind, and they call us bigots. They call us legalistic.

And we're misunderstood because we're trying to allow God to put us on that narrow path. And we're misunderstood. And as with our Lord Jesus, and as with the Apostle Paul, and with many, many, many godly saints that have gone before us in the past thousands of years, they and we are misunderstood.

We are labeled crazy. We're labeled unstable. We're labeled irrational.

We're labeled fanatics. We're labeled legalist. But look what Hebrews 11.38 calls them.

It calls these faithful ones of whom the world was not worthy. Of whom the world was not... You know, if someone wants to call me crazy, if someone wants to call me unstable, if someone wants to call me a fanatic, but I can fit into that description of Hebrews 11.38 that says that I, David Rubio, could be one of those of whom the world was not worthy, I would say amen, hallelujah, glory to God. And I pray you would too.

For the serious follower of Christ, who with a pure, unselfish, humble heart, obediently choosing to live the Christian life God's way, not man's way, you will be understood. You will be misunderstood by mankind. You will do the right thing for the right reason biblically, and you will be misunderstood.

And you will be judged for doing what the world would call the wrong thing. Or for what the world would call having the wrong motive. But biblically, you know what God would say that that's not true.

So it will be for all true, obedient followers of Christ. Be prepared for it, brethren. Be ready for it.

Because it will come. You will be misunderstood. And you know what's amazing? In that same, in back in Mark, chapter 3 again, there is a powerful statement here that Christ was misunderstood to a point to where even He was accused of the Pharisees, of the scribes.

Look at verse 22, Mark 3, 22. And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He, that's Jesus, hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. What blasphemy! The scribes calling Jesus a son of the devil.

Saying that His miracles were because of the devil. And it's amazing that God didn't strike Him dead right then. But He didn't.

And you know why He didn't? Because from this little episode we can learn three good reasons real quickly here of how we can handle being misunderstood. First of all, when you're misunderstood, you need to ask the question, who misunderstood you? Who? You need to consider the source of the misunderstanding. There's a little saying that I came across.

It was kind of a cute little saying, but I think it's a really beautiful saying. It says this, when a mule kicks you, it does so because it is only a mule. When a mule kicks you, it does so because it's only a mule.

When someone misunderstands you, and you know you're in the will of God, and you know there's no sin or pride or any of those other things involved in the things that you're doing, you're just trying to follow God's Word obediently, and you're misunderstood, you need to consider the source of the person who's misunderstanding you, because some people come back on you because of their problems and not yours.

They come back on you because of their unbelief, not because of your step in faith with the Lord. So you need to consider the source.

See, the Lord Jesus, when He was accused of being the son of Satan, the Lord could have struck him dead there, but the Lord looked at the scribes, probably in compassion, and said, you foolish men, you foolish men, you don't know what you're doing to yourself. And those scribes, unless they repented of that, and there's no indication they did, all those scribes are burning in hell today. And they'll be tossed in a lake of fire where they'll be wailing and gnashing of teeth forever and forever.

Consider the source if you're misunderstood. Maybe have some compassion on them, because maybe they're just blurting out the instability, the pain, the sin, the issues in their own life. And then, secondly, if the misunderstandings continue, that you keep having these misunderstandings over and over again, you need to ask yourself the question, why? Why do I keep having these same misunderstandings with people? It could be that you are repeatedly doing something offensive without realizing it.

Maybe you just have bad manners. Maybe you're just rude. And you just have to get some manners and learn how to approach people humanely and kindly.

Or maybe it's just the fact that maybe you are doing things wrong. Maybe you do have maybe a bad attitude and you don't see it. Maybe you have a wrong view of Scripture and you're applying it in a wrong way and people are misunderstanding.

So if you're being repeatedly misunderstood, you need to step back and ask why. And if you can't figure out why, then that's why you have godly friends. That's why you have godly people in the church.

Go to someone, get some counsel and say, you know, I'm having this problem. And I've had this problem with that person and that person and that person and they're not at all related to each other, but I keep getting the same response from being misunderstood. What do you think is going on? And that person will say, well, tell me what's going on each time.

And you know, getting a third person, I mean a second, someone else, an outsider to look at it, might help you come to some realization that maybe there is something you are doing. Or they might say that you're, nothing, you're doing this wrong, but you know, that person has this in their life, that person has that in their life and it might help you just understand it a little bit better. But get some godly counsel if it keeps happening again because maybe God wants to make, show you some things about your own life.

And thirdly and lastly, when the misunderstanding time is over, ask the Lord what. What can I learn from this situation, Lord? What about me? What about my life will help me not get into these misunderstandings again? What is it that God wants to change in my life? Because so often we've been misunderstood, not just one time, but repeatedly over and over and over again, even by different people. Sometimes people get bitter.

And they get angry because they keep getting misunderstood and they just get frustrated about it. And we know that anger and bitterness just consumes people. And it takes the focus off their life.

Often leading to even more understanding and more bitterness. And that gets in the way of our relationship with the Lord. We become, we start to backslide.

We start to become, we start to fall away. But we must, by God's grace, ask God to tell us what does God want to change in our life. Because God might want us to learn how to release that anger to Him.

Repent of the bitterness and learn to forgive and learn to be more patient with others. Because it is a tragedy for a Christian, brethren. It is a tragedy for a Christian to be full of bitterness and anger from being misunderstood.

Because not only is that person an offended brother or an offended sister, but they also are offensive. They become an offensive brother. An offensive sister.

Because their bitterness and anger flows out into their family. Into their marriage. Into the church life.

Into the body of Christ here. And it becomes offensive. O, be honest before God and confess if there's any of this in your life.

And choose not to be offended from being misunderstood for doing what is right biblically. Remember that what I read earlier, 2 Timothy 3.12 says, Yea, all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. All of us here today have felt and have experienced the sting of misunderstanding.

Just like a bee sting. Ouch, it hurts. But remember, Jesus Christ, our Savior, our Lord, the Captain of our souls, He too endured misunderstanding.

And He overcame it. And He was in all ways tempted as we are, yet He sinned not. And we also, who are His, can have the same victory.

My final verse I'd like to read in closing is 1 Corinthians 15.58. And it's an encouragement to us who have been misunderstood and maybe get a little discouraged at times. It says this, Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Amen.

Amen. May the Lord bless His Word this morning. And may you be moved on to Christlikeness in our Lord.

Amen. Yes, thank you so much, brother. I don't know how many of you realize it, but that was a message of maturity.

That was not a message of a novice. Not a message of someone recently born again just experiencing the blessings and the glory of salvation. But it was a thought-out message of great and deep maturity that I would say was very, very important in the lives of our church.

And hopefully all of us visitors likewise can gain much from this message. My mind went pretty far, brother. I'm sure we could have a Bible study here on that.

But you know, you have this thing of accidents that happen because of unsafe practices. No guard on machinery and things. And children fall under the tractor and then they want to put it all on God.

God saw that the child was going to be wicked and therefore took its life. And it's just simply not true. It's our own failings and our own unsafe practices and risks we take.

And there's just many other things like that that I believe would be good for us to ponder and think. But I just want to say a hearty amen. I feel it's a message of maturity for us to put away these misconceptions and think soberly, righteously, and godly concerning these matters and allow ourselves to be misunderstood for holding to the truth of them.

But that last part, I've often meditated upon that in the past year or more recent past, because as many of you know that if we are buffeted for our faults, take it patiently. But if you suffer for doing well, standing up for what's right and true, then rejoice that we have the privilege of being persecuted for Christ's sake. And we need to learn to divide that, like you say, maybe with some counsel at the heart of some brothers who know us well can help us separate those things from one another and we can tell what's going on a bit more and bring some of that turmoil and perplexity perhaps to rest.

Thank you very, very much, brother. I appreciate it deeply.

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