



*Week 1*

---

No Negative Talk

First Word — Luke 23:34  
“Father, forgive them; for they  
know not what they do.”





## WEEK 1

February 22-28, 2026

---

### FIRST WORD:

Luke 23:34:34

---

### WEEKLY FAST:

No Negative Talk

---

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2026

#### Strength for the Stretch

Good Friday was not just a strenuous day for Jesus. It was a stretch day. The cross was engineered to turn the body against itself. Crucifixion was not a sudden execution; it was slow suffocation. Every breath required effort. Every inhale demanded a push against pain. Every exhale surrendered strength. The victim had to stretch upward on nailed limbs just to live another moment. The cross hurt Him to live and hurried Him toward death. And in that stretch, Jesus speaks, "Father." That first word is devotion under duress. The commotion of the cross was undeniable. Soldiers were mocking. Crowds were yelling. Religious leaders were satisfied. Yet the intensity around Him did not interrupt the intimacy within Him. The noise never compromised His nearness to the Father.

#### DEVOTION: REMAIN UNDISTURBED

Some of us are in a stretch right now. Not nailed to wood but stretched between pressures. Your vertical stretch is reaching up to God without letting life pull you down. Your horizontal stretch is staying open to people who have given you every reason to shut down.

And here's where it becomes difficult. The breaking point is not just reaching up or reaching out. The breaking point comes when we try to do both at the same time. Jesus models something powerful. He does not clap back. He looks up. While they are swinging carnal weapons, He is speaking spiritual words. While they are preying on Him, He is praying for them. Prayer protects posture. Devotion keeps your vertical connection intact when horizontal relationships become intense. Devotion is knowing when to stop wrestling with people and start resting in prayer. Harder stretches introduce us to higher strength. God deepens the stretch so that we will depend on His strength. The tension of the stretch becomes the tuition for strength.

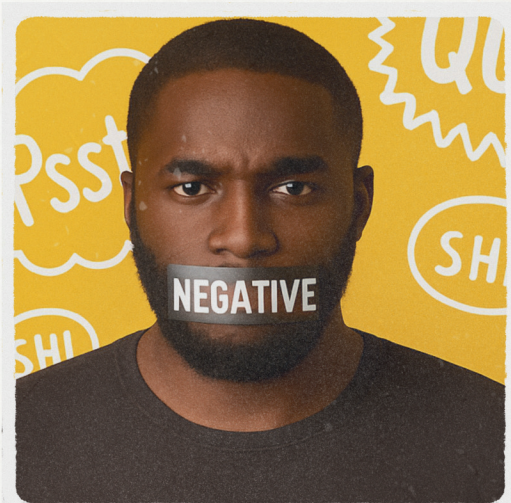
If you are going to loveWELL, liveWELL, and leadWELL, you must recognize this truth: when God does not end the stretch, He will send strength for the stretch.

#### REFLECTION:

*Where are you being stretched right now? Are you reacting to the commotion or remaining devoted in it?*

#### PRAYER:

"Father, strengthen me for this stretch. Help me remain devoted when life becomes disruptive. Guard my mouth this week as I fast from negative talk. Let my words reflect Your strength. Amen."



## WEEK 1

February 22-28, 2026

---

### FIRST WORD:

Luke 23:34

---

### WEEKLY FAST:

No Negative Talk

---

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026

#### Offload the Poison

"Father, forgive them..."

Jesus names the pain, but refuses the poison. Pain is what happens when we are inflicted. Poison is what happens when pain is left untreated. Pain may not have been your choice. But poison will be your responsibility. If pain is not processed, it distills into poison. And poison always competes with purpose.

As Jesus hangs on the cross, nails in His hands and insults in His ears, He chooses forgiveness. Not because the pain has stopped, not because apologies were offered, not because regret was realized. Forgiveness begins while the pain is still stinging.

The word "forgive" in the original language carries the weight of decisive release. It is not partial. It is not temporary. It is definitive. Jesus lets it go. Why? Because internal poison drains emotional capacity and dulls spiritual sensitivity. He refuses to let bitterness contaminate purpose.

If we do not lift our pain vertically, we will leak poison horizontally. Unresolved pain always shows up somewhere. It can be seen in our tone, our reactions, and/or our relationships. Poison speaks. Poison leaks. Poison infects passion. Forgiveness is not pretending it didn't happen. Forgiveness is preventing it from living in you. Forgiveness is not a detour. It is a detox. Jesus teaches us that grace has greater lung capacity than a grudge. On a cross designed for suffocation, grace still breathes.

#### DEVOTIONAL TRUTH

Offloading poison protects your passion. If you are fasting from negative talk, understand this: Often, Negativity is poison speaking. Forgiveness silences it. You are not the cause of people's behavior. And you are not the cure for their beliefs. Release them so you can remain free.

#### REFLECTION:

*Is there pain you have  
named but not released?  
Where is poison competing  
with your purpose?  
voted in it?*

#### PRAYER:

Father, I release what wounded me. Keep my heart clean so my passion stays pure. Help me guard my words and refuse bitterness. Teach me to forgive while the pain is still present. Amen."