

Sunday Morning Message

November 24, 2024

The First Thanksgiving

Texts – 1 Chronicles 29

Congregational Reading – 1 Chronicles 29:10 - 13

Introduction

In the context surrounding the passage we are examining today; David had made all the necessary preparations for the construction of the Temple. The building materials, the necessary finances, and even the plans had all been made during the final days of David's reign. Everything was ready for Solomon to build it. It was David's great desire to build this Temple for the Lord, a permanent structure that would replace the portable and temporary tents that God had previously provided for the people to worship Him in. However, it was God's will for Solomon to build it. But that did not stop David from preparing for its construction and providing all the needed materials:

Read 1 Chronicles 29:1 - 9

*"1 Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God. 2 Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. 3 Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, 4 Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal: 5 The gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. And **who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?** 6 Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, **offered willingly,** 7 And gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. 8 And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9 **Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.**" (1 Chronicles 29:1-9)*

In the following verses, David prays unto the Lord and thanks Him for all that God had done for the people of Israel:

*"10 Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. 11 Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. 13 **Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.**"* (1 Chronicles 29:10-13)

We often attribute the first Thanksgiving to the Pilgrims, but it is believed that they adopted the idea from the Dutch who got the idea from the Old Testament Thanksgiving offerings.

According to David Beale, the first Thanksgiving on American soil took place in 1621:

Although the exact date is nowhere provided, it was probably sometime in October of 1621, when Governor Bradford declared a three-day thanksgiving harvest celebration. They invited Massasoit, who arrived, not only with ninety hungry Indians, but also with five dressed deer and wild turkeys. All enjoyed the games that followed. A joyous occasion indeed!

A couple of years later, Bradford's *History of the Plymouth Plantation* recorded another Thanksgiving:

The second account is Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation*, which includes the traditional "turkey meal:" They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength and had all things in good plenty. For as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were exercising in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer there was no want; and now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides waterfowl there was great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides they had about a peck of meal a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to that proportion.

It was in 1623 that no rain fell between the third week in May and the middle of July. All their fields began to dry and wither, and it seemed that all crops would be lost, and famine would be their lot. The Pilgrims called on God, in a special day of humiliation and prayer. Bradford describes what took place: "They set apart a solemn day of humiliation, to seek

the Lord by humble and fervent prayer, in this great distress. And He was pleased to give them a gracious and speedy answer, both to their own and the Indians' admiration that lived amongst them. For all the morning, and greatest part of the day, it was clear weather and very hot, and not a cloud or any sign of rain to be seen; yet toward evening it began to overcast, and shortly after to rain, with such sweet and gentle showers as gave them cause of rejoicing and blessing God. It came without either wind or thunder or any violence, and by degrees in that abundance as that the earth was thoroughly wet and soaked and therewith. Which did so apparently revive and quicken the decayed corn and other fruits, as was wonderful to see, and the Indians astonished to behold. And afterwards the Lord sent them such seasonable showers, with interchange of fair warm weather as, through His blessing, caused a fruitful and liberal harvest, to their no small comfort and rejoicing. For which mercy, in time convenient, they also set apart a day of thanksgiving.

Although the Pilgrims never observed a set "Thanksgiving Day," on November 15, 1636, an ordinance was passed, "that it be in the power of the governor and assistants to command solemn days of humiliation by fasting, etc., and also for thanksgiving, as occasion shall be offered."²⁶⁰ Other New England colonies likewise fixed certain days of thanksgiving by formal proclamation.

The National Day of Thanksgiving (by David Beale)

Thanksgiving became a National Day of Observance when the Continental Congress, on November 7, 1777, by formal proclamation, recommended that Thursday, December 18, 1777, be recognized as such. This practice continued annually by the Continental Congress until and including the year 1783. No day was thereafter set aside until, on October 3, 1789, President George Washington, at the request of Congress, issued his first National Thanksgiving proclamation, recommending and appointing Thursday, November 26, 1789 (the last Thursday of the month), as the Day of Thanksgiving. Thereafter other dates were sometimes selected by proclamation as follows: President George Washington himself selected Thursday February 19, 1795; President John Adams selected May 5, 1798, and Thursday, April 25, 1799; President James Madison selected Thursday, January 12, 1815, and Thursday, April 13, 1815.

On his own initiative, President Abraham Lincoln issued a formal proclamation, selecting Sunday, April 13, 1862, as a Day of National Thanksgiving. In 1863 and 1864, President Lincoln followed the example of Washington and selected the last Thursday in November. In 1865, President Andrew Johnson selected Thursday, December 7, 1865; and in 1869, President Ulysses S. Grant selected Thursday, November 18, 1869. In 1870, President Grant

changed back to the last Thursday in November, which was followed by all succeeding presidents, except for the times that President Franklin D. Roosevelt tried to move the day forward a week, causing two days frequently to be celebrated. He tried to move Thanksgiving Day forward to lengthen the Christmas shopping season and spur the economy. In 1939, he reverted to the fourth Thursday in November, and so it has remained to the present time.¹

Although we have many claims to the origins of Thanksgiving, it seems that way back in the time of David, there was a national celebration in Jerusalem of Thanksgiving to the Lord here surrounding the provision of all the materials donated by the people of God for the Temple.

*"14 But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. 15 For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. 16 O LORD our God, all this store that **we have prepared** to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, **and is all thine own**. 17 I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. **As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.** 18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee: 19 **And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.** 20 And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD, and the king." (1*

Chronicles 29:14-20)

This was certainly a day that was dedicated to thanking the Lord for His provision.

We have already seen that their Thanksgiving service included prayer. Ten of these twenty verses that we have read were the recording of David's prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord.

We also read that in addition to David's prayer of thanksgiving, he also spent a great deal of time this day bragging on the Lord to the people.

But what else did Israel do after this day:

1. They Sacrificed (v. 21)

¹ David Beale, 2024 *The Mayflower Pilgrims: In England, the Netherlands, and America*, pp. 159 - 163

"21 And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings unto the LORD, on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel:" (1 Chronicles 29:21)

We sacrifice when we serve (our time and our talent); we sacrifice when we give (our treasure); we sacrifice when we praise:

"15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:15-16)

2. They Celebrated (v. 22)

"22 And did eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto the LORD to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest." (1 Chronicles 29:22)

Thanksgiving is a day of celebration. We celebrate the goodness of the Lord.

Have you made a list of the good things that God has done for you.

Illustrate: Matthew Henry, the famous scholar, was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary:

“Let me be thankful first, because I was never robbed before; second, because, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”²

You have a lot to be thankful for: salvation; a family; a roof over your head; food on your table; friends; a good church; a purpose; the list goes on

Think about it:

- Think about what you started with. (Nothing)
- Think about all that you were given. (Everything)
- Think about what you deserve. (Hell)
- Instead of comparing yourself with the few people who have it better than you, consider the many people who do not have what you have. (Most of the World)
- Keep a journal to help you remember the things that God has done for you; and the things that people have done for you.

² Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 1460.

- If you are down about your current situation, consider how much worse it could be.

Illustrate - *A girl called up her dad from college. She told her dad:*

- *She was kicked out of school for failing grades.*
- *She had recently been arrested for possession of drugs.*
- *She was pregnant from a guy that was now in jail.*

Her father naturally began to yell and scream, then his daughter quickly informed him that she had lied about all that she had just told him; but she did in fact get a C- on her chemistry exam; and she just wanted her father to have the right perspective.

3. They Served in the Next Generation (vs. 23 – 25)

"23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. 24 And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king. 25 And the LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel." (1 Chronicles 29:23-25)

Conclusion

As we consider the remaining verses of this chapter and this book of the Bible, we see that this is the end of David's life.

"26 Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27 And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. 28 And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. 29 Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, 30 With all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries." (1 Chronicles 29:26-30)

This chapter is about the end of David's life, but David didn't spend these last days talking about himself, and neither did the nation of Israel. They were bragging on the Lord and thanking Him for all that He had done for them. And then they committed themselves to serving the Lord and the nation in the future.

So as we reflect on all the blessings that God has given us this year, let us also commit to continue serving in the years to come.