

## Lent

Lent means for Christians a time of prayer and reflection. We can become a better follower of Christ. How do we become better at being a follower of Christ? The biggest thing we can do is pray. We can follow the words of Jesus to love our neighbors, to feed the hungry, to help those less fortunate. We live in a time of anger and discourse, of fear and worry. What can we do about that? We can be kinder, slower to anger and words that put others down. I went into a dealership this week to have work done on my car which is almost as old as I am but I have no wish to go through car payments again. At 87 I have already stopped driving at night and worry that I may have to give up driving all together one day and it will be sooner than I would like. The Service Manager asked what I needed, and I started with an oil change but included but whenever you can do it, I can make an appointment if you are busy now. We went on talking and he said because he had no history on the car (I had not taken the car to this dealership before) it would need some other things. I accepted this and told him I had a recall on the car and forgotten the paperwork and if he needed that I could come back. He looked it up on the computer and said he saw the recall on it and would check for the parts needed. When he asked if I could come in on Friday (this was Tuesday) I said certainly that although I am 87 I still buy green bananas and could plan on Friday. He said that even though I was a little bit out of their area they would give me a ride home on Friday. I thanked him for the exception and said that would be great. He came around the counter and put his arm around me and kissed me on the cheek and said, "Happy Valentine's Day" I was stunned but extremely grateful for his attitude and his kindness in dealing with me. I didn't tell him I had chosen this dealership because the dealership where I had gone before was extremely rude to me on two occasions and the last time, I had gone in there because my check engine light was on, they told me I would have to make an appointment to make an appointment (yes, you read that correctly) and they were only doing warranty work. On Friday morning I took the car in to the new to me dealership, and they gave me a ride home and then called me in the afternoon to say it was done and the gentleman who had driven me home would come and give me a ride back to the dealership to pick up the car. This gave me another opportunity to tell someone about how adorable and clever my Great Grandchildren are. As I thought about the difference in this visit to the dealership and my other visit to the last dealership I marveled at the change in attitude. Perhaps it started with my attitude. I was willing to do whatever to make it easier on this dealership but with the other dealership I was anxious and upset about the check engine light being on but not aggressive or nasty, I only wanted to make sure the car wasn't going to quit and leave me stranded somewhere. I was not nasty or bossy just concerned and did not need a very tall gentleman with a very bad attitude to get in my face and tell me to make an appointment and they would look at it and make an appointment to get it fixed. They had already run a computer check and knew what was wrong. I asked for the computer check and gave it to my son who ordered the part and fixed it in 5 minutes then changed my oil and checked my tire pressure and I vowed never to return to that dealership.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Be joyful always. Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

We are given opportunities to be kind, patient, and polite. We are also given opportunities to be rude and condescending may we always choose the high road with kindness and patience. We may not always be treated fairly but may we remember who we belong to. We are in our time of Lent, let us follow Christ as we are led to Easter and the resurrection. Let us remember the one who was crucified for our sins and remember his forgiveness and salvation freely offered to all who believe. Let us remember we follow a risen Christ.

Lord, we thank you for each day you give us. May we use those days to honor you by showing kindness and forgiveness to others. Be with those who are ill and those who mourn. Comfort them. Be with those who carry burdens others cannot see but those burdens are known to you. Be with them. Be with those in other lands who are suffering through war, hunger, the victims of disasters, and poverty, may they feel your love surrounding them. Be with our Pastor, protect him and bless his ministry and be with his family. Be with our staff and leaders guide and protect them. Be with our church may we be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in all we do. Be with us in this time of Lent may we be a forgiven people. Be with our church may we be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ here in this place. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Grace Epperson