

*Thanksgiving Devotional*  
**Week of Thanksgiving - November 22-25, 2020**

**Peace, Reconciliation and Thanksgiving**  
*A Divine Recipe illustrated by the Pilgrims in Plymouth*

*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful.*  
Colossians 3:15

In this short verse, the Scriptures declare a simple pattern. Since Christ has brought us peace with God through His sacrifice, we are now reconciled to Him as a unified body of believers. This leads us to have a deep gratitude and thanksgiving in our hearts for such a gift. Without God initiating this, we would have no way knowing God, experience deep unity with others, or a means of being thankful.

At this time of year, *we ought to determine to be peacemakers* (see Matthew 5:9). We ought to seek reconciliation (asking forgiveness and making things right) with any with whom we may have offended (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:14-21). And we ought to, as a result of this, be thankful with joy!

Amazingly, this simple pattern did occur 400 years ago among the Pilgrims who came here, first landing near Provincetown on November 13, and then at Plymouth on December 11. They came with a motive of being peacemakers, and thus they sought to procure such an alliance if they could. After a winter that saw half of them die, they suddenly had a visit from Samoset, an English speaking Native. Then, he introduced them to Squanto, who had been taken captive by Thomas Hunt but found his freedom and learned English as well. Squanto became their interpreter until his death in 1622.

**Peace Alliance between the English & Wampanoag**  
**(March 22, 2021)**

The alliance made with Massasoit reads in this way:

1. *That neither he nor any of his should injure or do hurt to any of our people.*
2. *And if any of his did hurt to any of ours, he should send the offender, that we might punish him.*
3. *That if any of our tools were taken away, when our people were at work, he should cause them to be restored; and if ours did any harm to any of his, we would do the like to them.*
4. *If any did unjustly war against him, we would aid him; and if any did war against us, he should aid us.*
5. *He should send to his neighbor confederates to certify them of this, that they might not wrong us, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.*
6. *That when their men came to us, they should leave their ows and arrows behind them, as we should do our pieces when we came to them.*<sup>1</sup>

**Reconciliation for Thomas Hunt's Treachery in 1614**  
**(possibly August, 1621)**

Thus, the Pilgrims had peace with their nearest neighbor. This would lead to an atmosphere where the wrongs done to the Nauset tribe on Cape Cod in 1614 could begin to be amended. The Nauset, who fired arrows in self-defense against the Pilgrim exploring part, had taken a young boy who had run away. When the Pilgrims came to recover him, the following incident took place.

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<sup>1</sup> Mourt's Relation: *A Journal of the Pilgrims of Plymouth*, edited by Jourdan D. Fiore, Plymouth Rock Foundation, 1985, pages 49-50.

*One thing was very grievous unto us at this place. There was an old woman, whom we judged to be no less than a hundred years old, which came to see us, because she never saw English; yet could not behold us without breaking forth into great passion, weeping and crying excessively. We demanding the reason of it, they told us she had three sons, who, when Master Hunt was in these parts, went aboard his ship to trade with him, and he carried them captives into Spain, (for Tisquantum at that time was carried away also,) by which means she was deprived of the company of her children in her old age. We told them we were sorry that any Englishman should give them that offense, that Hunt was a bad man, and that all the English that heard of it condemned him for the same; but for us, we would not offer them any such injury, though it would gain us all the skins in the country. So we gave her some small trifles, which somewhat appeased her.<sup>2</sup>*

Thus, the Pilgrim brought some reconciliation (at least a start) to those who had been wronged. That reconciliation probably led to the friendly three day feast and harvest festival only a few weeks later.

### **Edward Winslow's Account of the First Thanksgiving** **(probably October, 1621)**

*Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.<sup>3</sup>*

### **Some Facts about that First Harvest Festival**

The Pilgrims and the Natives would have given thanks to God for their harvest. They would also have thanked their neighbors for teaching them how to plant corn and survive. Athletic competition took place – who knows? Native vs. English? All dishes would have been wooden, the children would have served the adults, and since only four adult women were alive; imagine having a minimum of 140 guests! Good thing the Natives brought most of the food! They may have eaten cod, sea bass, fowl, wild turkeys and deer (venison.) Tradition even says that popcorn might have been introduced by the Natives!

### **A poem on Thanksgiving**

*We had gathered in our harvests, and stored the yellow grain,  
For God had sent the sunshine, and sent the plenteous rain;  
Our barley-land and corn-land, Had yielded up their store,  
and the fear and dread of famine, oppressed our homes no more.*

*As the chosen tribes of Israel, in the far years of old,  
when the summer fruits were garnered, and before the winter's cold,  
Kept their festal week with gladness, with songs and choral lays,  
so we kept our first Thanksgiving in the hazy autumn days.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, page 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 72.

<sup>4</sup> Dexter, H.M., editor, *Songs of the Pilgrims*, 1887, page 105. It is interesting that this poem, though anonymous, describes the First Thanksgiving of the Pilgrims, probably held in October of 1621, as patterned after the Feast of Tabernacles.