



## Episode 2—Seven Words: Listening to Christ from the Cross

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**Rev. Susan Robb** (Senior Associate Minister, Highland Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas) in conversation with **Rev. Nicole Caldwell-Gross** (Mobilization & Outreach Pastor, St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, Indiana).

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### Episode Recap

In her new Lenten study, Susan Robb examines the last seven words of Christ on the cross, bringing a hopeful and contemplative take on the cross during the weeks of Lent. It's from the cross – as Jesus breathes his last breath and speaks his last words – that his deep trust in God's divine glory is revealed.

Nicole began the conversation by asking Susan to share her experiences of pastoring to people during their last hours. It's during this time that people share what they most want loved ones to hear. It's a blessing to share what's most important as one dies and to be in the special audience to hear words meant just for them. It's the same with Jesus' last words, offering grievers what they need to hear: hope and instruction.

Susan walked through the last words of Christ and shared what they say just for us today and in this season. For example, when Jesus connects Mary and John, he is showing us what the church is for—caring for others. Jesus calls his followers to take up their own crosses and follow him. By studying his final words, we can reflect on what we've tuned out and what we need to hear to better follow Jesus.

By skipping Lent, and jumping from the joy of Christmas to the joy of Easter, we miss out on this valuable season of reflection. We may have an enjoyable sugar high, but we are spiritually malnourished. We do not follow a candy-coated Jesus.

Susan shared examples of the things that surprised her in her research for this book. For example, when Jesus asks, "Why have you forsaken me?", he is quoting a prayer from Psalm 22, one that the Jewish people at his crucifixion would recognize. Jesus knew the end of the prayer:

"They will proclaim God's righteousness  
to those not yet born,  
telling them what God has done."

—Psalm 22:31 CEB