

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

Sept 5, 2008—Atonement—Forgiveness—Part I

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	Forgiving in a world stripped of grace¹ 1) Jesus' words: Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.] For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. --Matthew 6:9-14 Parable of forgiven debt --Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" --Luke 17:1-5

¹ Following Volff's *Free of Charge*.

- a) What do you notice about forgiveness in these verses?
 - i) What is Jesus telling us?
- b) We say that God's gift of forgiveness is free; however, in the Matthew 6 passage there seems to be an obligation on our part.
 - i) Is God's gift a gift free of obligation?
 - ii) Are "gifts" by definition free of obligation?
- c) Compare Jesus' 70 x 7 forgiveness in Matthew 18:22 with God's 7-fold vengeance (Genesis 4:15) and Lamech's 70 + 7 vengeance (Genesis 4:24). What is the significance of Jesus' words and how would Jews familiar with the Genesis passages have heard them?

2) Paul's Words

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

--Ephesians 4:31-32

- a) Why does Paul say we are to forgive?

3) Jesus again:

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

--Matthew 5:43-48

NOTE: In this sense, "perfect" (Greek *teleios*) means for men: full development, growth into maturity of godliness, and not sinless perfection.

- a) What does Jesus say to do with regard to our enemies? Why?
 - i) What does this mean in your life?
- b) What does Jesus mean about being perfect as God is perfect (last line, v 48)?
 - i) Is this really possible?

4) Commands from Jesus?

But, I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (Matthew 5:39)

If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private...(Matthew 18:15)

And [Jesus] said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along,

	<p>likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. (Lk 22:36)</p> <p>a) Are these commands in conflict?</p>
7:00	<p>Closing Prayer</p> <p>If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">--Jesus (Luke 9:23)</p> <p>Every morning I must say again to myself, today I start.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">--St. Anthony of the Desert²</p>

Further reading:

- *The Bible*
- Volf, Miroslav. *Free of Charge*. Zondervan. 2005.

² Quoted in Benner, *Surrender to Love*. 75.