

## Giving Up and Giving In -- Lent -- 2023

If you are Christian then you are aware that we are in the season of Lent. It's the few weeks prior to Easter when we reflect and remember the sacrifice Jesus made for mankind when He died upon the cross. Beginning Ash Wednesday and through to Easter, many will sacrifice something in their lives for a few weeks as a token of that sacrifice by giving up coffee, social media or chocolate, for example.

For me, I never felt that giving up soda or chocolate put anything in perspective for me with regard to sacrifice, since I would often slip and give in or resume my consumption in 40-ish days anyways. Instead, I have often decided to make this a time to deepen my relationship with Christ by reading more scripture and praying for others on a deeper level.

Unfortunately, since the pandemic, I have not been as devout in my prayers or reading, and it has shown in my attitude towards life, my thoughts and my actions. I am not as spiritually centered as I had been. I am more stressed and unsettled, less focused and have little motivation on many levels.

So, this year I am returning to my practice and desire to remember and acknowledge the sacrifice that Jesus made for all of us. To remember how even Jesus fought against temptation and despair and to do the same in my own life. I am renewing my pledge during Lent to study more scripture and to pray for others and their situations and concerns instead of just my own.

Why? Why do I want to do this? Why do I need to?

Because we live in a broken world. There is so much violence and hate and fear. There is pain and despair. I will drown in all of this if I don't reach beyond what I see. I need to know there is light and love and peace for my soul. I need to share love and hope with others and for others.

After all, doesn't the Lenten season get us to the greatest season of hope when it delivers us to the foot of the cross? Where we can surrender all of our burdens and be lifted beyond our sin and shame and be set free into the loving arms of Jesus. A few short weeks can prepare us for a fuller life on this earth and for an eternal life thereafter. Isn't it worth the sacrifice?

Ultimately each one of us has to follow our own path, but this is the path I have chosen for me.

Whether you are Christian or not, these next few weeks is a good time for reflection. We will be moving from winter to spring, with hope of new beginnings. And hope is one thing that we all need to get us through this life.

May you be blessed this Lenten season with enlightenment and hope.

And hang in there....Spring is on its way!

Love,

*Ember*