

March 2015

Dear Friends,

All this month falls within the season of Lent. It is a time traditionally when people 'give something up', two modern favourites being alcohol and chocolate!

The modern association of Lent with giving something up has its roots in a much broader tradition of spiritual discipline in the period leading up to Easter, to help Christians to focus clearly on their faith and to grow spiritually in readiness for the joyous celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Day. Christian discipleship involves a conscious decision on the part of us all to follow Jesus in the first place: it involves continuing decisions thereafter to become more like Jesus as we invite the Holy Spirit to transform ever more areas of our lives. The logic behind giving something up is that the process improves our personal discipline which we can use for the good as we decide to become more and more devoted to Jesus.

Taken together, Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection represent the most important event there has ever been in human history – and that there will ever be until, that is, our Lord returns in His glory to judge the earth. It is really a good idea therefore for all of us to take some effort to focus on our relationship with the Saviour. But can I suggest that we might also consider our use of time, when we are thinking about what to give up? For instance, how about giving up 15 minutes of some less important activity each day in order to free up time for Bible study and prayer – both of which are essential ingredients of life if we are going to grow in our knowledge and love of the Lord.

In His great acts of salvation, Jesus has done all that is necessary for us to enjoy full and free forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. Let's use this Lent wisely, to try to draw close to Him.
Yours, in our Lord's service,

John Edmondson

Dean