

TITLE: The Grinch Who Stole Thanksgiving

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

OPENING HYMN: #557: Come Ye Thankful People Come

CLOSING HYMN: #294: Power in the Blood

GEM OF LIGHT: At the moment when you are offering your prayer for help you may not feel all the joy and blessing that you would like to feel, but if you believe that Christ will hear and answer your petition, the peace of Christ will come.... **[Our High Calling 326.4]**

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-55 years before the Pilgrims even arrived in Plymouth, the first true Thanksgiving took place in St. Augustine, Florida.

-Pedro Menéndez de Aviles christened the new settlement San Augustine, or St. Augustine.

-It was September 8th, 1565, 52 years after Juan Ponce De Leon landed in Florida for the very first time in 1513 (Columbus was 1492).

-Traditionally, the Spanish representative of the King would go to the flag, plant the flag in the ground and proclaim the land in the name of the king.

-He, however, went over to Father Lopez and knelt down and kissed the cross.

-He proclaimed the land in Nombre de Dios, in the name of God before the name of his king.

-And Lopez observed the natives imitating all they saw done.

-Father Lopez then conducted a mass of Thanksgiving and Menéndez ordered that a meal be prepared for everyone, including the natives.

-This was 55 years before the Pilgrims even arrived in Plymouth.

-A few years ago Dr. Michael Gannon drew fire when he called this meal **the true First Thanksgiving**.

-There was a guy who called this historian from WBZ in Boston.

-He said, While I'm talking, do you realize that there is an emergency meeting of select men at Plymouth to contend with this new information that there were Spaniards in Florida before there were Englishmen in Massachusetts?"

-And then he said Well, you know how you've become known up here in New England?

-He said no" - he said, **The Grinch Who Stole Thanksgiving**."

-Interestingly this is not the only thing the north and south contend with regarding the first/oldest.

-Elfreth's Alley (Philadelphia)

-Aviles St. (Formerly, Hospital St.) (St. Augustine)

-Elfreth's St. Is the longest continually used and inhabited st. in the country.

-Jamestown VS St. Augustine: St. Augustine is the oldest continually occupied settlement of European and African American origin in the United States, 42 years before the English colonized Jamestown and 55 years before landing on Plymouth Rock.

-It is interesting how perspective changes a declaration.

-Let me to give you a little background on St. Augustine, Fl.:

-Technically St. Augustine was not the first time people attempted to colonize North America. There were actually 10 or 11 previous attempts to colonize the continent, however they all failed because they attempted to take the land by force from the natives.

-This time, the tactic was to integrate and live in harmony with, and learn from, the natives.

Romans 12:18: *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

-With the help of the Timucuan Indians, Menendez and his men built a fort. On September 8, 1565, he officially named it St. Augustine. This became the first permanent settlement in the United States. He then claimed all of Florida for Spain.

-St. Augustine struggled. The Spaniards brought with them diseases such as smallpox and measles which devastated the local Timucua Indians.

-St. Augustine survived and became a haven for those fleeing British tyranny, from escaped slaves to British Catholics who found a refuge there.

-1 Thessalonians 5:16-18:

16 Rejoice always,

17 pray without ceasing,

18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

-The New World that had been discovered meant freedom, inclusion, and provision from God Almighty.

-The development of the New World was not without difficulty and perseverance. It came with a fight. In fact there were many battles to get to the point we are at today.

-This is how I see the experience of conversion, a great battle.

-America was beginning to develop its own identity.

-You know, I find it interesting that it takes thousands of Bible promises from God to convince us of who we are, yet one lie from the devil is able to crush us and cause us to question even abandon everything.

-What the Pilgrims left from Europe is similar to what the Jews were leaving when Jesus arrived in humanity.

-People would travel to the Holy City, to worship in the Holy Temple, to worship with the Holy people.

-The women wouldn't make it past the Women's CT.

-The Gentiles would make it past the Gentile CT.

-This was a system of exclusivity. Jesus came to break the societal walls.

-God's people were called to bring people to a "New World", into a relationship with the King... of the Universe.

-I believe most want to follow Jesus' commission to "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them..."

-I also believe most don't really want to do this. What to I mean?

-Allow me to illustrate. I was recently in a Discipleship Conference and called for a few volunteers, no hands raised.

-I then asked who here would like to follow Jesus wherever He would lead, hands raised. Then I said hold up your hands and proceeded to retrieve my volunteers :)

-We want to go but we don't want to go. I think fear plays a big part. Imagine the fear of crossing the Atlantic and venturing off into the unknown. This must have been terrifying.

-Each of us have, at some point, chosen to accept Jesus into our lives.

-I wonder if we have ever taken the time to thank the person that helped lead us into our relationship with God.

-Think of who it was that offered you that first invitation, that first prayer, that first Bible etc...

-I wonder what would happen if we took a second and sent that person a message/phone call and just said "Thank you for introducing me to Jesus".

-Really, we get too busy, don't we?

-Have we relegated Thanksgiving to just one day a year? Why do we do that?

-What if we sat down to the table as a family and regularly asked each other, "What are you thankful for today?"

-Someone led us to the sacrifice of God.

-The natural response to such a sacrifice is to present ourselves as a sacrifice.

-Romans 12:1: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

-What if as part of our self-sacrifice to God we offered our calendars as a sacrifice to God?

-If I made an altar call today and asked you to bring your calendars to the front and offer them as a sacrifice to God, offering your schedule to serve Jesus, would you do it?

-Could you do it?

-What if we took the Great Commission for what it is a Great Co-Mission?

-In fact, what if we thanked God for the opportunity to serve in His mission.

-Other religions just serve their god, offer sacrifices etc.. We get to serve with Him while we serve Him.

-John 4:35: *Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!*

-Mt. 9:37-38: ³⁷ *Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. ³⁸ Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

-We plant a seed here or a seed there and say nothing grows this doesn't work, blah, blah, blah.
-No farmer plants a field like that, you can't even garden like that.

-Thanksgiving is really about thanking God during a time of harvest. Let us not be the Grinch, the grinch who stole Thanksgiving.

-In fact, that's really who the devil is, isn't he?

-Has the devil stolen your Thanksgiving?

-Are you thankful for your ears? Let God be thankful you listen to good things

-Are you thankful for your eyes? Let God be thankful you view good things.

-Are you thankful for your mouth? Let God be thankful you speak good things.

-Who are you thankful for? Have you told them?

-What are you thankful for? Have you told God?

-When the Spanish landed in what would be La Florida, in what would be the city of St. Augustine, the Spanish integrated with the natives, and it became a mutually beneficial experience.

-As the dehydrated and unhealthy Spaniards got to shore and observed the lifestyle and behavior of the natives they learned of the Fountain of Youth.

-Water with 32 minerals

-Instant revival of health

-Average lifespan of European, 50

-Average lifespan of natives 80-90

-The Europeans began to introduce them to Jesus.

-Revelation 22:17: *And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*

-Do you think there are others that would be thankful to receive the "Water of Life"?

-Story of the Slingshot

-We get so scared to disciple. But I promise you, once you commit, you'll be so thankful you did.

-Not only will you, but the person you lead to Jesus will be thankful for eternity.

-Philippians 1...

End