

...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 26, 2008—Atonement—Forgiveness—Part IVa

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts Opening Prayer	
6:05 – 7:00	<b>Forgiving in a world stripped of grace<sup>1</sup></b>	
	1) Review week 1 a) Scriptural basis for forgiveness i) We forgive because we were first forgiven ii) Forgive others or God will not forgive us  2) Review week 2 a) Nature of God i) Not Implacable Judge: God loves the world; so he doesn't punish it in justice ii) Not Doting Grandparent: The world is sinful; God doesn't affirm it indiscriminately iii) God forgives  3) Review week 3 a) <b>God's</b> forgiveness  4) <b>Our</b> forgiveness	
	<b>OFFENDED</b> <b>(OFFERING FORGIVENESS)</b>	<b>WRONGDOER</b> <b>(RECEIVING FORGIVENESS)</b>
	I. Name and condemn the wrongdoing <b>[speaking truth]</b> A. An important part of forgiveness	I. Acceptance of the wrongdoing <b>[repentance]</b> A. Genuine, heart-felt sorrow

<sup>1</sup> Follows Volf's *Free of Charge*.

<p>II. Give the <b>gift</b> of not counting the wrongdoing against the offender [<b>offering grace</b>]</p> <p>A. “The generous release of a genuine debt is at the heart of forgiveness”<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>II. Restitution</p> <p>A. Fruit of repentance</p> <p>B. Necessary between humans</p>
<p>III. Reconciliation</p> <p>A. <u>Both</u> the offering and receiving must occur for forgiveness to be complete</p>	
<p>5) My limited <u>power</u> to forgive</p> <p>a) I am called to forgive because God has first forgiven me</p> <p>b) Removal of guilt is a necessary part of forgiveness</p> <p>c) Recall that there are 3 involved: offended, wrongdoer, and God:</p> <p>i) So, I can forgive <u>subjective</u> guilt: the <u>feeling</u> of guilt the wrongdoer has against me;</p> <p>ii) Only God can forgive <u>objective</u> guilt: the <u>fact</u> of guilt the wrongdoer has against God</p> <p>(1) Recall that our death and resurrection with Jesus separates us from our guilt (e.g., 2Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:23-25; Colossians 2:9-12)</p> <p>6) My <u>authority</u> to forgive</p> <p>a) A wrong against me is a broken moral law</p> <p>b) Moral laws come from the very nature of God</p> <p>c) Therefore, I do not have the authority to extend forgiveness except by the derivative authority God has given me (cf. Mt 6:14-15, 18:18; Mk 2:7)</p> <p>7) My offering forgiveness</p> <p>a) <i>I cannot forgive as exactly as God does, I am not God. I am only a fallen image of God. At my best, I can only forgive similarly to God.</i></p> <p>b) Naming the wrong</p> <p>i) I am not omniscient. “Assigning blame” can sometimes be messy.</p> <p>ii) I must name the wrong and assign blame; it is part of the forgiveness process</p> <p>c) Offering the gift of not counting the wrong against the wrongdoer</p> <p>i) We forgo <u>retributive</u> justice</p> <p>ii) What about societal punishment, discipline, retribution, reform, incarceration...</p>	
<p><b>NOTE</b>—The <u>offer</u> of forgiveness is independent of the attitude or actions of the wrongdoer. The offer of forgiveness can <u>never</u> be withheld upon the condition</p>	

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 202-203.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 215.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 183.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 121-123.

of repentance (see Rom 5:8).

8) Barriers to offering forgiveness

- i) The wounds are so deep
  - (1) Offering forgiveness may take time and be halting at first
- ii) Doubt
  - (1) Will justice be served?
  - (2) Will it happen again?
- iii) Cultural influence
  - (1) Litigious society
  - (2) Friends
- iv) Naming the wrong may be divisive (want to live and let live)
  - (1) Matthew 10:34-39

9) Motive for offering forgiveness

a) We are forgiven forgivers

Although I am an unworthy and condemned man, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that from now on I need nothing except faith which believe that this is true. Why should I not therefore freely, joyfully, with all my heart, and with eager will do all things which I know are pleasing and acceptable to such a Father who has overwhelmed me with his inestimable riches? I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor, just as Christ offered himself to me.

--Martin Luther<sup>3</sup>

b) We have been forgiven much

- i) Luke 7:40-50
- ii) Do you grasp how much you have been forgiven?

c) We are humble forgivers

Avoid a "display of our righteousness, magnanimity, and greatness, and in the process insult, demean, and diminish the offenders"<sup>4</sup>

10) My accepting forgiveness

- a) Proverbs 28:13
- b) I must accept the blame
- c) I must be genuinely sorrowful and desire to turn away from my offense
- d) I must offer restitution as the fruit of genuine repentance
  - i) The one offended should generally avoid refusing restitution
  - ii) Jesus tells us to "pick up our cross daily," he doesn't say, "don't worry; you don't have to do anything."

**NOTE**—It is possible for a person to repent before the one offended is ready to forgive or even knows of the offense. Yet, forgiveness is not complete until forgiveness is offered and accepted.

11) Barriers to receiving forgiveness

- a) I prefer punishment—suffering—to somehow ease my conscience
  - i) I am unable to accept your gift of releasing me from debt. This is why the

	<p>one offended should accept restitution. It allows me to somehow offset the wrong.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii) We are often unable to accept God’s gift of release from our debts to him</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) I don’t care that I wronged you</li> <li>c) I don’t think that I wronged you; remember, we are not omniscient</li> <li>d) Shame <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) I can’t face that I wronged you</li> </ul> </li> <li>e) Fear of punishment or confinement</li> </ul> <p>“By refusing to acknowledge the wrongdoing, Luther rightly claimed that a transgressor himself ‘has changed a forgivable sin into an unforgivable one’”<sup>5</sup></p> <p>12) Reconciliation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Offering and receiving forgiveness must occur</li> <li>b) Forgiveness strengthens the bond of a community</li> <li>c) To <i>complete</i> forgiveness, I must forget the offense against me (recall Isaiah 43:25) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) I cannot say, “I will forgive, but I will never forget”</li> <li>ii) We are human and struggle to forget</li> <li>iii) It may be <i>dangerous</i> to forget</li> <li>iv) <b><u>Because of the nature of our fallen world, complete, God-like forgiveness between people is rare.</u></b></li> </ul> </li> <li>d) To the best of our ability, we move forward to live in a restored relationship</li> </ul> <p>13) Consequences of the wrongdoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Forgiveness may not remove the consequences of the wrongdoing</li> <li>b) <i>Trust</i> may be damaged and take time to be restored. Even among friends we can rarely have certainty that the wrong will not reoccur.</li> </ul> <p>14) Daniel’s story<sup>6</sup></p>
	<p>Closing Prayer</p>

Further reading:

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