

NOVEMBER/2016

Thanksgiving . . . From Years Ago . . . 1620

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, with thanksgiving in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16}

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ--

LET US DWELL for a moment to recapture the origin of Thanksgiving Day. In August 1620, the Mayflower, a 180-ton ship, set sail from Southampton, England. After difficulties with the vessel, returning in her return to port, finally the voyage began. Her 102 passengers were to become some *of the founding pilgrims of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA*, and to introduce them to this nation's most popular holidays.

AFTER WEEKS OF plowing through the noisy and disorderly Atlantic waters, battling strong winds, pounding waves and a number of problems with their vessel, the pilgrims spotted Cape Cod, off the coast of Massachusetts. The stormy weather was brewing so strongly that they arrived there by accident. The intended location was off the Virginia coast, where other pilgrims had begun colonies.

BEFORE ANCHORING AT Plymouth Rock and disembarking to explore the territory, the pilgrims devised the "Mayflower Compact." This was to serve as the basis for governing this new colony, they all would have the freedom to worship God as they chose.

THE NEXT FEW months would prove to be difficult and trying. More than half of the original pilgrims did not survive the first, long, New England winter.

BUT, WITH THE approaching of spring came new hope. The survivors built homes and planted crops. They made friendships with local Indian tribes, and traded with them. After reaping the first harvest in the fall of 1621, the pilgrims dedicated a day for thanking God for the bounty with which He had blessed them.

PILGRIMS OF THE Plymouth colony gave **God** credit for all they had. Notice the many references to **God**, and their acknowledgement of how He granted them so many blessings. The pilgrim's beliefs were firmly entrenched in the realization of **God's** presence and intervention in their everyday lives. Thanksgiving Day began because of this belief. It is a day dedicated to giving thanks to God for the many things we often take for granted.

IN 1817, THE state of New York adopted *Thanksgiving Day* as an annual holiday. By the mid-1880s, other states adopted the practice. In 1863, President Lincoln appointed it as a national holiday, and gave a Thanksgiving proclamation. Each president since then has issued a proclamation, announcing the celebration of this day.

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!
{Psalm 118:1}

Thanksgiving . . . What Should It Mean? . . . 2016

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! {Psalm 100:4}

THANKSGIVING DAY as celebrated in North America, is a time to gather with family and friends to give thanks for the many blessings bestowed upon us. Turkey dinners, cranberries, candied yams, stuffing, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie are common at our meals. Many of our members and friends attend a **Thanksgiving** eve or day worship service to express their thankfulness to **God**.

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. {Ephesians 1:15-16} Amen

A Spiritual Writing Meditation
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*May Loren's love and passion for God's word, shine through his words as he encourages all of us to grow in grace. Please enjoy **The Faith Focus**; a series featuring spiritual writings from Loren.*