

“THE FIVE HEROES OF THANKSGIVING”

By Pastor Pete Bertolero

Deuteronomy 8

*1Keep and live out the entire commandment that I'm commanding you today **so that you'll live and prosper and enter and own the land that GOD promised to your ancestors***

*3He put you through hard times. He made you go hungry. Then he fed you with manna, something neither you nor your parents knew anything about, **so you would learn that men and women don't live by bread only; we live by every word that comes from GOD's mouth...**5You learned deep in your heart that GOD disciplines you in the same ways a father disciplines his child.*

6So it's paramount that you keep the commandments of GOD, your God, walk down the roads he shows you and reverently respect him

10After a meal, satisfied, bless GOD, your God, for the good land he has given you.

11Make sure you don't forget GOD, your God, by not keeping his commandments, his rules and regulations that I command you today

*12Make sure that when you eat and are satisfied, build pleasant houses and settle in, 13see your herds and flocks flourish and more and more money come in, **watch your standard of living going up and up--** 14make sure **you don't become so full of yourself and your things that you forget GOD, your God, the God who delivered you from Egyptian slavery; 15the God who led you through that huge and fearsome wilderness, those desolate, arid badlands crawling with fiery snakes and scorpions; the God who gave you water gushing from hard rock; 16the God who gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, some- -thing your ancestors had never heard of, in order to give you a taste of the hard life, to test you so that you would be prepared to live well in the days ahead of you.***

17If you start thinking to yourselves, "I did all this. And all by myself. I'm rich. It's all mine!"- 18well, think again. Remember that GOD, your God, gave you the strength to produce all this wealth so as to confirm the covenant that he promised to your ancestors--as it is today.

19If you forget, forget GOD, your God, and start taking up with other gods, serving and worshiping them, I'm on record right now as giving you firm warning: that will be the end of you; I mean it--destruction. 20You'll go to your doom--the same as the nations GOD is destroying before you; doom because you wouldn't obey the Voice of GOD, your God.

Romans 1:18

18The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men **who suppress the truth** by their wickedness, 19since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20For since the creation of the world **God's invisible qualities**—his eternal power and divine nature—**have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.**

21For although they knew God, **they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him**, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened...

24Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25**They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.**

Introduction

- Were you aware that to thank, comes from the root word for “think”?
- In fact, there are some experts in the root meanings of English words that go so far as to say that “thank” is the past tense of “think” even as “drank” is the past tense of “drink”, “shrank” is the past tense of “shrink,” etc...
- In other words, there is no doubt that people are not thankful who are not thoughtful. Consequently, we are told over and over again in scripture not to forget all the Lord’s benefits, and that we are to constantly remember the goodness of God on our behalf.

- So today, my duty as a Pastor, as I see it, is to put you in remembrance of the goodness and mercy of Almighty God in Christ, in providing for you this free and prosperous country in which you live, for two reasons:
 - Because, due to the secularizing of our public schools, what used to be taught to our children about the true historical roots of the founding and establishing of this country, is not any longer true, and as a result, our children as a whole, unless they are home schooled, or attend a conservative Christian school, are woefully ignorant of the Christian roots of this country, and at the same time, have been propagandized by a treasonous liberal education agenda and curriculum
 - Secondly, Christian youth have been disenfranchised from knowing the truth about the part their faith and the God at the heart of their faith had to do with the discovery, the founding, the establishing and the building of this country, which, decadent as it is, blasphemous and prodigal as it has become, still enjoys the greatest freedoms, prosperity, law and order of any country on earth ever. As a result, they are not appropriately thankful because they are not adequately thoughtful neither can they be since they have not been taught enough information to think thereupon.
 - Let me then speak to you of that which, hopefully, will assist you in a few days, to be remember and think about what Thanksgiving is all about, and thus, to gather friends and family away from football games, and TV, and videos, and Computer games, and the like, to think together and thank together. I will use as my outline 5 predominant historical heroes of what we refer to today as Thanksgiving.

1. Christopher Columbus (1451-1506)

Christopher Columbus is today both praised as a hero and cast as a villain; honored and ridiculed. Was he a visionary explorer or an opportunistic exploiter? Some would make Columbus responsible for all sins and shameful deeds of those who came after him. True, Columbus was a flawed human being just like the rest of us, but make no mistake about this: that he was motivated by an awareness of the calling of God upon his life to bring the Gospel to the new world, and he had a very strong commitment of faith in Jesus Christ.

And please do not fail to remember that Columbus was an Italian, a Genoan sailor, who was unafraid to venture into the unknown uncharted waters of the world. Matt. 24:14 was a very important verse to Columbus, if not his life verse. It was what drove him stubbornly to continue his quest when no hope, encouragement or support was in sight. In fact, Columbus hoped his voyage would somehow be instrumental in bringing about the return of Christ to the world!

How could a man who previously was considered to be one of the greatest heroes in American history become considered today as a villain? More cities, streets and towns have been named after him than almost any historical figure other than Washington and Lincoln. He is depicted in stone all across this land. Even the Pledge of Allegiance was created to honor the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of America. It was written by a Boston Pastor Francis Bellamy (1856-1931) in 1892 for school children across the nation to recite as the American flag was raised during the 400th anniversary celebrations.

Now, thanks to the treasonous secular humanists of this country, many who have more influence as to what is taught in our public schools than any other influential source, Columbus is condemned, scorned and ridiculed, as a murderous pirate who brought death and slavery to the new world, killing Native Americans by ill treatment and disease. Consider how many Americans view this American hero today:

The Mayor of Berkeley, Ca, announced on the eve of the 500th anniversary of Columbus Day that the city would no longer celebrate it at all! Instead, October 12th would be proclaimed to be "Indigenous Peoples Day." However, because one can never be politically correct enough, the Mayor had to quickly add, "This is in no way a slap at Italians."

The National Council of Churches has decried "the genocide, slavery, ecocide, and exploitation that followed Columbus' wake."

Russell Means, A Native American activist, had extremely harsh words for the Italian explorer: "Columbus makes Hitler look like a juvenile delinquent. He was a racist, a mass murderer, a slave trader, a rapist, and a plunderer." ¹

The Pledge of Allegiance, written to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' voyage, has also come under disrepute today by these same groups that want to remove Columbus from Americas list of heroes. They find it offensive, particularly due to the phrase 'under God' which was added by Congress in the year I was born, 1954. When President Eisenhower signed that law, he said

¹ these examples were taken from the book – ONE NATION UNDER GOD, by Dr. David C. Gibbs, and Jerry Newcombe; pp. 17-18

*FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, the millions of our school children will daily proclaim in every city and town, every village and rural school house, the dedication of our nation and our people to the Almighty. To anyone who truly loves America, nothing could be more inspiring than to contemplate this rededication of our youth, on each school morning, to our country's **true meaning**.*

One year later, President Eisenhower said,

Without God, there could be no American form of Government, nor an American way of life. Recognition of the Supreme being is the first-the most basic-expression of Americanism. Thus the founding fathers of America saw it, and thus with God's help, it will continue to be.

Immediately after the attack on our country by Muslim terrorists September 11th, 2002, our President called for a day of prayer and soul searching. We watched on TV as our nation's law makers and government officials gathered together in a Christian church and heard Billy Graham exhort them and then lead them in prayer to God, for help, and mercy, and guidance. Two months had not gone by, when a federal appellate court declared that it was not constitutional to recite the Pledge of Allegiance in Public schools because of the phrase 'under God.'

Interestingly, the man who served as the plaintiff in the case based his suit on a false premise that reciting the Pledge was psychologically injurious to his atheist daughter because it went against her beliefs. He represented his second grade daughter as being offended just by hearing the phrase 'under God.'

The fact of the matter, however, was that this man was estranged from his daughter's mother (they had never married), and that both the mother and daughter were Christians and attended church regularly, and that the daughter had publicly said that she liked to say the Pledge of Allegiance and wanted to continue to give honor to God.

The real irony in such erroneous case as this, is that the father who is attempting to make it illegal to say the Pledge of Allegiance, so long as it has 'under God' in it, is that the only reason he is permitted to be an atheist without penalty in the United States is because of the right to believe or not believe was granted to him in America under the authority of the very God he denies and is seeking to censor.

Until recently, honoring Columbus Day and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance while standing with hand over heart, was associated with patriotism and love of country. In describing his discovery of America, Columbus said to King Ferdinand of Spain –

Therefore let the king and queen, the princes and their most fortunate kingdoms, and all other countries of Christendom give thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has bestowed upon us so great a victory and gift. Let religious processions be solemnized; let sacred festivals be given; let the churches be covered with festive garlands. Let Christ rejoice on earth, as He rejoices in heaven, when He foresees coming to salvation so many souls of people hitherto lost.²

Christopher Columbus, discoverer of America, was not only a committed Christian, but also a man of prayer and Bible study. From both the scripture and sensitivity to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, Columbus' world view and scientific inclinations were formed and shaped in spite of the cross currents of much of the educated mindsets of his day. From one of his personal journals which he filled with Biblical prophecies he believed were personalized for him, called "Book of Prophecies," he first cited the scripture reference out of the book of Isaiah, and then made personal application. He wrote –

"Listen to me, O coastlands, and hearken, ye people, from afar; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he named my name... I will give thee for a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." Isaiah 49:1, 6

"It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel his hand upon me) the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies. All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me. There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because He comforted me with rays of marvelous inspiration from the Holy Scriptures...

"I am a most unworthy sinner, but I have cried out to the Lord for grace and mercy, and they have covered me completely. I have found the sweetest consolation since I made it my whole purpose to enjoy His marvelous presence. For the execution for the journey to the Indies, I did not make use of intelligence, mathematics or maps. It is simply the fulfillment of what Isaiah had prophesied...

² taken from the book – THE LIGHT AND THE GLORY, by Peter Marshall and David Manuel

“No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Savior, if it is just and if the intention is purely for His holy service. The working out of all things has been assigned to each person by our Lord, but it all happens according to His sovereign will...day and night, moment by moment, everyone should express their most devoted gratitude to Him.”³

Some things are profoundly noteworthy about this journal entry. For one thing, Columbus sensed from this passage of scripture that not only was he born for a purpose in God’s own plan, and not only was he indeed called to perform it from his mother’s womb, but that his name - “Christ-bearer” (oferens=bearer), was also no accident, but part of God’s divine design for his life. He sensed that his purpose was not merely discovering the “coastlands” and “people from afar” but also that he was to bring Christ to them.

Although these scriptures were written about what God was saying to Isaiah the prophet, the Holy Spirit energized them in such a way that Christopher was flooded with assurance that they indeed were just as much about him as they were about Isaiah. And off of his assurance he risked everything in the pursuit of his God-given destiny. In fact, the first land Columbus touched down upon he christened “San Salvador” which means “Holy Savior,” and another he named Trinidad – after the holy Trinity, and another Navidad, after the nativity of our Lord. He then, on bended knee bowed his head and prayed –

“O Lord, Almighty and everlasting God, by thy Holy Word thou has created the heavens, and the earth and the sea; blessed and glorified be thy name, and praised be thy majesty, which hath deigned to use us, thy humble servants, that thy holy Name may be proclaimed in this second part of the earth.”

Contrary to the spirit of the age we live in today, in which many so called scholars are attempting to cast doubt on the inerrancy of the Bible, Christopher Columbus’ faith was so rooted in the integrity of the Bible that he based his entire belief in the new world and the route to take to find it. Scriptures like Proverbs 8:27 (KJV) and Isaiah 40:22 were the sole source that convinced him the earth was not flat but spherical. Isaiah 43:16 spoke about pathways in the sea, which also influenced his oceanography and mapping of the seas.

³ taken from one of my archive articles entitled, Pilgrim not Pagan.

Isaiah 24:15 spoke of isles beyond the sun which mapped out for Columbus a kind of manifest destiny that provided the passion and motivation to finally discover America. Not surprising, these insights into the life of Columbus are left out of any study of Columbus and the discovery of America in our godless, humanistic public education system.

Columbus' confidence and success in discovering America is due in large measure, as his journals tell us, to his singular desire to fulfill his God-given destiny, his absolute confidence in the authority of scripture, his conviction that Christ's evangelical mandate in Matthew 24 needed to be the basis for his discovery of the New World, and his trust in the voice of the Holy Spirit. He is a Christian saint and hero, secularized in our public schools because to not do so would mean casting the Christian faith in the best possible light, which is not politically correct.

2. Pilgrims

The heritage of the past is the seed that brings forth the harvest of the future.

The Pilgrims, who celebrated the first thanksgiving in America, were fleeing religious prosecution in their native England. In 1609 a group of Pilgrims left England for the religious freedom in Holland where they lived and prospered. After a few years their children were speaking Dutch and had become attached to the Dutch way of life. This worried the Pilgrims. They considered the Dutch frivolous and their ideas a threat to their children's education and morality. So they decided to leave Holland and travel to the New World. Their trip was financed by a group of English investors, the Merchant Adventurers. It was agreed that the Pilgrims would be given passage and supplies in exchange for their working for their backers for 7 years.

On Sept. 6, 1620 the Pilgrims set sail for the New World on a ship called the Mayflower. They sailed from Plymouth, England and aboard were 44 Pilgrims, who called themselves the "Saints", and 66 others, whom the Pilgrims called the "Strangers."⁴

The long trip was cold and damp and took 65 days. Since there was the danger of fire on the wooden ship, the food had to be eaten cold. Many passengers became sick and one person died by the time land was sighted on November 10th.

⁴ The Light and the Glory, pp 114-115

The long trip led to many disagreements between the "Saints" and the "Strangers". After land was sighted a meeting was held and an agreement was worked out, called the Mayflower Compact, which guaranteed equality and unified the two groups. They joined together and named themselves the "Pilgrims."⁵

Although they had first sighted land off Cape Cod they did not settle until they arrived at Plymouth, which had been named by Captain John Smith in 1614. It was there that the Pilgrims decide to settle. Plymouth offered an excellent harbor. A large brook offered a resource for fish. The Pilgrims biggest concern was attack by the local Native American Indians. But the *Patuxets* were a peaceful group and did not prove to be a threat.

The first winter was devastating to the Pilgrims. The cold, snow and sleet was exceptionally heavy, interfering with the workers as they tried to construct their settlement. March brought warmer weather and the health of the Pilgrims improved, but many had died during the long winter. Of the 110 Pilgrims and crew who left England, less than 50 survived the first winter, and it looked like more would succumb to the harsh living conditions. Yet they continued to offer to God thanksgiving and praise, asking Him to help them survive so they could bring glory to His name.

On March 16, 1621, what was to become an important and providential event took place. A savage looking Indian brave walked into the Plymouth settlement wearing nothing but a leather loin cloth scaring the poor Pilgrims, who thought they were under attack...that is, until the Indian called out "Welcome" (in English!).

The Indian's name was *Samoset* and he was the sagamore (or chief) of the Algonquins. He had been visiting the area for the previous eight months, having learned his English from various fishing captains who had put in to the Maine shore over the years. After staying the night Samoset left the next day. He returned the following Thursday with another Indian who spoke better English than he did, and who was to prove "a special instrument of God for their good, beyond their expectation. His story was no less extraordinary than the saga of Joseph being sold into slavery to Egypt. His name was Tisquantum, also called Squanto.

3. Squanto

⁵ Ibid

Squanto's story began in 1605 when Squanto and four other Indians were taken captive, sent to England, and taught English to provide intelligence background on the most favorable places to establish colonies. After nine years in England, Squanto was able to return to Plymouth on Capt. John Smith's voyage in 1614. Lured and captured by a notorious Capt. Thomas Hunt, he, with 27 others, were taken to Málaga, Spain, a major slave-trading port. Squanto, with a few others, were bought and rescued by local friars who shared the gospel of Christ with him. In the providential mercy and grace of God, Squanto surrendered his life to Jesus Christ. Thus, it appears that God was preparing him for the role he would ultimately play at Plymouth. ⁶

He was able to join himself to an Englishman bound for London. He then joined with the family of a wealthy merchant, and ultimately embarked for New England in 1619. He stepped ashore six months before the Pilgrims landed in 1620. When he stepped ashore he received the most tragic blow of his life. Not a man, woman, or child of his own tribe was left alive! During the previous four years, a mysterious plague had broken out among them, killing every last one. So complete was the devastation that the neighboring tribes had shunned the area ever since. The Pilgrims had settled in a cleared area that belonged to no one. Their nearest neighbors, the Wampanoags, were about 50 miles to the southwest. Stripped of his identity and his reason for living, Squanto wandered confused and aimlessly until he joined the Wampanoags, having nowhere else to go. But God had other plans that began to clearly unfold when Samoset came into camp one day telling him of the Pilgrims plight. Soon the chief of the tribe, Massasoit, chief of the Wapanoags, mustered up an entourage to visit the Pilgrims, and taking Squanto along with them, headed toward their camp.

Massasoit, entered into a peace treaty of mutual aid with the Plymouth colony that was to last as a model for forty years. When Massasoit and his entourage left, Squanto stayed. He had found his reason for living: these English were helpless in the ways of the wilderness. Scholars have said that if it wasn't for this Christian Indian, the Pilgrims would have not survived. Squanto taught them how to catch eels, stalk deer, plant pumpkins, refine maple syrup, discern both edible and poisonous herbs, and those good for medicine, etc.

Perhaps the most important thing he taught them was the Indian way to plant corn. They hoed six-foot squares in toward the center, putting down four or five kernels, and then fertilizing the corn with fish: three fish in each square, pointing to the center, spoke-like. Guarding the field against the wolves (who would try to steal the fish), by summer they had 20 full acres of corn that would save every one of their lives.

⁶ Material on Squanto taken from an article at Koinonia House written by Chuck Missler on the first Thanksgiving

Squanto also taught them to exploit the pelts of the beaver, which was in plentiful supply and in great demand throughout Europe. He even guided the trading to insure they got full prices for top-quality pelts. The corn was their physical deliverance; the beaver pelts would be their economic deliverance.

The harvest in October was very successful and the Pilgrims found themselves with enough food to put away for the winter. There was corn, fruits and vegetables, fish to be packed in salt, and meat to be cured over smoky fires.

The First Thanksgiving

The Pilgrims were a grateful people-grateful to God, grateful to the Wamp-anoags, and grateful also to Squanto. After a particularly prosperous year (due in large measure to Squanto's help) Governor Bradford declared a day of public Thanksgiving, to be held in October.

Massasoit was invited and unexpectedly arrived a day early-with an additional ninety Indians! To feed such a crowd would cut deeply into their stores for the winter, but they had learned through all their travails that God could be trusted implicitly.

And it turned out that the Indians did not come empty handed: they brought five dressed deer and more than a dozen fat wild turkeys. They helped with the preparations, teaching the Pilgrim women how to make hoecakes and a tasty pudding out of cornmeal and maple syrup. In fact, they also showed them how to make one of their Indian favorites: white, fluffy popcorn! (Each time you go to a movie theatre, you should remember the source of this popular treat!)

The Pilgrims, in turn, provided many vegetables from their gardens: carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, cucumbers, radishes, beets, and cabbages. Also, using some of their precious flour with some of the summer fruits which the Indians had dried, the Pilgrims introduced them to blueberry, apple, and cherry pie. Along with sweet wine made from wild grapes, it was, indeed, a joyous occasion for all concerned. ⁷

The Pilgrims and Indians happily competed in shooting contests, foot races, and wrestling. Things went so well (and Massasoit showed no inclination to leave) that this first Thanksgiving was extended for three days.

⁷ The Light and the Glory, p.135-136

The Pilgrims and Squanto were able to share a common mutual Christian faith. They prayed and worshipped together, and the journals from that period convey a general benevolence and good will amongst them all. There was a remarkable God-consciousness that permeated everyone's awareness. The doctrine of the Providence of God was not only foremost on their minds, but also served as a major lens through which they interpreted and understood the things that unfolded around them. The psychological health which they were able to enjoy, and the hardiness and robustness that characterized their daily labors and work, was do, in large measure to their understanding and acceptance of this Biblical doctrine. Because this doctrine easily lends itself to a spirit of generosity and thankfulness to the goodness and mercy of God, it is no wonder that the first thanksgiving actually emerged out of a people so saturated and buoyed by it.

The moment that stood out the most in the Pilgrims' memories was William Brewster's prayer as they began the festival. They had so much for which to thank God: for providing all their needs-and His provision of Squanto, their teacher, guide, and friend that was to see them through those critical early winters.

An annual commemoration of thanks didn't occur until December 4, 1619, in Virginia. 38 colonists had landed at a place they called Berkeley Hundred. 'We ordain,' read an instruction in the charter, 'that the day of our ship's arrival...in the land of Virginia **shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God.**'"

While none of these Thanksgiving celebrations was an official national pronouncement (since no nation existed at the time), they do support the claim that the celebrations were religious. "Thanksgiving began as a holy day, created by a community of God-fearing Puritans sincere in their desire to set aside one day each year especially to thank the Lord for His many blessings. The day they chose, coming after the harvest at a time of year when farm work was light, fit the natural rhythm of rural life."

4. George Washington (1700)

George Washington was one of our most godly presidents. His habit was to spend an hour on his knees in prayer every morning at 5am, kneeling before a chair with his open bible on it and a candle to give it light. He spent another hour every night in prayer, retiring at 9 pm to do so, in the same fashion. He as described as a very thankful man.⁸

⁸ from a tract by D. James Kennedy entitled – THANKSGIVING IN THE MIDST OF TROUBLE

He wrote his prayers in a personal journal he titled DAILY SACRIFICES. Let me read to you the first four entries into this journal, which covered Sunday morning and evening, and Monday morning and evening, to show you the measure of the faith and Christian commitment of this man.⁹ On Sunday morning, the day of his first entry, Washington wrote:

Let my heart, therefore, gracious God, be so affected by the glory and majesty of [Thine honor] that I may not do mine own works, but wait on Thee, and discharge those weighty duties which Thou requirest of me...

On Sunday evening he wrote

O most glorious God...I acknowledge and confess my faults; in the weak and imperfect performance of the duties of this day. I have called on Thee for pardon and forgiveness of sins, but so coldly and carelessly that my prayers are become my sin and stand in need of pardon. I have heard Thy holy word, but with such deadness of spirit that I have been an unprofitable and forgetful hearer....But, Oh God, who art rich in mercy and plenteous in redemption, mark not, I beseech Thee, what I have done amiss; remember that I am but dust, and remit my transgressions, negligences, and ignorances, and cover them all with the absolute obedience of Thy dear Son, that those sacrifices (of sin, praise and thanksgiving) which I have offered may be accepted by Thee, in and for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered upon the cross for me.

On Monday morning, he wrote

Direct my thoughts, words and work, wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the Lamb, and purge my heart by Thy Holy Spirit...and daily frame me more and more into the likeness of Thy Son Jesus Christ.

And Monday evening –

Thou gavest Thy Son to die for me; and hast given me assurance of salvation, upon my repentance and sincerely endeavoring to conform my life to His holy precepts and example.

⁹ Ibid

Issac Potts, Washington's temporary landlord at Valley Forge the winter of 1777-78 gave a famous account of Washington's Christian faith. As he was traveling the dark forest, he heard some distance from him a voice that became more and more intense and fervent the closer he got to its origins. As he carefully spied out where the imploring voice was coming from, he spotted George Washington head bowed, hands clasped, on bended knees, praying for the new nation, for God's guidance, and for the welfare and courage of the men under his command Potts, a Quaker, returned to his home and declared to his wife, **"I have seen this day what I shall never forget. Till now I have thought that a Christian and a soldier were incompatible; but if George Washington be not a man of god, I am mistaken, and still more shall I be disappointed if God does not through him perform some great thing for his country."**¹⁰

George Washington wasn't confused about the Christian foundations of this nation, as so many atheists and secular humanists are prone to be today. In a letter dated August 20th, 1778, he wrote to Thomas Nelson: **"The hand of providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked, that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations."**

By 1970, a public school systems history textbook contains more than 7 pages on Marilyn Monroe, but only 2 paltry paragraphs on George Washington.

He is so revered as a National hero, his head and face adorns our dollar bill and quarter, the huge stone monument on our Nation's Capital, Mount Rushmore, and our Nation's capitol city is named after him. But in New Jersey, the state chapter of the National Education Association (a liberal teachers union) blocked a businessman from having a portrait of George Washington placed in every school in the Garden State. A spokesman for the organization said **"There were so many great men and women in our Nation's history, that it would be an injustice to have George Washington singled out as the one person to have his picture posted in every school."**

It was none other than George Washington who, as this Nation's first President, made thanksgiving an official holiday. He called for a National celebration in honor of the hand of God in the discovery of this country and the founding of our nation. So Thanksgiving, a day set aside to remember this nation's Christian roots, and the gracious hand of God in its discovery, founding, and establishment. Continued on for many years. Each year, on the appointed day, Americans throughout this nation were called upon to attend their house of worship, and give thanks to God for His providential blessings upon this nation, and to beseech Him for His continued guidance, protection and blessing.

¹⁰ Missler, Koinonia House

Thanksgiving continued to be celebrated until the hero of our current secular and atheist public education system and of the secular media chose to discontinue Thanksgiving as a National day of prayer and the giving of thanks to God. Of course, we are talking about Thomas Jefferson. Because of Jefferson, we Thanksgiving wasn't celebrated for more than two-thirds of a century.

5. Abe Lincoln (1800)

No matter, by the end of the nineteenth century, Thanksgiving Day had become an institution throughout New England. It officially became a national holiday again on October 3rd, 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln stood and proclaimed

“No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the most high God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy...I do therefore, invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday in November next as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in heaven.”¹¹

Now guess what happened just before President Lincoln made Thanksgiving a National Christian holiday again? It is true that for most of Lincoln's life he was not a Christian. He wrote a letter to a pastor in Illinois when he was President in which he said –

When I left Springfield, I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg, and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there, consecrated myself to Christ. Yes, I do love Jesus.

And it was within that very same month in which Lincoln came to faith in Christ, that he also renewed and reestablished Thanksgiving Day as a regular perpetual Christian holiday in this Country. He also initiated a National Day of fasting.

¹¹ Ibid

Here is part of the speech he gave as his faith in Christ began to awaken in him a great gratitude and the importance of encouraging his countrymen to realize it as well –

It is the duty of nations as well as of men to owe their dependence upon the over-ruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the holy scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord.

We know that by His divine law, nations, like individuals, are subject to punishments and chastisements in this world. May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins; to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? We have been the recipients of the choicest of bounties from heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God.

We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness in our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us...

It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens...

Conclusion

So you see, I would put you all in remembrance this Lord's Day that Thanksgiving Day is

- rooted in the Christian faith of the Pilgrims and Puritans

- is steeped in a grateful response to Divine Providence, and saturated in the recognition that not only does our nation exist because of the gifts God, in His mercy, has granted us, but with the understanding that our nation can only hope to continue to exist to the extent that our heavenly Father continues to bless it
- and therefore, all true Thanksgiving prayers include petitions for God to mercifully continue to bless our country and return it to its true Christian faith
- that when Abraham Lincoln officially proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday as an act of homage and humility before the God who led our forefathers to discover America, he set it apart as a Christian holiday
- and that therefore, Thanksgiving is literally as holy a day as any other Holy day set aside for the purpose of honoring and praising God for what he has done
- and that it is a singularly Christian holiday whose roots are Christian, and therefore should serve a holy purpose: to prick and trigger our national conscience to remember Americas Christian history and heroes, and the grace of God in it all.

Unfortunately, in 1941, The Free mason President Franklin D. Roosevelt persuaded congress to set in motion an act to move the day Thanksgiving is pushed the Day Thanksgiving was celebrated back a week to the third Thursday in November. And what was of such momentous importance to warrant the deconsecration of the last Thursday in November? According to the reason given by F.D.R. it was so Americans could have more time for Christmas shopping. This decision exhibited a very low view of God, and disrespected the reason upon which Thanksgiving was established in the first place. It was a profaning act, and one that many over the years have noticed injured the sacred soul of Thanksgiving Day. From that time on, Thanksgiving has seemed to lost something in the National subconscious, and has become more and more of a secular holiday devoid of its original meaning. Alas.

Years ago there was a newspaper story about a woman who was walking down a street in New York when she recognized a young woman she hadn't seen in 10 years walking ahead of her. She called out to her but the woman couldn't hear her because of the noise of the traffic. So she followed her to an apartment building and saw her go upstairs. She followed her up the stairs and rang her door bell. When the door opened, she greeted her – "My dear, I haven't seen you in ten years. Where on earth have you been?"

Her friend invited her in, and took her to one of the bedrooms in the apartment, where over against one wall was a very large crib in which sat an 8 year old boy, severely retarded. She said, *"This is where I have been for the last ten years. I have been taking care of him. He cannot speak or recognize anyone, and he cannot care for himself. He is too weak, too*

simple, and helpless. Unless I take care of him, he would starve, get sick, and die. I do everything for him, and it has been my great joy to do so. But oh, it would have been so much nicer if, when I did all of those things for him, he could recognize that it is me who cares for him, and be grateful that I do.

How many children does God have who are quite well able to speak but seem unable to recognize the difference between God and anything or anyone else? We are quick to assign blame to Him when calamity falls upon us, but when things go well for us, why we are lucky, fate has smiled on us, we are getting what we deserve for a change.

Remember, in order to be thankful, one must first be thoughtful. Give thought, then give thanks. Let us pray together.