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## THANKSgiving EveryDAY

What a wonderful tradition we have in Thanksgiving Day! This national observance came about because of deliverance from a deadly drought in the New World -- and yet we too seem to face a drought of thanks-giving in our land today.

We set aside one day a year, to thank Almighty God for His providential care in our lives. Psalm 107 says it well: *“O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.”*

Early Spanish, French and English explorers and settlers had celebrated a day of thanksgiving in the 1500s and 1600s. But we think most of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. They had fled to the New World in 1620 from England by way of Holland, out of concern for the spiritual well-being of their children, in order to live by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1621 the surviving half of their number celebrated God’s providence through an extremely difficult winter. The Indians Samoset and Squanto and others had been invaluable. The Pilgrims invited the neighboring Wampanoag Indians to a harvest feast – complete with turkey, shellfish, lobster, cornbread, berries, venison and more. Ninety natives joined fifty pilgrims, and we’ve been celebrating in a similar way ever since.

Psalm 107 also says *“For the LORD satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul He fills with good things.”* The Pilgrims thanked God not only for food and shelter, but for the spiritual blessings that brought them to America.

And we too should thank God for the Pilgrims, and other early settlers including the Puritans, for the spiritual heritage that forms the foundation of our society today. Scholars say their American experience demonstrates one of history’s most incredible cultural transformations. Through the Bible-teaching ministry of their Cambridge-trained pastor, John Robinson, the Pilgrims put into practice the principles of civil, economic and religious liberty revealed in the Bible, and merged them with hundreds of years of English common law.

The merchants who chartered their voyage required a communal quasi-socialist approach. The Pilgrims abandoned that in 1623 to form a thriving free-enterprise system based on Christian work-ethic principles of responsibility and liberty. The guiding documents of their settlement, based on the Bible, formed the basis of the charters and covenants of more than 80 neighboring colonies, and eventually of the American experiment of independence and our constitutional republic. It was all modeled on the ancient Hebrews and the polity of the New Testament church. They established Christian schools and colleges in the first 200 years of the American experiment, making its citizens the most literate on earth.

All because the Pilgrims understood and lived out the truths of God’s Word, the Bible. Psalm 107 says *“Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things; let them consider the steadfast love of the LORD.”*

Indeed. Let us give thanks for the spiritual heritage of our forefathers. Let us give thanks for their faith in God which propelled them over dangerous seas to the new world. Let us give thanks for their reliance on God in their daily lives. Let us give thanks for what we can learn from their lives and their heritage. Let us give thanks for the liberties that we prize and the rights that we must maintain – all because a small band of believers trusted the God of the Bible above all else.

And let us not give such thanks just one day a year – but every day of every year. Because the steadfast love of the LORD endures forever !