

THE COST OF THE
CROSS

LIVING OUT OUR THANKSGIVING



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One of my favorite parts of the Holy Communion Service is at the end where we give thanksgiving to God for the meal we have just partaken together as the Body of Christ. With this gratitude, we ought to remember long after the meal is over and bring it into our daily living. Let this guide assist you in your living out of the Cross of Christ. Before you dive into the practical steps and Bible references to assist you, make this your prayer:

***Heavenly Father,
I come to you today with a heart full of gratitude for the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. I ask that you would come and be with me as I walk out thanksgiving for the cross and seek to learn the practicalities of the cross through sacrificial love for others. Please help me to have a servant's heart, to see the needs of those around me, and to be willing to make sacrifices for their well-being. May my life be a reflection of the love and grace that Jesus showed us through his sacrifice on the cross. Thank you for your presence with me always. Amen.***

Here are some practical ways we can live out our thanksgiving to Jesus for what He did for us upon the cross:

1 Obeying His commands and living according to His teachings.

Simply believing in Jesus is not enough, rather, one must also be willing to follow his teachings and obey his commands. By emphasizing the importance of continuing in his word found in John 8:31, Jesus is calling his followers to a life of faithfulness and obedience. This is a reminder that being a disciple of Jesus requires ongoing commitment and perseverance in following his teachings, even when it may be difficult or challenging. It encourages believers to remain faithful to Jesus and to continue learning from his teachings in order to grow in their relationship with him as a means of thanksgiving for all He has done for you.

2 Sharing the good news of salvation with others and inviting them to experience the love of Christ.

Telling the good news of Jesus Christ is important because it is through hearing the message of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that others can come to know and experience his love and grace. The gospel is a message of hope and salvation, and it is through sharing this message with others that we can participate in God's work of reconciling the world to himself. Jesus commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20), and this task of telling our story is essential to the growth and expansion of the Kingdom of God. As believers, we have a responsibility to share the good news of Jesus with those around us, so that they too may have the opportunity to believe and be saved.

3 Serving others sacrificially, just as Christ served us.

In Luke 14:27, Jesus says, "*Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*" This verse emphasizes the importance of sacrificial living as a disciple of Jesus Christ. As followers of Christ, we are called to live in a way that reflects his selflessness and willingness to lay down his life for others.

One way to serve others sacrificially out of thanksgiving for the cross of Christ is to put the needs of others before our own. This could involve giving up our time, resources, or comfort in order to meet the needs of those around us. It could mean taking on tasks that are difficult or unpleasant or reaching out to those who are marginalized or overlooked in our communities.

Another way to serve sacrificially is to demonstrate forgiveness and grace towards others, even when it is difficult. This can be especially challenging when we have been hurt or wronged by someone, but by choosing to forgive and extend grace, we are reflecting the

forgiveness and grace that we have received through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Ultimately, serving sacrificially is an act of worship and thanksgiving to God for the gift of salvation that we have received through the cross of Christ. By following his example of sacrificial love, we can demonstrate his love to others and participate in his work of reconciling the world to himself.

4 Forgive others, as Christ forgave us

Forgiving others as Christ forgave us is a powerful expression of gratitude for the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus offered forgiveness and reconciliation to all who believe in him, and by forgiving others, we can extend that same forgiveness and reconciliation to those around us.

Forgiving someone can be difficult, especially if we have been deeply hurt or wronged. However, forgiving others is a crucial aspect of our own healing and spiritual growth, as well as an act of obedience and worship to God.

One way to go about forgiving someone is to start by acknowledging the pain and hurt that you have experienced. It's okay, to be honest about the ways in which you have been hurt and to express your emotions to God.

Next, ask God for the strength and willingness to forgive the person who has wronged you. This may involve asking for God's help in letting go of anger, bitterness, and resentment, and choosing to extend grace and forgiveness instead.

It can also be helpful to remember the ways in which God has forgiven us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. By reflecting on the depth of God's love and mercy toward us, we can be inspired to extend that same love and mercy to others, even when it is difficult.

Ultimately, forgiving others is a process that may take time and effort. It may involve seeking support from trusted friends or mentors, practicing self-care, and choosing to extend forgiveness even when we don't feel

like it. But by following Christ's example of sacrificial love and forgiveness, we can demonstrate our gratitude for the cross and participate in God's work of reconciliation in the world.

5 Living with an attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving, remembering that everything we have is a gift from God.

Living with an attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving requires intentional effort and a perspective that recognizes everything we have as a gift from God. Scripture reminds us to give thanks for all things in all situations (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). It can be easy to focus on the challenges and difficulties in life, but cultivating a heart of gratitude means learning to give thanks in all circumstances, even in the midst of trials and hardships.

Start each day with gratitude: Begin each day by acknowledging the gifts and blessings in your life, whether it's a comfortable bed to sleep in or a loving family to wake up to. You can even keep a gratitude journal to record the things you are thankful for.

Express gratitude to others: Take time to express gratitude to those who have blessed you, whether it's a friend who has encouraged you, a family member who has supported you, or a stranger who has shown kindness. Letting others know how much they are appreciated can also foster a spirit of thankfulness in them.

Put into practice a few of these practical ways of showing thanksgiving to Jesus for the cost of the cross and see what God does through them as you bring the light of Christ into the world that is waiting. Pray this prayer as you step out and show your gratitude for the cross:

**Dear God,
Thank you for sending your son Jesus to save me. I am so grateful for his sacrifice on the cross, which allows me to receive forgiveness and eternal life. Please help me to remember the depth of your love for me and to live in a way that honors Jesus' sacrifice. Amen.**



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