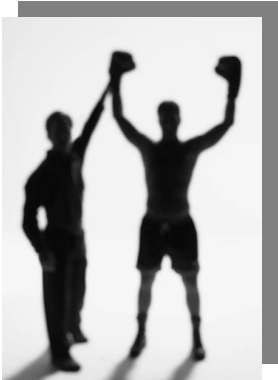




Are We Hard-Hearted?

Luke 6:36: (NKJV) *Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.*



Anger, revenge and grudges! Sometimes our tolerance for others wears thin and we just want to...why we just want to let 'em have it! Let 'em know the heat of our wrath and the consequences for what we see as their wrong-doing and misbehavior. We want them to know that they can run but they cannot hide, for the long arm of justice will prevail! Now that that's been said, the question is, SHOULD that be the way we think and act? Is there ever a time when we as Christians "take off the gloves" and show the full force of our dissatisfaction? This weekend, being the ninth anniversary of 9/11, we thought it appropriate to not only assess our position nine years later, but also to try and understand some current events and put it all in the context of God, tolerance, hard-heartedness and forgiveness.

Our Only Question for consideration:

What would Jesus do?

(Source on September 11 used throughout the program: www.jotzen.com/tribute; written quotes from Peggy Noonan's Wall Street Journal Editorial page from 9/8/06.)

Flight 93 flight attendant Ceecee Lyles, 33 years old, in an answering-machine message to her husband: "Please tell my children that I love them very much. I'm sorry, baby. I wish I could see your face again."

Captain Walter Hynes of the New York Fire Department's Ladder 13 dialed home that morning as his rig left the firehouse at 85th Street and Lexington Avenue. He was on his way downtown, he said in his message, "I don't know if we'll make it out. I want to tell you that I love you and I love the kids."

Todd Beamer of United flight 93 wound up praying on the phone with a woman he'd never met before, a Verizon Airfone supervisor named Lisa Jefferson. She said later that his tone was calm. It seemed as if they were "old friends," she later wrote. They said the Lord's Prayer together. Then he said "Let's roll."

2,991 people lost their lives that day. So what do you do now?

FIRST WE MOURN...

The following is the mourning of Job and his three friends:

Job 2:11-13: (NKJV) ¹¹Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place...For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. ¹²And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. ¹³So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.

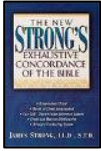
It is appropriate to enter into the suffering of another. Job's friends sat with him a week before saying a word!



...THEN WE ADJUST. We learn to live with the loss, which can be a difficult and even an almost insurmountable task. At some point, the matter of forgiveness inevitably comes up. Forgiveness doesn't mean everyone should be able to get away with anything. As Christians, we are responsible to live a life that has a forgiving attitude. But what does forgiveness accomplish?

Forgiven: Strong's #863 - to send forth, away.

This word is very broadly used, addressing both Godly and human-to-human forgiveness.



Forgiveness: Strong's #859 - - freedom, pardon (as if the sins had never been committed)

This word is never used in connection with us forgiving one another - it is only related to the pardon granted through Jesus sacrifice. This is an important distinction to make.

Forgive: Strong's #630 - to free, relieve, release, dismiss, let die, pardon, divorce

This is broadly used but rarely translated as "forgive."

Forgiving: Strong's #5483 - favor

This word is broadly used in the sense of having a big heart *in spite of* sin, not -taking away sin.

So, looking at the words that relate to our forgiveness of one another, what can we learn?

We **MUST** learn to forgive as we have been forgiven: this concept is often repeated throughout the New Testament - **All three words that apply to us for forgiveness are used to describe our responsibility.**

Matthew 6:9-15: (NRSV) ⁹"Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And **forgive <863>** us our debts, as we also have **forgiven <863>** our debtors. ¹³And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

Next Jesus, after the model prayer, explains the part that would be hardest for us to get:

¹⁴For if you **forgive <863>** others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also **forgive <863>** you; ¹⁵but if you do not **forgive <863>** others, neither will your Father **forgive <863>** your trespasses.

If you don't have that forgiving attitude, your Father is not able to forgive you. But how does this tie into the callousness of the tragedy of 9/11...?

This program begins a discussion about the Floridian minister who threatened to burn Korans to "commemorate" 9/11, including audio excerpts from ABC Nightline on September 7, 2010

Matthew 7:1-5: (NKJV) ¹"Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.



We don't want our anger to dictate to our reason; rather, we want our reason to dictate our anger. Emotions can be dangerous. When we base our actions on our emotions, we can run into trouble. If we are going to be measuring it out to others, expect it back from God in the same fashion. We need to think before we judge. We aren't saying Christian judgment is inappropriate; what we are saying is it needs to be based upon solid principles and the question, "What would Jesus do?"



Is there a difference between a right and a responsibility? Yes there is. If I claim to be a Christian and want to do something such as burn a Koran, I may have a legal right to do so in this country, but do I have a moral right due to the Christianity I profess?

Christian principles of the treatment of others:

1 Corinthians 8:4-9: (NKJV) ⁴*Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. ⁵For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), ⁶yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. ⁷However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. ⁹But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.*

Corinth was a center for Paganism when Paul was writing to this church. Everyone, though, didn't see things the same as the Christians there. The principle is that yes we have rights, but we also have responsibilities. Sometimes our responsibilities are higher and outweigh our rights. Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

What is our *responsibility* when dealing with different faiths, especially those that come from a different paradigm?

We believe that from a Christian standpoint, this minister needlessly was out of line, because that's not the way we are taught by Scripture to deal with one another.

Matthew 5:43-45: (NKJV) ⁴³*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

This is what Jesus would do! Obviously we cannot live this text unless we have a forgiving attitude of heart. Can we "expect" others to do as we do? Where do we draw the line to find the proper Christian response?

The entire world has reacted to this minister laying down the gauntlet, declaring a Holy War on Islam.

This program will not try to interpret the Koran, and we are asking that our Muslim friends not to try to interpret the Bible. If you are steeped in the



Koran, you are not going to understand the Bible, and vice-versa. Either taken out of context can be detrimental and will not be an accurate representation.

The minister stated he was willing to die for this message.

What is the message that we *should* be willing to die for, in the words of Jesus?

John 15:12-13: (KJV) ¹²*This is my commandment that ye love one another, as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Matthew 5:5: (NKJV) *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

Matthew 5:7: (NKJV) *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

Matthew 5:9: (NKJV) *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

Matthew 5:11-12: (NKJV) ¹¹*"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

This is not a message of offense, or of telling others off. It is a message of self-development and self-sacrifice. Jesus taught us that forgiveness is the required principle of a Christian.

"Forgiveness is me giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me."
-Anonymous

Matthew 5:14-16: (NKJV) ¹⁴*"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Men should see our good works.



Use our freedom for serving others, not self-aggrandizement.
Galatians 5:13: (KJV) *For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*



We must learn to distinguish between what is sacred from what is profane.
Leviticus 10:1: (KJV) *And...the sons of Aaron...offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not.*

As Christians we may have rights, but our responsibility is to rise above the rights so that we can determine that which is sacred versus that which is profane, and only act upon that with is sacred.

Proverbs 15:1-4: (NKJV) ¹*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. ²The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness. ³The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. ⁴A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.*

Verse 3 assures us that God is bigger than all of this. He sees it and His plan is working itself out over time. Sometimes this takes longer than we think it should be, and we take matters into our own hands. This is profane, not sacred.



Shouldn't we be mad that God is being misrepresented?

When the Apostle Paul went to Mars Hill, he walked through an incredibly idolatrous place where they were worshipping the Created and not the Creator. He took the good of their desire to believe in something and used it as an opportunity to teach them about the Unknown God. He showed respect and tried to enlighten them.

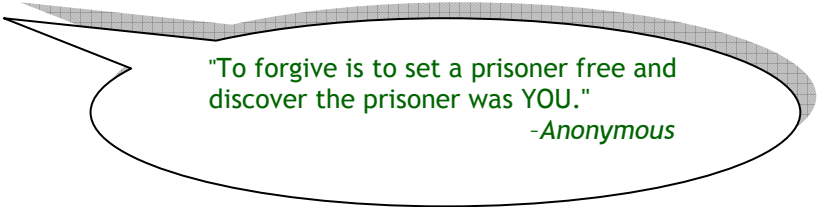
Acts 17:22-31: (ESV) ²²Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.' ²⁹Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. ³⁰The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

Once again, Jesus clearly taught the concept of a forgiving heart:

Matthew 5:38-42: (NKJV) ³⁸"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴²Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Defend Christianity where it is being threatened instead of promoting the destruction of someone else's beliefs.

Find those thing which are good and build upon them. Show people something greater, not smaller! Don't make God small! Do you think God doesn't know there are different religions in the world, or that He is misrepresented most of the time? Of course He does, and He will take care of it in His own time.



"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was YOU."
-Anonymous



We can see that the concept of a forgiving heart has many levels of meaning, none of which are easily attainable:

Learning to overlook a wrong:

Matthew 18:21-22: ²¹Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I **forgive** <863> him? till seven times? ²²Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Learning to release it from our accountability:

Ephesians 4:32: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, **forgiving** <5483> one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath **forgiven** <5483> you.



Realizing that we cannot actually pardon someone for their sins against us, but we can release them from their responsibility to us:

Ephesians 1:7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the **forgiveness** <859> of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Appreciating the actual pardoning of sin that Jesus brought.

Hebrews 9:22: And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.



"Angel 9/11 Remix," Sarah McLachlan

The forgiveness of God:

Psalms 103:6-13: (NRSV) ⁶The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. ⁷He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. ⁸The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever. ¹⁰He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; ¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us. ¹³As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.



But didn't Jesus behave in a "radical" way?

Event: the cleansing of the Temple:

John 2:13 -17: (NKJV) ¹³Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴And he found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵When he had made a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶And he said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make my Father's house a house of merchandise!" ¹⁷Then his disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten me up."

Matthew 21:12-27: (NKJV) ¹²Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" ¹⁴Then the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant ¹⁶and said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise'?" ¹⁷Then he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and he lodged there.

The people were being cheated and Jesus seemingly reacts radically. But notice! Jesus turned over the tables - surely they were able to recover their money; he pushed the animals out - surely they were able to recover their animals; however, instead of releasing the doves (the only sacrifice the poor could afford), he told them to take the doves out. He doesn't set them free. He doesn't do harm to anybody, he simply stops the extortion and teaches them a lesson.

Event: The scolding of the Pharisees:

Matthew 23:1-6: (NKJV) ¹Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ²saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. ⁴For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. ⁵But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. ⁶They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,

Matthew 23:23-24: (NKJV) ²³"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. ²⁴Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

Matthew 23:25-26: (NKJV) ²⁵"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. ²⁶Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.



Observations about the common threads in all of this radical behavior:

- Jesus was addressing HIS OWN people - not the Pagans or the Roman citizens, but God's chosen people;
- Jesus was extremely firm;
- Jesus' firmness was not without compassion;



- Jesus' actions were just and for the good of those he addressed;
- Jesus' actions were not out of anger, but out of righteousness and love.

*What would Jesus do? We see what he did.
His behavior was for the purpose of reclaiming the Jewish people in their own context. In contrast, when face to face with the Romans, for example, he said nothing in his defense.*

In Ephesus:

Acts 19:18-20: (NKJV) ¹⁸And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. ¹⁹Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Wait! Followers of Christ burned books about magic...? But look closely!

It says they brought **THEIR OWN BOOKS!** They renounced their previous way of life to take on the mantle of Christianity. They didn't take the books from someone else. It was their own possession that they once believed in and was their way of saying, "I'm moving up!"

Our responsibilities far outweigh our rights.

Our responsibility as Christians is not to react, but to rise above.

Our responsibility as Christians is to take on the thoughts and actions of Jesus and be loving, kind, compassionate and merciful.

Our responsibility as Christians is standing for something, but not tearing down others in the process. Jesus never did that.

Our responsibility as Christians is to live higher.



"Heaven 9/11 Remix"

*So are we hard hearted?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

For Your Continued Study:

We ran out of time! Here are additional Scriptures for your consideration:

Romans 14:5-8: (NKJV) ⁵One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. ⁷For none of us lives to himself, and no

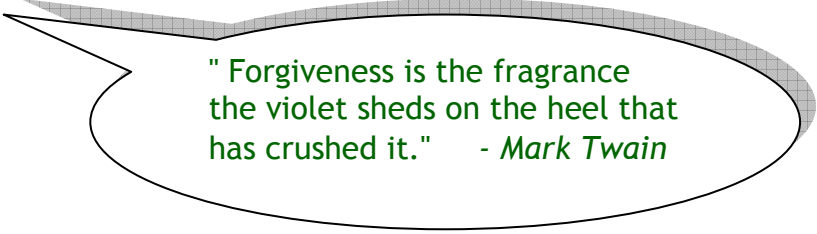


one dies to himself. ⁸For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Romans 14:19: (NKJV) *Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.*

Why don't we just leave the judgment of the world where it belongs - in God's hands!

Psalms 98:1-9: (NKJV) ¹Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory. ²The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. ³He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. ⁴Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises. ⁵Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of a psalm, ⁶with trumpets and the sound of a horn; Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King. ⁷Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it; ⁸Let the rivers clap their hands; Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD, ⁹For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity.



" Forgiveness is the fragrance
the violet sheds on the heel that
has crushed it." - Mark Twain