

Adversity Births Thanksgiving

From them will come songs of thanksgiving and the sound of rejoicing. **–Jeremiah 30:19**

When the Mayflower landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts, on November 11, 1620, the Pilgrim fathers were full of expectancy. Months before they were addressed by the pastor, John Robinson (c. 1575-1625), who said to them, "The Lord hath more light and truth to break forth his word." The future looked so bright once the Pilgrims landed, but they fell on unbelievably hard times their first year, when many actually starved to death.

Why did God allow such unexpected adversity to a group of people who sincerely thought they were glorifying God in their venture? I do not know, but I know this: once they had begun to experience God's bounty they determined to be grateful. The result was Thanksgiving Day.

The original Thanksgiving of the Pilgrims was ordered after the first harvest in Plymouth Colony (1621). Special days were often appointed in New England for thanksgiving or fasting. Beginning in Connecticut in 1649, the observance of an annual harvest festival spread throughout New England by the end of the eighteenth century. George Washington proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving in 1789. With Abraham Lincoln's proclamation in 1863, it became an annual observance. By an act of Congress in 1941, Thanksgiving Day is the fourth Thursday of November. Sadly, few Americans know this history, and not many care. Although it is America's favorite holiday, it is sadly known largely now for eating turkey and watching football. Few go to church to thank God on that day.

I believe that the falling of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001, was a wake-up call to all the nations of the world. Ungrateful

nations will be judged—sooner or later. Ungrateful leaders, the rich and the poor, will be judged—sooner or later.

There's a great day coming! Are you ready? The best preparation for that day is to be found in repentance, thanking God.

Excerpted from *Just Say Thanks!* (Charisma House, 2005).