

Monday, March 29

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SACRIFICE

At the beginning of COVID-19 in March 2020 it soon became apparent that this would not be a short-term issue. At the time of this writing it is still unknown how long this event will continue its control on our lives. "Wear a mask, socially distance, wash your hands," have been constant refrains. These are sacrifices we have been asked to make for the good of others, and we don't know how much longer we will need to make them.

It reminded me of another time in our country's history when sacrifices were asked of the American people, and also for an indefinite period of time. When World War II began, no one knew how long it would last. People were asked to deny themselves various daily items. At that time the refrain was, "We must ration gasoline, tires, nylons, coffee, sugar, etc.," and there was no end in sight.

There are two common points to recognize in the two events. First, not knowing at the beginning how long they would last. Second, the need and call for sacrifice in order to reach a successful conclusion.

As we are nearing Easter, I see parallels in Jesus' experience. It is believed that Jesus' ministry was three to three and a half years in length, but when he began he likely didn't know how long it would last. He lived with the assurance that God the Father was guiding him. Even with all the teaching, miracles and insights about God he proclaimed, there was opposition, most notably from religious leaders of the day. Yet, he continued on, committed to his mission.

In Luke 9:51 we read, "*He set his face to go to Jerusalem.*" This was about six months before Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, his arrest, trial, crucifixion, burial and resurrection. He saw the end date. In Philippians 2:7-8 we read of Jesus, "*...he emptied himself, ...and being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*" Sacrifice, his ultimate sacrifice, brought a successful conclusion to his ministry and mission, a ministry and mission that is for our salvation.

Even though we live with the control of COVID-19 on our lives, God the Father is guiding. We can trust him even though we don't know the end date. And making sacrifices in our lives in these days to bring a successful conclusion to this event can be a testimony of our faith.