

November 25, 2121

GRATEFULLY GRATEFUL!

By Dr. Tom R. Pousche

There is nothing more disappointing than seeing signs of ungratefulness. In the past several decades, we have witnessed our society becoming self-centered, voracious, and over-bloated consumers.

We Americans who live in the richest country in the world flaunt our comfort and easy-street living. We simply have an overabundance. It's time to be thankful!

When I think of being thankful, I can't help but take a little historical walk back in time by recalling the Pilgrims' saga. At Plymouth the Pilgrims gave thanks to God for a safe ocean voyage from England. After a dreadful winter during which nearly half of the Plymouth colonists perished, the first New England Thanksgiving was celebrated in the summer of 1621.

This began the wonderful tradition of celebrating what is today called Thanksgiving Day. Those days were not easy as one unfolds their long story from beginning to end. The Pilgrims paid a precious price for their commitment to be free from political and religious persecution in England.

As a matter of fact, nine out of every ten people who embarked for the New World would die before reaching their destination. The death rate in the Virginia Colony during its second year was even higher than the first. According to *The Light and Glory* by Peter Marshall and David Manuel, "Of the 1,200 people who went out to Virginia in 1619, only 200 were left alive by 1620."

The Apostle Paul in the New Testament reminds us:

Never stop praying. Be thankful, whatever the circumstances may be."

(1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 J.B. Phillips)

We need to keep in mind that the giving of thanks in ALL things does not imply that all things are good. On the contrary, because of our confidence in the providence of God, we can give thanks knowing whatever the circumstances; God is in complete control.

That means, even when you back your pickup into your minivan with your wife sitting by your side, you give thanks! And folks—that was not easy to do. For the first time in my professional driving career I did not want anyone to know I drove professionally. Incidentally, my wife had to remind me to be thankful. Thank God for my wonderful wife!

To make sense out of our upcoming 2017 Thanksgiving holiday, I can think of nothing more powerful than the announcement made 393 years ago by the governor of Plymouth. Take note of his word:

To All Ye Pilgrims

Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, beans, squashes and garden vegetables, and has made The forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and Inasmuch as He has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience: now, I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and little ones, do gather at the meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of nine and twelve in the day time, on Thursday, November ye 29th of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three, and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor, and render Thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings.

William Bradford

Governor of Plymouth Colony

1623

This message is truly thanksgiving. Let's be equally thankful for everything this Thanksgiving season. Happy THANKSGIVING!