

Happy Thanksgiving, New South Family. Welcome to the 69th edition of the Weekly Word – this for the week ending November 27, 2020.

-----The Critical-----

Announcements

- 1) **Gifts for Missions:** Please consider sending any additional gift(s) to the mission project of their choice for Thanksgiving and or Christmas to encourage them through these tough times. Also, please remember to pray for your pastor, who bears many responsibilities for decisions in these days – that are not always popular. ☺
- 2) **FM History and Polity** The conference is planning to offer FM H & P in Wilmore or via Zoom this spring in a Friday evening / Saturday format for two weekends. If you are interested, [please email me for more information.](#)
- 3) **MEG Interviews** The MEG Board will be conducting Zoom interviews in early December. If you need or want an appointment with the MEG, [please email me.](#)
- 4) **Thanksgiving Thoughts:** I hope we are all able, not just tomorrow on Thanksgiving, but every day - and even in these strange times in which we live - to focus on the good parts of life and not just on what is missing or disappointing to us. When we focus on the latter, we give away life's sweetness, which is, to put it theologically, a crummy way to live. :-) Toward that end, here are a couple thoughts regarding thanksgiving:

1) My friend, Dr. Vic Hamilton, shared the following with me earlier this week:

One of my favorite quotes about Thanksgiving comes from the (Jewish) Midrash (Midrash Leviticus Rabah 9:7). Given that the Torah devotes only four verses to the thanksgiving offering (Lev. 7:12-15), much much less material and coverage when compared with other offerings/sacrifices mentioned in Lev. 1-7, the quote is especially interesting: "In the world to come all prayers will be annulled except the prayer of thanksgiving, and in the world to come all sacrifices will be annulled except the sacrifice of thanksgiving."

And then this from my friend, Dale Ditto:

Who could have imagined what a strange year 2020 has been – full of unexpected events. Who would have thought at the beginning of the year that the world would be shut down due to a global pandemic...businesses and schools were closed, and the stock market dropped 35%. We had a crazy and divisive election, racial tensions and problems with China...and that's just the beginning.

Yet in spite of all of this, we have much for which to be thankful. We have food on our table and most of us live in relative peace in our communities. However, many of our neighbors are still experiencing tough economic times. This is a time when those of us with plenty should reach out to others and share with those in need. This is a way to truly enjoy the blessings we have...by sharing with others.

The history of Thanksgiving shows many examples of how Americans have given thanks and shared with others in the midst of hardship and challenges:

- *In 1621, after suffering through a harsh New England winter and having more than half of the Pilgrims die, the surviving Pilgrims gathered with the Indians for the day of Thanksgiving.*
- *In the midst of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a National Day of Thanksgiving & Prayer in 1863.*
- *In 1941, President Roosevelt made Thanksgiving a federal holiday at a time when the Great Depression was ending and WWII was beginning.*

Why is it that our most significant times of Thanksgiving were during times of trial in American History? Could it be that during times of prosperity we take our blessings for granted, whereas in times of trouble we recognize that we should be thankful for what we have?

There is plenty of evidence that thankfulness is good medicine. Did you know studies show that grateful people:

- 1) Have stronger immune systems and lower blood pressure?*
 - 2) Have higher levels of positive emotion?*
 - 3) Sleep better?*
 - 4) Earn more annually?*
 - 5) Have deeper, more satisfying relationships?*
 - 6) Give 20% more and volunteer regularly?*
 - 7) Experience more joy, optimism, and happiness?*
- All excellent reasons to cultivate thankful hearts.*

Thankfulness gives joy and contentment, and puts our problems in perspective.

In his call to prayer and thanksgiving, President Lincoln reminded the nation:

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has grown. We have been preserved in peace and prosperity. But we have forgotten God. We have become too self-sufficient to feel the need of redeeming and preserving grace; too proud to pray to the God who made us."

While we have problems, we live in the era of greatest abundance in the history of mankind. The average American can do things that the richest kings could not have done 100 years ago. Hopefully we can all think of things to be thankful for this year. Let's try to make this our finest time of Thanksgiving in years. We will all be healthier and happier if we will take time to count our blessings!

November Birthdays (*that we know of)

29 – Lenore Sweigard

*I would love to know the birthdays of all those related to the NSC who receive this communique – pastors, elders, delegates, special friends, etc. Please send month and day to Timothy at newsouthconference@gmail.com

This Week's Passage, Quote and Joke

Passage: This week I begin our Advent series, "Here Comes..." which looks expectantly for Jesus' birth, and noting all the different roles He fills in His coming to earth as a baby to save us from our sins.

Quote...actually, two from A.W. Tozer:

"The value of the cleansed imagination ... lies in its power to perceive in natural things shadows of things spiritual."

"We who call ourselves Christians are supposed to be a people apart. We claim to have repudiated the wisdom of this world and adopted the wisdom of the cross as the guide of our lives. We have thrown in our lot with that One who while He lived on earth was the most unadjusted of the sons of men. He would not be integrated into society. He stood above it and condemned it by withdrawing from it even while dying for it. Die for it He would, but surrender to it He would not."

Joke: A young woman walks into a big NYC bank and says to the teller that she wants to take out a loan for \$5000 so she can go to Europe for a week. The teller says, "We'll need collateral for a loan of that size for this purpose." The woman takes out the keys to a brand new Rolls Royce Phantom, and says "I'm sure that this will be more than suitable"

The teller immediately calls his supervisor, who calls his boss, who has someone check out whether the car was stolen, but it turns out this young woman legally bought that car from a reputable dealer earlier that day. So they accept the car as collateral, parking it in the bank's garage and securing the keys in the vault. The woman takes her money and goes to Europe.

She comes back a week later and says that she'd like to pay back the loan and get her car back. So she pays back the \$5000 plus \$5 for the interest.

The teller says, "We ran a background check on you, and you're very wealthy already. Why did you take a loan for a week long trip to Europe and put a Rolls Royce as collateral?"

Looking up from her check book the woman says, "Where else in NYC can I pay \$5 to park my Rolls Royce for a week and expect it to be there when I get back?"

Blessings on your worship this weekend!

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