**Transformed: 2 Corinthians wk 2 - Make My Day**

**“Go ahead, make my day” – Sudden Impact - Clint Eastwood – you crossed me, give me a reason to pull this trigger…**

**Have you ever been misunderstood? Taken out of context? Done something good only to have to blow up in your face? You want to fight back… set the record straight…**

**How we respond can expose growth or immaturity. Chiseling you.**

**Growth and transformation in Christ = sanctification.**

**Using 2 Cor - the messy process of becoming more like Christ…**

**Last week - God makes us more like him, through Pain & Trials.**

**This week - How mistreatment from others shapes you.**

**2 Corinthians is written as a part of an ongoing dialogue between Paul and the Christians in Corinth. Like listening to one side of a phone conversation. We must read between the lines.**

**The Vegas like city of Corinth… Let’s pick up where we left off last week…**

**2 Corinthians 1:12 Now this is our boast: (I promise you this – I know for sure)**

**Acts 18 - Paul spent 1 1/2 yrs with them - after he leaves people come and question Paul’s teaching & leadership - saying he is not a real apostle and used them for his own gain – and that Paul couldn’t be trusted because he changed plans on coming back and is unstable.**

**He was treated horribly after he gave so much for them**

**What follows is yrs of tension between Paul & Corinth. On the edge of a church split, friendships at stake... Ever been there?**

**Friend / marriage ending- under the surface unresolved issues.**

**How did Paul respond? That mistreatment actually shaped him and made him more like Christ - How...?**

**WHAT HAPPENED? How was and (how are we) misunderstood**

**Let’s take a look a what happened and how he responded.**

**2 Corinthians 1:12 Now this is our boast: (let me explain...) Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God’s grace. (Paul's conduct was questioned)**

1. **When your integrity and character is questioned**

**2 Cor 1:13 For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. (I did not try to trick you - don't twist my words...) And I hope that, 14 as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us (be proud of us) just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.**

1. **When your words are twisted**

**Ever had that happen to you?**

**15 Because I was confident of this, I wanted to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. (I was planning on coming to see you again) 16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. (To come by both times – to be the last stop before I go home) 17 Was I fickle when I intended to do this? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both “Yes, yes” and “No, no”? (I meant and intended to come)**

**It's true the plans changed several times – “but I did not lie to you – I meant it…”**

1. **When your love is questioned**

**Accused of not caring – you were not there!**

**18 But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.” (I was not double minded - I am not unstable...) 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.” (we told you about Jesus with complete assurance and conviction) 20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. (Jesus fulfills every promise of God - everything he says he will do) And so through him the “Amen” (so be it) is spoken by us to the glory of God. (By Jesus I will keep my word)**

1. **When your reliability is doubted**

**But you said… you said… he is a liar… He had planned on coming back to see them – but couldn’t – he was attacked**

**21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (We came to you – filled with God’s Spirit – sent by God and taught you confidentially with a pure heart)**

1. **When your motives are challenged**

**His Christan faith and leadership were questioned.**

**2 Cor 2:23 I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. (I fully intended to come – but didn’t as it might stir more trouble)**

**If I had come, I know I would’ve been unkind – it was for you own good that I did not come when I'm upset**

* **Sometimes we need to know when not talk or meet up**

**24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, (I am not trying to manipulate or make you feel bad) because it is by faith you stand firm.**

* **Basically - I don’t want you to change because I show up & pressure you – I want it to be a faith issue on your part**

**Ever talk to someone and they relent just to end the issue - you want them to change because they want to**

**(1 Cor 16:5-7) He plans to pass through Macedonia and hopes to spend the winter with them (wanting it to be a long visit). He qualifies it by saying “if the Lord permits” (1 Cor 16:7). But that trip never took place... so again – his actions were questioned…**

1. **When every action is picked apart**

**They accused him of never wanting to come based on his actions - they picked it apart - and accused him of not caring.**

**2 Cor 2:1 For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. 2 For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? (If me coming gets you angry… how is that good for you or me?)**

**3 And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, (mystery 3 letter – it was harsh… hoping you would have some things worked out before I get there) for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. (I was sure you would see things differently) For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, (I spoke from a broken and frustrated heart) not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you. (I was harsh and truthful – because I care for you)**

**But - they were offended. Paul confesses - Okay, my heart was breaking for you – it was truth but hard to hear.**

* **As hard as it may be for some of us to hear, we can’t always solve every problem... Not everything we do will be understood.**

**Some people just won’t listen. Some people just love to argue. Some people have already made up their minds. Some people have an answer for everything - we can't fix every issue.**

**Knowing that the situation was inflamed, and emotions were high... Paul decided not to go to Corinth at this time - but in his absence…**

**2 Cor 2:5 If anyone has caused grief, he (this mystery person) has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. (Honestly - This person is hurting you more than me) 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. (those who shamed him, pointed him out – exposed him - and asked him to leave - that is enough)**

1. **When you’re plotted against**

**Paul mentions a mystery person they all knew, "the great offender" who attacked Paul and stirred up trouble against him. That person was cast out - due to his actions - but seems he has come back.**

**Paul's integrity was questioned, words twisted, authority tested, motives challenged, actions picked apart and plotted against...**

**How did he (how can we) respond to mistreatment & misunderstanding**

* **Realize you will be misunderstood (even by those close)**

**Paul and the Corinthians were close - he led them to the Lord, baptized some of them, laughed, and cried with them... but then a rift developed.**

**Same thing happens in marriage, families, friendships... that is part of being in relationships - part of letting people in your life**

* **Live above accusation**

**2 Corinthians 1:12 ...we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity.**

**Paul was determined to be a person of integrity – he says - I did not manipulate you or use you – I was blameless.**

**He always conducted himself in ways that honored God.**

**Echoed through out the Bible: Listen to some of these...**

**Phil 2:15...be blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky**

**1 Timothy 3:2 (Titus 1:6) ...now the leader is to be above reproach... (blameless)**

**1 Timothy 3:7 ... also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.**

**1 Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among unbelievers that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.**

**2 Peter 3:14 ... make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with others.**

**Are you a person of integrity? Do you live what you say? Do others have a reason to accuse you? For some, we can stop right here…**

**Paul says my conscience is clear, I'm an open book, nothing is hidden, I'm transparent – What can you really accuse me of?**

* **Don't get defensive**

**Paul was troubled by the accusations, but he was not angry at them.**

**He did not get argumentative or try to prove he was right.**

**Not responding like those in the world – anger, lies, revenge, burning bridges. Mass emails and posts on social media.**

* **Present a humble, honest, and clear explanation**

**Paul patiently explained it again - He did not pressure them or hide things - but humbly put his heart out there – he told the truth in love.**

**He shared his struggles and exactly what happened**

**“I** **wanted to come and see you but only if it would bring about healing and spiritual growth - not more fighting.”**

**He said - Just as Jesus kept his word, I strive to keep my word, but things happen that sometimes keep us from doing it.**

* **Pray for them and give them some room**

**Paul responded with giving then space and time - He went to God on their behalf and let the Holy Spirit work - without interfering –**

**Sometimes you need to meet & hash it out. Sometimes you need to back off, give people space, give them time to think and pray - and give the Holy Spirit time to soften their hearts.**

**He did not press the issues to fix it. This was a tough one for me. Gamber song… know when to hold em…**

**2 Cor 2:4 “I wrote that letter (the one we don’t have) in great anguish, with a troubled heart and many tears. I didn’t want to grieve you, but I wanted to let you know how much love I have for you”**

**The lost letter was a hard letter that Paul didn’t want to write.**

**And it was a hard letter the Corinthians didn’t want to read.**

**He wrote it out of love - but they did not feel his love... sometimes that happens - The HS moved on him to pull back a bit... and let God work.**

**I will come... but until then - hear God, let him work in you - I've not given up on you - I said what I needed to say - now I'll wait.**

**Romans 12:18 - If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.**

**Waiting can be hard for me... I often try to fix things...**

**This is not passive / apathy / do nothing indecision but - Active waiting**

**Ps 37:8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.**

**Isaiah 40:31 - ...they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (waiting on the Lord for them)**

* **Don't return evil for evil**

**Paul understood - as Christ was insulted and accused and condemned - though innocent, Jesus never counter attacked (though he could…)**

**Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.**

**When they beat him, he didn’t retaliate. When they forced that crown of thorns on his head, he didn’t curse them. When they drove the nails in his hands & feet, he didn’t threaten them. When they spat at him, he didn’t spit back. When they swore at him, he didn’t swear back.**

**How did Jesus do it? 1 Peter 2:23 - When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.**

**Sometimes the real test of our faith is what we don't do. Those moments test our faith, shape character, reveal who we follow**

* **Give them what Jesus gave you - another chance**

**Paul responded with grace - He did not trade insults or try to get even... instead he forgave... even the one that started it.**

**2 Cor 2: 6 The punishment inflicted on him (the great offender) by the majority is sufficient. (he has gone through enough) 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.**

**That troublemaker dude… let him back in and restore him.**

**It can take just as much courage and wisdom to welcome back a person as it does to confront a person.**

**9 Another reason I wrote you (the previous mystery letter) was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, (one verse - 5X he says forgive - we all need God's grace – Don’t keep a grudge on my account – I’ve let it go)**

**Remember - That person needs forgiveness / you need forgiveness / I need forgiveness / ...thank God for Jesus.**

**This is a truthful statement - We will always need forgiveness, and we will always have someone we need to forgive.**

**That issue - that argument - (chisel) is shaping you**

**When we get misunderstood - We like to claim our rights - make our point - push until the other person breaks... because we are right, dog-gone-it! / Then here come Jesus... submit to one another... prefer others above yourselves... turn the cheek... forgive... restore...**

**Interesting verse the next one - 2 Cor 2: 10b ...I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (Don’t be fooled this whole thing - that issue - that argument - that division - was a plot of the enemy to tear us apart)**

**Don't allow the enemy to tear your marriage, friendship, or kids apart from you... instead - don't get defensive, be humble, explain yourself, and then give it to God & let the HS do the rest.**

**While God takes another wake at you… Chisel**