Be Christlike When Misunderstood

By Charles W. Koller

Not all the crosses are on hills. And the heaviest cross that Jesus bore was not the wooden cross He bore to Calvary. A heavier cross was the fact that He was so largely misunderstood by those whom He sought to save. Jesus did not weep on Calvary, but on Olivet He wept!

His parting gift to the disciples was peace (John 14:27), but coupled with the gift was the commandment to love (John 15:12). This commandment carries with it several imperatives.

It is imperative that we strive to *understand*. "Love is kind --thinketh no evil--believeth all things--hopeth all things." Much of the beauty of our fellow beings lies undiscovered, waiting for our understanding to open the windows for it to shine through. Much of the strife that has ravaged the earth has resulted from misunderstanding. Most of our harsh judgments would be mellowed if we only understood.

It is likewise imperative that we strive to be understood. We owe it to ourselves and others to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22). The *appearance* of evil is often as deadly as the *actuality,* to our reputations, our usefulness and our aspirations. If misunderstanding provokes wrath, which "worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:20), a serious injury has been done, and the cause of Christ suffers.

It is imperative that we strive to be Christlike *when we do not understand.* Love is generous in its judgments. Perhaps our principal sins are sins of the disposition. Of these, none is greater than the sin of ungenerous judgment. It is far better to be too trustful than too suspicious, and far more profitable to the soul. Love is patient in its misgivings. What losses, griefs, and disruptions would be avoided by the exercise of love and patience in the face of misgivings!

It is imperative that we strive to be Christlike *when we are not understood.* To be misunderstood is the penalty of individuality. The strong misunderstand the weak; the rich misunderstand the poor; the old misunderstand the young--and vice versa. Yet, each one needs the other, and we must live together.

To be misunderstood is often a penalty of discipleship, and particularly is it one of the penalties of leadership. But to be Christlike when misunderstood is one of the most beautiful evidences of having been with Jesus.

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