

Thanksgiving

- I. Introduction.
 - A. "Thanksgiving is..."
 - B. **Thanksgiver or Thanks-taker?**
 - C. **What 2 areas are you most thankful for today?**

Pilgrim Prayers called "America's Early Years-1492-1620," by Fern L Nilson. "History tells us that PRAYER has been a part of our nation since its beginning. It is America's priceless heritage.

In 1492, CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS not only discovered America, but was convinced that God had given him a special mission to carry the Light of Christ to this new land. His name, Christopher, which literally meant Christ-bearer, was to him a clear indication that God had called him to do this. It would be hard to say when his sense of mission became clear, it may have been while he was still a teenage boy in Genoa, Italy, carding wool in the family wool shop, as his father and grandfather had done before him. Or, it could have come later, in Lisbon, Portugal, the sea-faring capital of the world, where the year 1484 found him and his brother employed in the profession of mapmaking. Later, it was Ferdinand and Isabella, king and queen of Spain, who provided the support to send forth Columbus' expedition that would bring the gospel to an undiscovered land. ¹

It was a little more than one hundred years later that JAMESTOWN became the site of the first permanent English settlement in America. In 1607, three ships bearing 105 colonists sailed to the New World. Before they left England, they drew up the First Charter of Virginia which stated that they came... "for the Furtherance of the Christian Religion to People who as yet live in ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God." The first act performed by the settlers was to erect a large wooden Cross, and they fell upon their knees before it and thanked God. ²

The first three years in Jamestown were difficult because of adjustments to an unfamiliar wilderness. Disease, poor water, shortages of food, dissension, and Indian hostility made life difficult for the colonists despite being ably led by men like Captain John Smith.

Thirteen years later, in 1620, the PILGRIMS risked their lives to come to America to be free to worship God and pray. "One hundred and two Pilgrims huddled together between the decks of the Mayflower. The severity of the incessant storms prevented them from seeing the light of day as the small ship wallowed across the Atlantic. After seven weeks of enduring storms and deprivation, their mutual commitment to the cause of faith and freedom was severely tested before they set foot on American soil at Cape Cod. Vicious storms had driven them nearly 100 miles off course. Before landing on November 11th of that year, they drafted a compact that would become the cornerstone of American freedom and democracy, THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT. Only two paragraphs in length, it reads in part:

*'In the name of God, amen. We whose names are under-written. Having undertaken, for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and honor of our King and country, a voyage to plant the first colony do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and of one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic; for the better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid...'"*³

*History records that having arrived in a good harbor, WILLIAM BRADFORD led the Pilgrims in prayer as they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and who had delivered them from all the dangerous perils. They had initially begun their long journey by kneeling on the dock at Delfthaven (Holland) to ask God's blessing; they ended it on the sands of Cape Cod, kneeling to thank Him for that blessing.*⁴

*That winter Indians, like Squanto and Massasoit, came to meet the Pilgrims. "Massasoit was a remarkable example of God's providential care for his Pilgrims as he welcomed them as a friend. When spring arrived, Squanto showed them how to plant corn, stalk deer, plant pumpkins among the corn, refine maple syrup from the maple trees, discern which herbs were good to eat and good for medicine, and how to find the best berries."*⁵

The Pilgrims later settled at Plymouth on December 21, 1620, and established the second permanent English colony in America. They named the site, Plymouth, because Plymouth in England was the last town from which they left.

The Pilgrims were filled with gratitude, not only to the Indians who had been friendly, but also to God who had met their needs. So, GOVERNOR BRADFORD, Governor of Plymouth Colony, declared a day of public THANKSGIVING to be held in October of 1621. Ninety Indians came bringing with them deer and turkeys to help with the feasting.

*Surely, one moment stood out in the Pilgrims' memory-WILLIAM BREWSTER'S prayer as they began their celebration. There were many reasons to thank God. God had provided for all their needs, even when their faith had not been up to believing that He would do so. They thanked Him for those who had given their lives for the sake of a new country. In addition, the settlers were grateful to God for friendship with the Indians, and for all His remarkable providences in bringing them to this place and sustaining them."*⁶

II. Scripture.

- A. Definition (Webster's Dictionary). "1: the act of giving thanks; 2: a prayer expressing gratitude; 3a: a public acknowledgment or celebration of divine goodness."

B. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words.

1. **Hebrew.**

- a. yadah {yaw-daw'}: v AV - praise 53, give thanks 32, confess 16, thank 5, make confession 2, thanksgiving 2, cast 1, cast out 1, shoot 1, thankful 1; 114.
- b. towdah {to-daw'}: n f AV - thanksgiving 18, praise 6, thanks 3, thank offerings 3, confession 2; 32 1) confession, praise, thanksgiving 1a) give praise to God 1b) thanksgiving in songs of liturgical worship, hymn of praise 1c) thanksgiving choir or procession or line or company 1d) thank-offering, sacrifice of thanksgiving 1e) confession.

2. **Aramaic.** y@da' (Aramaic) {yed-aw'}: v AV - thank 1, give thanks 1; 2 (Aphel) to praise, give thanks.

3. **Greek.** eucharistia {yoo-khar-is-tee'-ah}: n f AV - thanksgiving 9, giving of thanks 3, thanks 2, thankfulness 1; 15 1) thankfulness 2) the giving of thanks.

C. **Scripture.**

1. "**Thanks**" (71 times total, 25 select verses below).

- a. **1 Chronicles 16:34-35**—"34 **O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.** 35 **And say ye, 'Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to Thy holy name, and glory in Thy praise.'**"
- b. **Psalms 18:49**—"Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy name."
- c. **Psalms 30:4**—"Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness."
- d. **Psalms 30:12**—"To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever."
- e. **Psalms 35:18**—"I will give Thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise Thee among much people."
- f. **Psalms 75:1**—"<<To the chief Musician, Altaschith, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.>> Unto Thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto Thee do we give thanks: for that Thy name is near Thy wondrous works declare."
- g. **Psalms 79:13**—"So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks forever: we will shew forth Thy praise to all generations."
- h. **Psalms 92:1**—"<<A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day.>> It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High."
- i. **Psalms 97:12**—"Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."
- j. **Psalms 105:1**—"O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people."

- k. **Psalms 106:1**—"*Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.*"
 - l. **Psalms 106:47**—"*Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto Thy holy name, and to triumph in Thy praise.*"
 - m. **Psalms 107:1; 118:1, 29; 136:1**—"*O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.*"
 - n. **Psalms 119:62**—"*At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous judgments.*"
 - o. **Psalms 136:2**—"*O give thanks unto the God of gods: for His mercy endureth forever.*"
 - p. **Psalms 136:3**—"*O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for His mercy endureth forever.*"
 - q. **Psalms 136:26**—"*O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for His mercy endureth forever.*"
 - r. **Psalms 140:13**—"*Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy name: the upright shall dwell in Thy presence.*"
 - s. **Colossians 3:17**—"*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.*"
 - t. **1 Timothy 2:1**—"*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.*"
 - u. **Revelation 11:17**—"*Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned.*"
2. "**Thanksgiving**" (27 times total, 9 select verses below).
- a. **Psalms 26:7**—"*That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Thy wondrous works.*"
 - b. **Psalms 50:14**—"*Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High.*"
 - c. **Psalms 69:30**—"*I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.*"
 - d. **Psalms 95:2**—"*Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms.*"
 - e. **Psalms 100:4**—"*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.*"
 - f. **Psalms 107:22**—"*And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.*"
 - g. **Psalms 116:17**—"*I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.*"
 - h. **Psalms 147:7**—"*Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.*"

- i. **Revelation 7:12**—"*Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*"
- 3. "**Thank**" (26 times total).
 - a. **1 Chronicles 29:13**—"*Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.*"
 - b. **1 Corinthians 1:4**—"*I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.*"
 - c. **2 Thessalonians 1:3**—"*We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.*"
- 4. "**Thankful**" (3 times, 1 verse below. "**Thanked**" 3 times, but not shown).
 - a. **Psalms 100:4**—"*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.*"

III. Application.

- A. What is a grateful or **thankful experience** you remember?
- B. What is **something spiritual for which you are thankful**?
- C. What is **something about your spouse makes you thankful**?
- D. 9 practical ways to be more thankful:
 - 1. **Thank God repeatedly for everything.**
 - 2. **Tell others how thankful you are for God** or something He is doing.
 - 3. Recognize and **thank others for little things.**
 - 4. **Start prayer with confession**—it helps put things/thanks in perspective.
 - 5. Thank God at **scheduled times**—when you rise, retire, and before meals is a great practice.
 - 6. Think or **dwell on things for which you are thankful (Php. 4:6-8).**
 - 7. **A good formula** for thankful thinking is from **1Chr. 16:34**, "*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is...*"
 - 8. **Ask others about their thankful thoughts**—to gain to thankful thinking, and avoid vain repetitions.
 - 9. A great way to thank God is **happy obedience.**
- E. **Popcorn Prayer of Thanksgiving.**