

The First Word: Christ Intercedes

“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34)

Forgiveness does not flow easily or naturally from the human heart. When we have been undervalued, angered, physically attacked, imposed upon, taken advantage of, berated, insulted or otherwise violated, our first response is to retrieve power through retaliation.

Take a close look at Christ on the cross. He experienced all of the above and more. The whip, the crown of thorns, the nails, mocked and spit upon. Yet His very first words from the cross were “you-centered”. His intercessory prayer to His Father for the forgiveness of His torturers included you. It was not natural; it was supernatural. For as much as we would have it otherwise, He was in that spot because of our sin. Yet His first words were calculated to save us. What’s more “When he said, ‘Father, forgive *them*,’ the unexpressed implication is clearly, ‘And condemn *Me*’” (Russell Bradley Jones).

This first word opens the door to the very heart and purpose of Christ toward you. Here is what Christ came to do. *“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him”* (John 3:17). Forgiveness, God’s forgiveness, is the only way to be saved. And that forgiveness is granted freely through the sacrifice and intercession of the Son to all who by faith receive His forgiveness.

Make it personal: If you accept that you need forgiveness, that Jesus is the only One who can forgive you and by faith receive His forgiveness for your sin, take a nail symbolizing the nails He took for you. Take a few moments to thank Jesus for His forgiving love.

Now, move to the **second word** on the other side of the room. Follow the **red** line.