

Misunderstood! — Week 4

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The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?" (Matthew 26:59-68, NIV).

If anyone knows what it's like to be misunderstood, Jesus does. As we read here, these witnesses who came forth testified that Jesus said He could tear down the temple and build it up again in three days. Yes, Jesus did say that (John 2:18-22), but He was referring to His own death and resurrection. The others misunderstood what He meant. They thought He was referring to the temple building where they worshipped. Many misunderstood who He was, and why He came.

So often in life, we too are misunderstood. It can be really hurtful and frustrating, and even damage relationships if the misunderstanding gets passed around. It is possible that when someone hears even just one negative thing about a person, it taints his or her entire view of that person, and often it's over a misunderstanding. If Satan has tainted a person's view of someone else, everything they hear about the person (as in gossip), just adds to the "all-round view" they have of them. Yet, what about "truth?" Where does truth come into this? We need to exercise discernment and sort out the "lies" from the "truth," the "misunderstanding" from the "facts."

If you are one that has been misunderstood, then take heart; Jesus understands how you feel. He too was misunderstood and even had His character attacked. True moral fiber is revealed in how we respond to an injustice or untrue accusation. Remember, an attack like this is one of Satan's most cunning ploys, so much so that he even used it against our Lord and Savior. Stay sweet in your spirit through prayer, stay humble in attitude through the Holy Spirit, pray that the truth will be made known, and that the explanation (either by you or someone else), will shed light and reveal the truth. You don't have to feel alone in this. God knows the truth and He knows your heart. Leave it with Him!

On a personal note, I have keen compassion for those who have been misunderstood. Having experienced a situation that culminated in my walking away from a professional position, where I had labored intensely, and my superiors did not distinguish the truth: I have been misunderstood. It wasn't until two years later that truth was shed on the circumstances. I am not sure how it came to pass because I had moved on in faith believing, and God opened

doors that I would have never imagined. Yet, to be brutally honest, my initial response produced agony, loss of sleep, and oppressive thoughts that tormented my mind. No doubt I aged ten years or more in a few short months over this matter. The lyrics to "Thou O Lord," would play over and over in my mind and get me through tough moments . . . "For Thou O Lord are a Shield for me, my Glory and the Lifter of my head." It was no coincidence that during this time of heartache, my children were practicing this song almost daily for the youth choir to sing in Teen Talent. Now I look back and wonder why I ever questioned Him. God has always been faithful to me! He will be faithful to you as well—He is on your side!

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, not only to die for my sins, but to endure human trials just like I do. It's comforting to know that Jesus was misunderstood just like I have been misunderstood. Help me to guard my heart and mind against lies that might come against me or against other people. Allow me to be a vessel of light in the situations where I can make a difference. In Christ's Holy and Matchless Name, Amen.