

**THANKS FOR NOTHING**

No doubt, you have heard the phrase, “Thanks for nothing.” It is a response on the part of a person who is disappointed for not receiving what was expected. The phrase is intended to imply displeasure, and its tenor is that of sarcasm. A person asks another for a favor. The response to the request did not fit exactly into the plans of the person making the request. And, so, the reply made is, “Thanks for nothing.” It is not a grateful response.

We are approaching another Thanksgiving Day. It is a civil holiday that reminds us of our beginning when the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in late November of 1620. After a year of hardships, they celebrated with gratitude the harvest, which they attributed to God.

One of the Pilgrims, Edward Winslow, described it as follows: "Our harvest being gotten in, our Governor sent four men on fowling [*bird hunting*] so that we might, after a special manner, rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as... served the company almost a week... Many of the Indians [came] amongst us and... their greatest King, Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted; and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought... And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God we are.... far from want."

President George Washington was the first to designate a day of thanksgiving. This was reaffirmed by President Abraham Lincoln, who, it appears, became a Christian (perhaps, out of gratitude) on Pennsylvania soil.

Lincoln is quoted as saying, “When I left Springfield [*to assume the Presidency*] I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ.”

Everyone has his or her own list of things for which to be thankful. Those lists are non-exhaustive, if we acknowledge God’s providence in our lives. Everything that we have we have received. But, how about those things that we have not received? Lincoln’s life was not what he might have planned. Nevertheless, he was grateful.

Many have the impression that God’s blessings for us consist only of that which we would like at the moment. Sometimes (perhaps, most times), God answers our petitions in a way that we do not ask. This appears to us as if He had not heard. Yet, in the long run, it turns out to be better than if the Lord had granted what we had asked. After all, He knows what is best for us. His love for us prompts God not to grant the inferior choices that we make for ourselves.

Rather than being disappointed, He is saying to us, “Be calm, and remember that I am God.”

And, so, this Thanksgiving, I am particularly grateful for nothing. I am grateful for the times that I did not get what I wanted, - grateful for the times that I did not get my way, - grateful that He is God and I am not. I am thankful for the many “nothings” in my life, which turned out to be wonderful blessings and signs of the Lord’s love.