

## Sacrifice

We're traveling back from a trade show in Philly. My eldest and my dear wife said 'this one is his last'. Hah! I'll show them.

The show involved thirteen hundred artists from all across America and Canada, selling their American and Canadian products to retail stores who visit the annual show to stock their shelves for the coming year.

You could have fired a shotgun down any aisle from one end to the other and the pellets wouldn't have hit anyone.

Business is bad, maybe horrid. People are frustrated, reminiscing about the 'good old days', just a couple of years ago, even last year.

Got me to thinkin' about how life's been impacted; ours, yours, everybody's.

In the middle of one of those nights in Philly (I sleep poorly outside the county) I thought about all of this. I thought about the economy, the misery, the pain, not just here where we live but also in the poorest places in the world – places that finally had seen some economic light over the past decade and now find somebody turned off the darn electricity – just as they were getting used to having it – many for the first time.

And it occurred to me that the concept of 'sacrifice' has been lost on at least one generation if not two.

You see, nowadays, it's only okay to do something if it 'feels' right. People offer their services or volunteer based on the 'reward' they'll get of 'feeling good' about helping somebody else.

So it's not okay to do something if you feel bad? If it hurts to do it? If you get no reward, no thanks, no feel good moment. You shouldn't do things that 'hurt' you?

In my father's generation, people worked themselves to the bone making sure they did their part, whether it was serving their country and giving their very lives, or providing for their families, or taking physical care of their families – what used to be the 'mom work'. They did whatever it took, rarely thinking of themselves.

Somewhere about the same time 'drugs, flowers, and rock and roll' (and a few other things) showed up – so did 'me', as in 'I', as in 'the individual'.

The age of the individual, at the expense of everything else. (The dear good Lord included.)

As I reflected on all of this, one thought came to me - I was glad to be a Jesus man. I was so glad in the midst of all this negativity, this world turned upside down, to have my Lord and Savior there, in my presence, in all those hurting people around me, in my loved ones, in myself, and in my knowledge. He is in my heart and my soul as He is in all others – God within.

Its one of those, 'this I know for sure' things.

Jesus taught that it is okay to sacrifice even when it hurts, or damages the sacrificer. Its okay to do it with no reward, no feel good feeling, in fact you can even be in that state where you feel totally abandoned by God and ITS STILL OKAY to follow through with the 'sacrifice', so long as it is 'His will'.

"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Mark 14:34

Some close to me wonder why I do some things physically that perhaps I shouldn't. My rational is that if it needs to be done – do it. If it doesn't kill you it can't be that bad and if it does – look where you'll be!!!! With HIM!!!

God, let us choose to sacrifice, let us choose to make it a way of life, not just a season, or another cause that makes us 'feel good'. Let us do it in such a way that no one knows...

Just like You did. Just like You do.

Clement