



**HAPPY
THANKSGIVING**
REMEMBERING THE GOODNESS OF GOD

**Thanksgiving Day
2014**



GOD PROVIDES

LEARNING TO TRUST IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

“Truth buy, and sell not, Wisdom, instruction, and understanding.” Proverbs 23:23

(Young’s Literal Translation)

In Thanksgiving to The LORD for His Providence & Abundant Favor we are having a "feast" --- but why do we have a Thanksgiving Feast?

Feast is from the Hebrew word *chag*. The word *feast* or "festival gathering," is related to the verb that means "to make a pilgrimage" or "to keep a pilgrim feast" (Ps 84: 5). The Hebrews were commanded to observe three pilgrim feasts a year (Ex 23: 14ff). These sacred feasts were celebrated by all people and were joyous expressions of *gratitude to GOD*. They included processions, dancing, and the enjoyment of food and drink. GOD intended that Israel's religious feasts be worship events, a celebration of the joy GOD had given them. The Old Testament prophets, however, condemned the feasts because the Hebrews were desecrating these holy convocations with *sacrilegious behavior* (Isa 1: 12-15; Amos 5: 20-27). Zachariah prophesied of a time in the future when all nations would keep the "pilgrim-feast" before The LORD (Zech 14: 16).



The Thanksgiving Story

Most stories of Thanksgiving history starts with the harvest celebration of the pilgrims and the Indians that took place in the autumn of 1621. Although they did have a three-day feast in celebration of a good harvest, and the local Indians did participate, this "first Thanksgiving" was not a holiday, simply a gathering. There is little evidence that this feast of thanks led directly to our modern Thanksgiving Day holiday. Thanksgiving can be traced back to 1863 when President Lincoln became the first president to proclaim Thanksgiving Day. The holiday has been a fixture of late November ever since. However, since most school children are taught that the first Thanksgiving was held in 1621 with the pilgrims and Indians, let us take a closer look at just what took place leading up to that event, and then what happened in the centuries afterward that finally gave us our modern Thanksgiving.

The Pilgrims who sailed to this country aboard the Mayflower were originally members of the English Separatist Church (a Puritan sect). They had earlier fled their home in England and sailed to Holland (The Netherlands) to escape religious persecution. There, they enjoyed more religious tolerance, but they eventually became disenchanted with the Dutch way of life, thinking it ungodly. Seeking a better life, the Separatists negotiated with a London stock company to finance a pilgrimage to America. Most of those making the trip aboard the Mayflower were non-Separatists, but were hired to protect the company's interests. Only about one-third of the original colonists were Separatists.



The Pilgrims set ground at Plymouth Rock on December 11, 1620. Their first winter was devastating. At the beginning of the following fall, they had lost 46 of the original 102 who sailed on the Mayflower. But the harvest of 1621 was a bountiful one. And the remaining colonists decided to celebrate with a feast -- including 91 Indians who had helped the Pilgrims survive their first year. It is believed that the Pilgrims would not have made it through the year without the help of the natives. The feast was more of a traditional English harvest festival than a true "thanksgiving"

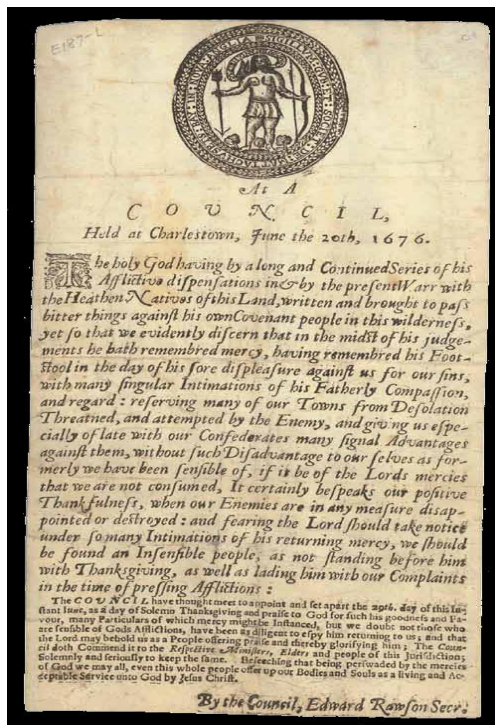
observance. It lasted three days. Governor William Bradford sent "four men fowling" after wild ducks and geese. It is not certain that wild turkey was part of their feast. However, it is certain that they had venison. The term "turkey" was used by the Pilgrims to mean any sort of wild fowl.

Another modern staple at almost every Thanksgiving table is pumpkin pie. But it is unlikely that the first feast included that treat. The supply of flour had been long diminished, so there was no bread or pastries of any kind. However, they did eat boiled pumpkin, and they produced a type of fried bread from their corn crop. There was also no milk, cider, potatoes, or butter. There was no domestic cattle for

dairy products, and the newly-discovered potato was still considered by many Europeans to be poisonous. But the feast did include fish, berries, watercress, lobster, dried fruit, clams, venison, and plums. This "thanksgiving" feast was not repeated the following year. Many years passed before the event was repeated. It wasn't until June of 1676 that another Day of thanksgiving was proclaimed. On June 20 of that year the governing council of Charlestown,



Massachusetts, held a meeting to determine how best to express thanks for the good fortune that had seen their community securely established. By unanimous vote they instructed Edward Rawson, the clerk, to proclaim June 29 as a day of thanksgiving. It is notable that this thanksgiving celebration probably did not include the Indians, as the celebration was meant partly to be in recognition of the colonists' recent victory over the "heathen natives," (see the proclamation).



1676 Thanksgiving Proclamation

"The Holy God having by a long and Continual Series of His Afflictive dispensations in and by the present War with the Heathen Natives of this land, written and brought to pass bitter things against His own Covenant people in this wilderness, yet so that we evidently discern that in the midst of His judgments He hath remembered mercy, having remembered His Footstool in the day of His sore displeasure against us for our sins, with many singular Intimations of His Fatherly Compassion, and regard; reserving many of our Towns from Desolation Threatened, and attempted by the Enemy, and giving us especially of late with many of our Confederates many signal Advantages against them, without such Disadvantage to ourselves as formerly we have been sensible of, if it be of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, It certainly bespeaks our positive Thankfulness, when our Enemies are in any measure disappointed or destroyed; and fearing the Lord should take notice under so many Intimations of His returning mercy, we should be found an Insensible people, as not standing before Him with Thanksgiving, as well as lading him with our Complaints in the time of pressing Afflictions:

The Council have thought meet to appoint and set apart the 29th day of this instant June, as a day of Solemn Thanksgiving and praise to God for such His Goodness and Favor, many Particulars of which mercy might be Instanced, but we doubt not those who are sensible of God's Afflictions, have been as diligent to espy Him returning to us; and that the Lord may behold us as a People offering Praise and thereby glorifying Him; the Council doth commend it to the Respective Ministers, Elders and people of this Jurisdiction; Solemnly and seriously to keep the same Beseeking that being persuaded by the mercies of God we may all, even this whole people offer up our bodies and souls as a living and acceptable Service unto God by Jesus Christ."

A hundred years later, in October of 1777 all 13 colonies joined in a thanksgiving celebration. It also commemorated the patriotic victory over the British at Saratoga. But it was a one-time affair.

George Washington's 1789 Thanksgiving Proclamation

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me to "recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"



Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been able to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand, at the city of New York, the 3d day of October, A.D. 1789.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "G. Washington".

G. Washington (his actual signature)

There was discord among the colonies, many feeling the hardships of a few pilgrims did not warrant a national holiday. And later, President Thomas Jefferson opposed the idea of having a day of thanksgiving. It was Sarah Josepha Hale, a magazine editor, whose efforts eventually led to what we recognize as Thanksgiving. Hale wrote many editorials championing her cause in her Boston Ladies' Magazine, and later, in Godey's Lady's Book. Finally, after a 40-year campaign of writing editorials and letters to governors and presidents, Hale's obsession became a reality when, in 1863, President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November as a national day of Thanksgiving.

Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation

By the President of the United States of America



The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of

the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom. 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. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea 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. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed. Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the Unites States the eighty-eighth.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln

William H. Seward,
Secretary of State

Thanksgiving was proclaimed by every president after Lincoln. The date was changed a couple of times, most recently by Franklin Roosevelt, who set it up one week to the next-to-last Thursday in order to create a longer Christmas shopping season. Public uproar against this decision caused the president to move Thanksgiving back to its original date two years later. And in 1941, Thanksgiving was finally sanctioned by Congress as a legal holiday, as the fourth Thursday in November.

Look to the Scriptures to see that God instructs us to be thankful . . .



1 Chronicles 16:8 Give thanks to the LORD, call on His Name; make known among the nations what He has done.

Psalm 35:18 I will give You thanks in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise You.

Psalm 95:2 Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song.

Psalm 100: 4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His Name.

Psalm 118: 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; His love endures forever.

Psalm 136: 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.

Romans 1: 21 For 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.

1 Corinthians 15: 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 9:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Philippians 1: 3 I thank my God every time I remember you.

Philippians 4: 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Colossians 3: 15-17 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Colossians 2: 6-7 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

1 Timothy 4: 3-4 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 12: 28-29 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."

Remembering: Thanksgiving 2013, when The Rawls & The Powells were at Big Oaks Ranch.



Dillon, Tammie, & Jeff on Thanksgiving afternoon & the Thanksgiving Dinner table; we missed Jason, Carmen, Justin, Jade Brock and Koda in 2013!

We are grateful this year during this Thanksgiving season for:

1. Our LORD & SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST and His Word.
2. Our family.
3. The Providence of GOD working on our behalf.
4. Those, by Providence, who are protecting the freedom to worship, speak, assemble and publish.
5. Faithful protection, care, and blessings in our lives from our LORD & SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.
6. _____
7. _____

The Lord's Goodness to the Faithful, A Psalm of David

Psalm 138

*I will praise You with my whole heart;
Before the gods I will sing praises to You.
² I will worship toward Your holy temple,
And praise Your Name
For Your lovingkindness and Your truth;
For You have magnified Your Word above all Your name.
³ In the day when I cried out, You answered me,
And made me bold with strength in my soul.
⁴ All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD,
When they hear the words of Your mouth.
⁵ Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
For great is the glory of the LORD.
⁶ Though the LORD is on high,
Yet He regards the lowly;
But the proud He knows from afar.
⁷ Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me;
You will stretch out Your hand
Against the wrath of my enemies,
And Your right hand will save me.
⁸ The LORD will perfect that which concerns me;
Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever;
Do not forsake the works of Your hands.*



We are invited to join the pilgrims



In celebrating a heartfelt Thanksgiving

Psalms 34 Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)

The LORD Delivers the Righteous

Concerning David, when he pretended to be insane in the presence of Abimelech, who drove him out, and he departed.

David extends a thanksgiving invitation, a personal invitation to a Thanksgiving Celebration. Psalm 34:1-10.

[One can read the account of David's circumstances in 1 Samuel 21-22.]

[Thanksgiving is not dependent on physical circumstances, finances, or politics.]

[Giving thanks to God is the result of a commitment we make, not the conditions we find ourselves in.]

[Giving thanks to God is: a consistent attitude and activity, not an occasional blessing we celebrate.]

¹ I will praise the LORD at all times; His praise will always be on my lips.

[Giving thanks to God is: the result of a choice we make, not determined by the company we keep.]

² I will boast in the LORD; the humble will hear and be glad.

³ Proclaim Yahweh's greatness with me; let us exalt His name together.

[Giving thanks to God is: the result of looking up to God, not looking at the world around us.]

⁴ I sought the LORD, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

⁵ Those who look to Him are radiant with joy; their faces will never be ashamed.

[Giving thanks to God is: the exercise of our faith not the outcome of our feelings.]

⁶This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him from all his troubles.

⁷The Angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.

[Giving thanks to God is: contagious, it is inviting to others.]

⁸Taste and see that the LORD is good. How happy is the man who takes refuge in Him!

⁹You who are His holy ones, fear Yahweh, for those who fear Him lack nothing.

¹⁰Young lions lack food and go hungry, but those who seek the LORD will not lack any good thing.

David's instructions – How to have a Thankful Heart, Psalm 34:11-22

[#1 - Choose to be thankful]

¹¹Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

[#2 - Do an attitude check]

¹²Who is the man who delights in life, loving a long life to enjoy what is good?

[#3 – Take action. Words and works matter. Circumstances of life do not determine our thankfulness. Thankfulness is a choice.]

¹³Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from deceitful speech.

¹⁴Turn away from evil and do what is good; seek peace and pursue it.

[#4 – Take inventory of things to be thankful for.]

¹⁵The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry for help.

¹⁶The face of the LORD is set against those who do what is evil, to erase all memory of them from the earth.

[#5 – Seek and find Him.]

¹⁷The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them from all their troubles.

¹⁸The LORD is near the brokenhearted; He saves those crushed in spirit.

¹⁹Many adversities come to the one who is righteous, but the LORD delivers him from them all.

[#6 – Remember the Savior who redeemed us! Ref: John 19:34-57]

²⁰He protects all his bones; not one of them is broken.

²¹Evil brings death to the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

²²The LORD redeems the life of His servants, and all who take refuge in Him will not be punished.

[#7 – Include Thanksgiving in every prayer.]

Psalm 34:1 I will praise the LORD at all times; His praise will always be on my lips.

Let us give thanks with a joyful heart.



We love you and wish you a happy and purpose filled Thanksgiving and for the coming days of Christmas celebration as well,

*Chag Semeach,
"Joyous Gathering"*

*Poppa "Pops" & Mimi
Big Oaks Ranch, 2014*

History: This booklet was first compiled in 2008 from various studies we had made over the years with our children, Jason & Carmen, now we can share a tradition of what we have learned and continue to learn over the years about our heritage in THE LORD and in America. ©BOR 2014

Tidbits

Where does Christmas come before Thanksgiving?
What happens when a turkey gets into a fight?
Why did the pilgrims eat turkey for Thanksgiving?

In the dictionary
He gets the stuffing knocked out of him.
They could not fit the moose into the oven.