

Requirements For A Sacrifice Of Thanksgiving

Text : Heb. 13: 15-16 ; I Thes. 5: 16-18 ; Col. 3: 14-17

INTRODUCTION :

A. Origins of Thanksgiving holiday.

1. The Pilgrims

- a.** It took two months for the 105 pilgrims to sail the stormy Atlantic.
 - 1) Before disembarking their ship they composed the “Mayflower Compact.”
 - 2) Upon landing, they held a prayer service before beginning to build shelters.
 - 3) Unprepared for the severity of the New England winter, half died that first year.
 - 4) The following year they had a bountiful harvest so they declared a Thanksgiving.

- b.** Pilgrim Edward Winslow described the Pilgrims’ Thanksgiving in these words:

“Our harvest being gotten in, our Governor sent four men on fowling (*bird hunting*) so that 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... served the company almost a week... Many of the Indians [came] amongst us and... 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... And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God we are ... far from want.” (Dec. 4, 1619)

2. Mrs. Sarah Joseph Hale

Much of the credit for the adoption of a later annual national Thanksgiving Day may be attributed to Mrs. Sarah Joseph Hale, the editor of *Godey’s Lady’s Book*. For thirty years, she promoted the idea of a national Thanksgiving Day, contacting President after President until President Abraham Lincoln responded in 1863 by setting aside the last Thursday of November as a national Day of Thanksgiving. Over the next seventy-five years, Presidents followed Lincoln’s precedent, annually declaring a national Thanksgiving Day.

3. Abraham Lincoln

- a.** Conversion of Lincoln

When I left Springfield [*to assume the Presidency*], I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, (60,000) I then and there consecrated myself to Christ.

- b.** Lincoln’s proclamation of a day of national Thanksgiving

Proclamation of Thanksgiving

by the President of the United States of America

The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful years 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 can not 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 theater of military conflict, while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the field of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax 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 theretofore. Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, 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 herunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

[Signed]
A. Lincoln

4. President Hayes

1877 Thanksgiving Proclamation

A PROCLAMATION by the President of the United States Of America :

The completed circle of summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, has brought us to the accustomed season at which a religious people celebrates with praise and thanksgiving the enduring mercy of Almighty God. This devout and public confession of the constant dependence of man upon the divine favor for all the good gifts of life and health and peace and happiness, so early in our history made the habit of our people, finds in the survey of the past year new grounds for its joyful and grateful manifestation.

In all the blessings which depend upon benignant seasons, this has indeed been a memorable year. Over the wide territory of our country, with all its diversity of soil and climate and products, the earth has yielded a bountiful return to the labor of the husbandman. The health of the people has been blighted by no prevalent or widespread diseases. No great disasters of shipwreck upon our coasts or to our commerce on the seas have brought loss and hardship to merchants or mariners and clouded the happiness of the community with sympathetic sorrow.

In all that concerns our strength and peace and greatness as a nation; in all that touches the permanence and security of our Government and the beneficent institutions on which it rests; in all that affects the character and dispositions of our people and tests our capacity to enjoy and uphold the equal and free condition of society, now permanent and universal throughout the land, the experience of the last year is conspicuously marked by the protecting providence of God and is full of promise and hope for the coming generations.

Under a sense of these infinite obligations to the Great Ruler of Times and Seasons and Events, let us humbly ascribe it to our own faults and frailties if in any degree that perfect concord and happiness, peace and justice, which such great mercies should diffuse through the hearts and lives of our people do not altogether and always and everywhere prevail. Let us with one spirit and with one voice lift up praise and thanksgiving to God for His manifold goodness to our land, His manifest care for our nation.

Now, therefore, I, Rutherford B. Hayes, President of the United States, do appoint Thursday, the 29th day of November next, as a day of national thanksgiving and prayer; and I earnestly recommend that, withdrawing themselves from secular cares and labors, the people of the United States do meet together on that day in their respective places of worship, there to give thanks and praise to Almighty God for His mercies and to devoutly beseech their continuance.

In witness 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 29th day of October, A.D. 1877, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and second.

R.B. HAYES

(all quotations taken from the Internet)

B. Though a long established tradition, it was not until as recently as 1941 that congress established a national holiday on the 4th Thursday of each November.

1. From its conception this nation was conceived and founded as a Christian nation.
2. This nation was a place for all people to come worship the God of Heaven as they chose to do so. (*A haven for all men of faith*)
3. Today our religious freedoms are under attack as never before.
 - a. There are those who seek to pervert it as freedom FROM religion.
 - b. Others want the freedom to worship false gods in opposition to the one true God.

C. This national day of Thanksgiving calls to remembrance why America is great.

1. We are a great nation ONLY because God made us great. (*Only HE keeps us great*)
2. It is God who gives all blessings.
 - a. **Psa. 50: 10-12 ; 24: 1**
 - b. **James 1: 16-17**
3. It is God who gives strength to armies.
 - a. **Dan. 2: 21-** It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding.
 - b. Remember God used only **300** men lead by Gideon to destroy the vast armies of Midian. (**Judges 6-7**)

*** When God removes His blessings, America will become as all the other great nations of the past so let us make this holiday one of true THANKSGIVING not just one of feasting and of recreation, As our text says, let us offer up "a sacrifice of praise to God."**

I. Offering Thanks to God in more than something nice to do; it is commanded.

A. Thank offerings were part of the Law of Moses.

1. **Lev. 7: 11-12** Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the LORD. **12** 'If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of well stirred fine flour mixed with oil.

2. **Jer. 33: ...11-** the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say, "Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, For the Lord is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting"; and of those who bring a thank offering into the house of the Lord. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first,' says the Lord.

B. The prophet David assigned priests to give thanks to God.

1. **I Chron. 16: 4-** He appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the Lord, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel:
2. **I Chron. 16: 8-** Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples.
9 Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; Speak of all His wonders.
10 Glory in His holy name;
 Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.

C. Christians are commanded to be thankful.

1. **Col. 3: 15-17** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
2. **I Thes. 5: 16-18** Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks (cf **Jas. 1: 2-3**); for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

II. Four things required for a "sacrifice of thanksgiving" to occur. (Heb. 13: 15-16)

A. There must be the acknowledging of God and of His mighty deeds.

1. God is a spirit who is infinite in all His attributes. (*Totally and consistently ...*)
 - a. Holiness
 - b. Love
2. One must understand that God is the source of all things.
 - a. He created the world and everything in it. (*Allows man to use it.*)
 - b. Man can make things out of what God created, **but** man cannot create.
3. **THUS :** All we have, use, or enjoy was given to us by God
James 1: 17- Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

B. There must be an awareness and knowledge of one's self.

1. We are weak and sinful creatures.
2. Unlike God, we are finite in all aspects. (*Too often proud, but always limited*)
 - a. Limited in knowledge
 - b. Limited in ability
 - c. Limited in lifespan
3. Man can do nothing without God enabling him.

C. There must be a surrendering of self.

1. The very word sacrifice means to surrender something of value.
2. **Rom. 12: 1-** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice,
acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.
3. The surrendering of self is uncomfortable to life on earth. (*a sacrifice of pride, etc*)

D. There must be a grateful acknowledgement of one's total reliance on God.

1. Our nation relies on God. (*He made a great nation of Israel and brought it down.*)
2. We rely on God both individually and collectively.
3. This church relies on God.
 - a. **I Cor. 3: 6-** I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth
 - b. **Rev. 2: 5-** Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and
do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will
remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent.

CONCLUSION :

A. Therefore, let us all make this holiday more than just "Turkey Day."

Heb. 13: 15- Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,
that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. **16** And do not neglect
doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

B. Being at the official poverty level in the U.S. puts one in the top 10% worldwide.

C. Christians must assertively lead us to national repentance.

1. We are going the way of Israel and other nations that became rich.
2. We are forgetting the source of our wealth becoming less grateful.

D. With blessing comes responsibility. (*Apply to nation ... to church ... to each*)

INVITATION :

Lesson Texts :

Colossians 3: 14-17

14 Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. **15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

I Thessalonians 5: 16-18

16 Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is

Hebrews 13: 15-16

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. **16** And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.