Nov. 18, 2001                                    Northwest Bible Church

A THANKSGIVING MEDITATION

INTRO

I. THE HISTORY OF THANKSGIVING

     A. Who were the pilgrims? Many of the Pilgrims were members of the Puritan sect known as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

     B. What was the nature of their celebration in 1621?

          1) A harvest celebration.

          2) A time of thanksgiving to God.
     Edward Winslow, who later became the third governor of Plymouth Colony, wrote one of the two surviving eyewitness accounts of the Harvest Festival of 1621:
          “And God be praised, we had a good increase . . . . Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling that so we might after a special manner rejoice together . . . .”

     C. Who was there? There were about 140 present at the three day harvest celebration. 90 Indian men, including their chief Massasoit, and some 50 Pilgrims.

II. THE DUTY OF GIVING THANKS TO GOD.

     A. Why should we give thanks to God?

     B. For what are we to be thankful? 1 Thess. 5:18 - “In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ give thanks, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

          William Bridge: “Give thanks when you are full and when you are empty; strong and weak; when delivered from the hands of your enemy but also when you are delivered into the hands of your enemy.”

     C. When are we to be thankful? Eph. 5:20 - “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”

III. SOME SPECIFIC ITEMS FOR THANKSGIVING

B - This is nearest to the original Thanksgiving of the pilgrims. But how do we maintain a thankful heart in this way?

     1) Don’t desire \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Those who desire much will expect much and then they will not be content with little, and ungrateful for what he has.

     2) Remember the depth of your sin and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Remember what you deserve and then any little blessing will be delicious to your soul.

     3) Count your blessings one by one.

L - It is an act of faith to give thanks when times of loss come our way. A thankful heart will give you:

          1- more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to help you rest in the Lord during such trials; thanksgiving brings a calm to the soul as we acknowledge the presence of God.
          2- more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to trust the Lord because your thankful heart believes that God has a good and godly purpose behind his frowning providence; you rest in His sovereign plan and that glorifies God. Rom. 8:28 is real in your hearts.
          3- more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ over the devil, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”
          4- more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to fight worry. A thankful heart is a cure for worry and fear (Phil. 4:6-7).

E - 2 Thess. 2:13

     Why give thanks to God for our election? God did not have to choose us. He could have justly not chosen to save us. There was nothing in us to make us worthy or deserving of being chosen: no good, no foreknowledge of faith, no merit of any kind. We were sinners like all the rest, deserving judgment like all the rest, blind and dead and full of enmity toward God like all the rest. YET IN GRACE AND LOVE HE CHOSE TO SAVE US.

S -     From the Scriptures we learn wisdom to live by, the way of righteousness and blessedness, we learn what pleases God and what God hates, we learn about God and His glory for only in the Bible has He revealed Himself in words that we can understand, in the Bible we learn the gospel where by one might believe and live forever.

          Ps. 119:72, 97, 98, 104, 105

S - Without Christ, we go straight to hell. Christ gives us eternal blessings which we cannot lose:
     Eternal life (Jn. 10:28)
     Forgiveness (1 Jn. 1:9)
     God’s presence (Heb. 13:5)
     Access to the Lord through prayer (Heb. 4:15-16).

CONCLUSION