Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

As I imagined Christ stretched out on the cross, my thoughts focused on His arms — His loving, everlasting arms. They were arms that loved us from eternity into eternity. Because of His attraction for you and for me, His arms, though limp, bloodied and strained beyond belief, never hesitated to remain on that cross. Because those arms belonged to a man that became a curse for us, we now are embraced with His love and forgiveness. See that love revealed in the following verses.

Deuteronomy 33:27
Isaiah 40:11
As His precious lambs, we were carried close to His heart through His journey on the cross. The sense of pain that cut deeply into Him is exposed in each flaw of my cross and is a reminder that, as a result of His restoring, loving arms, we are redeemed and set free to love and serve Him and others. Our sins were erased from our accounts, and only His purity remains.

He Remembered Us
When He was nailed to the cross, He remembered us. He knew it was our sins that placed Him there, and He chose to remember that His love for us was greater than our sin. Revealed in each searing pain felt by Him and with each nail that held Him there also came a flood of refreshing righteousness that could only be exposed through His love beyond comprehension. Confirm these thoughts in the following verses.

Isaiah 49:16
John 15:13
Romans 5:6–8
What was the final outcome? 2 Corinthians 5:21
See, from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flowed mingled down!
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Oh, For The Joy

Hebrews 12:2 states that we are to look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross and despised the shame. Now because of that wondrous cross, the joy He experienced became ours. Granting us the Holy Spirit, we are anointed with a joy that can only come from Him — one that is not dependent on our circumstances but on Him alone. Review and discuss the following verses together.

John 15:11
Romans 14:17
Galatians 5:22
1 Thessalonians 1:6
1 Peter 1:8–9

The cross that bore our sins, sorrows, and grief was replaced with our salvation, freedom, and everlasting peace. Now we can honor our best Friend, Jesus, by willingly taking up our crosses and following Him, no matter the cost. Read the following verses and discuss the possible impact upon our lives today.

Mark 8:34–38
Romans 1:16–17
1 Corinthians 2:1–4
Galatians 6:14

In Christ we are alive. In Christ our sins were nailed to the cross and forgiven. In Christ the price was paid for our freedom, and we can release the need to satisfy God on our own terms. The nails were excruciating for Him but revealed righteousness, grace, and mercy for us.

Now, through His Spirit, we can look at the wondrous cross and experience a peace that passes understanding. We can be strengthened with His power as Christ dwells in our hearts through faith. And incredibly so, our rough crosses will help us to better grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:18–19).

Closing prayer

Dear Father in heaven, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus into the world for our sakes. We know that His burden on the cross was unbearable, but we give You honor and praise for accepting His price for our eternity. We offer Him our grateful thanks as we remember the freedom, grace, and forgiveness He won for us as a result. May we now be willing to take up our crosses for You in loving service and with grateful hearts. In His name we pray. Amen.

Additional hymns: “In the Cross of Christ I Glory” (LSB #427; LW #101; TLH #354) and “Lift High the Cross” (LSB #837; LW #311).

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