

Mathew 6:16-21

¹⁶“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.

¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

¹⁸so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal.

²⁰But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal.

²¹**For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.**

How's Lent going?

Show of hands. Who's given up something for Lent?

Who's given up something important?

Anybody want to share?

So you all gave up chocolate for lent?

15th century chocolate was medicinal, so it was exempt from Lenten sacrifice.

The 40 days of lent are a reflection of the 40 days Christ spent fasting and praying in the desert, resisting the temptation of Satan and preparing for his ultimate sacrifice on the cross for you..

Lent is a time for us to offer sacrifice up to the Lord, to remember why we're here and what we are about.

Fasting is not just abstaining from food. It is about reflection and prayer and connecting with God the Father. It is about sacrifice. Giving up chocolate is not a sacrifice. It's a gesture. And by the way, giving up a sinful practice is not a sacrifice. You should just give that up now and go to confession.

I had a teen tell me some years ago that she put a box of Godiva Chocolates on her nightstand for all of lent where it would remind her every morning and every evening and every time she saw it she said a little prayer of thanksgiving and penance. Maybe not a huge sacrifice but resisting a temptation daily and giving it up to God.,

When Easter came, she ate the whole box.

I think, she almost got it right. But what if she had shared it with others instead? What if after all that temptation she gave it to her family, or friends at school?

Matthew 25:31-40

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, ³² and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’

⁴⁰ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

How many are giving alms to the poor?

Money in the poor box? Food for the hungry?

That is also a sacrifice, doing something as well as giving up something.

So giving up and giving **of** are both ways to remember ourselves in God. The point is to make a sacrifice, and lift it up to God in remembrance of the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for us at the cross.

So what are **you** getting out of these sacrifices? How do **you** benefit from lifting these sacrifices up to God?

Yes, it's all about **YOU!**

Lent is all about **YOU!**

Jesus is all about **YOU!**

Scripture is all about **YOU!**

The Gospels are all about **YOU!**

The Church is all about **YOU!**

Everything in these two books, and all the traditions of the Catholic Church, founded by Jesus Himself, is about storing up your treasures in heaven so that someday, you will be joyously united in Heaven with God the Father, Jesus and all the saints and Angels for eternity!

These books and all of the traditions of the church are the owners manual for human life on Earth, to prepare us for eternal life with God.

Lent reminds us of this every year. But shouldn't we be living a Lenten life for the rest of the year as well? It's not something that we do for a few weeks then go back to eating the whole box of chocolate for the rest of the year.

Sacrifice and alms giving are eternal commands to be considered and practiced every day of our lives. Now I'm here preaching it to you but I'll admit, I'm not as good at it as I should be. We all get distracted by the every day world we live in, and it's hard to follow these instruction manuals every day. But we can make a great effort at it and year long sacrifice and alms giving are within our reach.

Joe used to have a sign in his office that read, "You love Jesus just as much as the person you love the least."

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Thorns on his head, spear in his side
Still it was a heartache that made him cry
He gave his life so you would understand
Is there any way you could say no to this man

Christ himself is standin' here
His face full of glory his eyes full of tears
If he reached out his arms with his nail printed hands
Is there any way you could say no to this man

How could you look into his tear stained eyes
Knowing that it's you he was thinking of
Could you tell him you're not ready now to give him your life
Could you say that you don't think you need his love

Well Jesus is here with his arms open wide
You can see him with your hearts If you'll stop lookin' with your eyes
He's left it up to you, he's done all that he can
Is there any way you could say no to this man

How could you look into his tear stained eyes
Knowing that it's you he was thinking of
Could you tell him you're not ready now to give him your life
Could you say that you don't think you need his love

Thorns on his head, his life in your hands
Is there any way you could say no to this man?

Let's say yes to Jesus every day...

Amen