



January 11, 2026

## K.N.O.W. Series: Nailed

Acts 5:30–32 (ESV) 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

There is an essential message to the Christian faith, and people all over are walking away from Jesus *because they don't know it*.

- The **KNOW** series, is about exploring the central, fundamental story that the first believers shared about Jesus.
- The introductory statement these first believers made about Jesus every time they shared about him was that Jesus was KING. The King sent from God to save the world.
- When this King came into the world, what was the result? What kind of reception did God's own Son, the King of heaven, receive here on the earth?
- Listen to the first believers tell the story:

Peter in Acts 2:23 *23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.*

In Acts 3, Peter and John heal a man at the Jewish temple. They launch into his story:

*13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. 14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life.*

Peter and John say the same thing in Acts chapter 4:10 *10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.*

Peter again in front of religious leaders in Acts 5:30 *30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.*

In Acts 10, Peter declares: 10:39 *39 And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree,*

Paul in the synagogue in Acts 13:29 *28 And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. 29 And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.*

Paul is in another synagogue in Thessalonica in Acts 17, and it reads, *...he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead,*

In Acts 26, Paul is before the Roman ruler Agrippa and gives his testimony about how Jesus completely changed his life. He says, *22 ...I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: 23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."*

Did you see the 2nd bullet point in all those addresses?

- Every time the story of Jesus is told, the first point made is that Jesus is the King, sent and commissioned by God. And the second point is that for all his efforts, ***Jesus was condemned to die on a cross.***
- Bullet point #2 of the essential message of Jesus, is **NAILED**. Jesus was nailed to a cross.
- Crucifixion was the cruelest capital punishment method ever devised.
- It was a gruesome death. Two wooden bars were fixed together commonly in the shape of the lower case t. The victims feet were pierced with a single nail that held them together on the vertical beam, and the arms were stretched out so the forearms could be nailed to the horizontal piece.

- The vertical beam was then dropped into a hole in the ground so the whole thing stood upright, and the criminal was left to hang this way. The whole point was to prolong suffering. Victims could hang for days on crosses.
- When they finally died, it was usually of suffocation. Victims would have to push up from their nailed feet to be able to fill their lungs with air. There would finally be no strength left to do this, and they would suffocate.
- In the case of Jesus, it was even worse.
- Jesus was whipped 39 times.
- 600 Roman soldiers took Jesus privately into a courtyard and mocked his claim to be a King.
- They put a purple robe on him to mock his authority. They put a crown of thorns on his head to mock a real king's crown. They sarcastically saluted him and hailed him *King of the Jews*.
- They hit Jesus on the head with a staff. They spit on him. They abused him physically and verbally.
- They took off the purple robe they had just put on. They put Jesus' own clothes back on him. It would've been the equivalent of ripping a bandage off of bloody wounds.
- Jesus carried his own cross.
- Then came the nails in the hands and feet. Then came the raising of the cross and the thud of it dropping in the hole in the ground. Then the hanging, and the suffering.
- And finally, in the case of Jesus, a spear was thrust in his side to make sure he was dead. That's the crucifixion of Jesus.
- These early believers looked at their audiences and had the nerve to say right to their face: You did that. *YOU killed the King of heaven by nailing him to a cross until he died.*
- It would have been better if the first believers could have left this cross part out.

For Jewish people, the cross was a problem.

- If he's the Christ, the Messiah, then he should have been victorious in overthrowing the oppressive Roman government.
- But Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was executed by Rome.
- The cross, in a Jewish mind, was evidence that God had cursed a person. (Deut 21:23)
- Paul will say the same thing in Galatians 3.
- The cross is a terrible way to convince Jewish people that someone is the Savior of the world.

For Gentile people...the cross was a problem.

- No one would believe that this man was a God if he ended up crucified on a tree by mere men.
- Greeks were looking for wisdom. Wisdom will save us.
- They hear about Jesus the wise King. They're good with that. But when they hear about the cross, it's intellectually contemptible. It's morally outrageous that God would stoop to that.

## The message of the cross is offensive

- But from the beginning, this was without exception the message to people who did not know God. *You can know God. You can have a relationship with God. But the only way that's possible is by the cross of Jesus Christ.* There was no other message than that.
- Why? PT Forsyth gives a great response: “*Christ is only to us what his cross is. You cannot understand Christ, until you understand his cross.*”
- Offensive or not, the cross is the indispensable centerpiece of Christianity.

## One reason: **Atonement**.

- You can remember what Atonement means by breaking the word apart: it means at-one-ment. An atonement is a sacrifice, or a payment of some sort that brings two parties at odds with each other back together.
- Atonement happens all the time in your life.
- You say something dumb to someone significant in your life. It's hurtful. Right away there is estrangement in the relationship. How will you restore the relationship?
- Answer: an **atonement** must be paid. That act costs you. It costs you your pride and position maybe, but you have to pay that cost for there to be **at-one-ment** with the other person.
- Maybe the offense is behavioral. You lend your car to someone and they go out driving the car around and when they're trying to live a parking lot, they back into a pole.
- You're not very happy. They're really sorry. There's now a fracture in the relationship. What are we going to do?
- Two options: Maybe they say, I'm so sorry, I'm going to take care of this. I'll pay to fix the bumper.
- Another option is that maybe you say, forget about it.
- Either way it shakes out, someone has to pay. Either they pay in money to fix the bumper, or you pay in personal anguish having to drive around now with a dented up car.
- Sin never just goes away into thin air. Someone has to pay the debt of the sin.
- Let's pull more on this string. Someone has wronged you and hurt you. How does atonement work now? Again, two options.
- One: you make them pay for what they've done to you. Maybe you gossip about them. Maybe you give them a bad name whenever you can. Maybe you sabotage them in some way. You're exacting payment, and getting them back.
- Or, you can forgive. It's hard. The reason forgiveness is hard is because the sin never just floats off into thin air. If you forgive, you bear the cost.
- At-one-ment can't happen without forgiveness.

Now, what happens when we get to the level of our relationship with God? When we rebel against God?

- The only way to have atonement for a cosmic level rebellion against God is to have a cosmic level sacrifice as payment.

- The only payment that qualifies, the only sacrifice that is sufficient, is Jesus.
- In the OT the sacrifice for sin was an animal. But the problem was pretty obvious to everybody. How in the world can an animal be an adequate replacement for the sins of a person? It can't.
- The New Testament answer is that this was just a picture that looked forward to the real sacrificial substitute who would come, Jesus Christ.
- You cannot understand Christ, you'll never know the full extent of his love for you, until you understand his cross. It was truly the only way that atonement between you and God could ever be achieved.
- Christian, nothing is more precious to you than the cross of Jesus.
- Until I have atonement/peace with God through the cross of Jesus, nothing else matters.

*When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died...  
Love so amazing, love so divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

- The essential message of Jesus is the cross. God loves you so much he gave his Son to be nailed to a cross, in your place, so that you could have at-one-ment with him.
- Jesus was nailed to a cross so that you could KNOW God.

*God, help us to understand the cross today. The cross is the only way we truly understand Jesus. On the cross Jesus said, "Father, forgive them." On the cross he said, "It is finished." On the cross, Jesus suffered in our place, paying the price for our sins. We glory in the cross. We boast in the cross. Because only there is life. Only there do we get how much you love us. In the name of the crucified Savior, Jesus, we give thanks. Amen.*