



"And now I am no more in the world,
but these are in the world..." (John 17:11).

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance
of this week's lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®
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FORGIVE . . .

Dylann Roof's website spewed racial hatred. This troubled young man spoke admiringly of the Confederacy and apartheid-era South Africa. On June 17, Roof attended a Bible study at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston and murdered nine members of that group.

Later, at Roof's hearing, the families of the victims offered Roof their forgiveness and promised to pray for him. On the following Sunday evening, a racially diverse crowd of an estimated 20,000 people marched peacefully through the city singing the gospel chorus "This Little Light of Mine" in a show of solidarity for those slain.

These remarkable acts of forgiveness and unity were all but ignored in some circles. Some political commentators argued that the incident demonstrated that America's sins of racism are as prevalent today as ever and are nearly permanently enmeshed in our culture and institutions.

BUT NEVER FORGET?

"Forgive and forget" is a familiar cliché. Those two commands seem to be intertwined. Many times we have seen constant remembering an offense be evidence that forgiving has not taken place. With that in mind, God's commands to *forgive* and the prophet Amos's declaration that God would never *forget* Israel's sins (Amos 8:7) seem contradictory.

1. How do you view these recent events in South Carolina? Do you think they indicate a culture that has not repented of a racist past or a culture that has rejected a racist past? Defend your position.
2. Consider the verb tense in today's text. Does Amos indicate that God was primarily speaking about past or present sins of Israel? How does that help resolve the seeming contradiction between forgiving and not forgetting?
3. If God would not forget Israel's sins, does that justify our not forgetting sins committed against us? How might Paul's words in Romans 12:19 apply here?
4. What other sins might God hold against America today? How can the church take a prophetic role in calling for repentance of societal sins as well as personal sins?

—Charles R. Boatman

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