



Greetings,

For seventeen years, writer and editor, Sarah Josepha Hale campaigned for Thanksgiving to be a national holiday. Since the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indians feasted at Plymouth Colony, thanksgiving had been celebrated in pockets throughout the Thirteen Colonies. But as the United States emerged and expanded, there was greater need for a unified thanksgiving which became most evident during the Civil War. It was Abraham Lincoln, the fifth president that the seventy-five-year-old Hale wrote her proposal to, who took heed and in 1863 declared Thanksgiving as a national holiday.

The proclamation penned by Secretary of State William Seward was not merely a reminder to be grateful for the abundance of land, resources, and people that the United States had grown into, but to be humbled by the journey it had traveled to become such a nation.

“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.”

We are in the midst of our own civil war, divided by man’s will and God’s. And yet, how can we despair? Through prayer, worship, study, and fellowship, we see and know God’s goodness. It is undeniable. So let our eyes be fixed on Him above the distractions of this time.

In Colossians 3:15-17, an imprisoned Paul wrote: “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 message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 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.”

Let us give thanks to our Lord, for He is good.

Grace & Peace,
Dr. Charles Travis

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