



**“The First Encounters” – Layne Schranz**  
**March 17, 2013**

**Review It**

The difference between knowing about something and actually encountering it for yourself is a stark contrast. We all have a longing inside us to encounter the living God. Over the course of these two weeks, we will explore how we can encounter the Cross of Christ!

**Talk About It**

1. How would you describe the difference between knowing about God and knowing God. Do you feel you have truly encountered God in your life? How did that encounter change your understanding of Jesus?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18. Discuss.
3. Read Luke 23:23-25. Discuss how Jesus took the cross that belonged to Barabbas. Barabbas thought he was going to die that day and, by grace, he was saved from that death. What must he have been thinking?
4. Barabbas must've felt trapped by his circumstances. Have you ever felt trapped with no way out of your bondage? How can encountering the cross change your perspective?
5. The challenge that the criminal we call the Scoffer faced was a challenge of faith. Faith is choosing to believe what we can't see. What doubts have you struggled with? How can faith overcome the doubter that's in all of us?
6. The Worshipper found forgiveness when he encountered the cross. True worshippers worship because of who He is, not based on their circumstances. Why do we worship God even when things don't work out the way we think they should?

### **Think On It**

Each of us can identify with all three of these men who encountered the cross on that Friday. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the redeemed murderer in you. Ask Him to reveal the answers to your doubts. Ask Him to help you trust Him no matter what and live as a Worshipper.

### **Act On It**

This week, try and think of something new every day that you can thank God for and begin your day praising Him for what he has done for you. Then, allow the cross to be your focus leading up to Easter Sunday!