

luke 17.<sup>3-6</sup>

<sup>3</sup>“Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. <sup>4</sup>And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, “I repent;” thou shalt forgive him.”

<sup>5</sup>And the apostles said unto the Lord, “Increase our faith.”

<sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, ‘Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea;’ and it should obey you.

This is the 17<sup>th</sup> reading for Lent 2025.

1. Jesus counsels, “If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him.”  
? What does it mean to you to “rebuke”?

The Greek word can also be translated “reprove,” and even “blame.”

- ? Does this alter your understanding of how to handle a “trespass against” you? If so, how?  
? How does Jesus’ designation of the trespasser as “thy brother” influence your understanding of how Jesus expects us to approach the trespasser?  
? Who is not our “brother”?
2. Jesus speaks of those who “trespass against thee seven times in a day.”  
? How should we feel about someone who is so habitually transgressive?  
? How well does this relate to what some might think of as our own myriad trespasses a day against God?
3. Jesus requires that even though one might trespass habitually against us, we are to forgive just as habitually if they “repent.”  
? How do you feel about this requirement?  
? Do you wonder at the sincerity of the repentance when “trespasses” flow one after another? How do you square this with the common understanding that repentance involves forsaking?  
? How does this relate to ourselves and our myriad trespasses a day against God—sometimes the same trespass over and over again?  
? Do you believe that Jesus was true to this admonition? Do you believe God is true to it? What does this say about your own trespasses against God and his response to them?  
? What does all of this suggest about the nature of forgiveness itself?
4. Luke records the apostles’ response to Jesus’ instruction about forgiveness.  
? What was that response?  
? What do you hear in the apostles’ “Increase our Faith”?  
? Would you agree with the apostles’ sense that what Jesus is asking is very difficult and requires his help?  
? To what degree are you true to Jesus’ admonition?  
? What can you do to experience an increase of faith needed for obedience to this directive?
5. Jesus says that with the tiniest amount of faith, we could do something as huge as move a mountain.  
? What is your response to Jesus’ assertion?  
? Does it sometimes feel that it is the opposite: that it requires a mountain of faith to do the simplest things? How do you abandon such feelings and think, feel, and live more in line

- with Jesus' observation?
- ? How does this instruction concerning faith relate to Jesus' instruction concerning our need to forgive others?
  - ? How might this instruction concerning faith relate to our confidence in God's readiness to forgive... over and over again?
6. Matthew records that Peter once asked Jesus, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Jesus' reply was "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" Matt. 18.<sup>21-22</sup>).
- ? How does this passage relate to and enhance your understanding of today's reading?

*(edition: March 20, 2025)*