

Polly's Pondering

Let them give thanks to the LORD for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind, for He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. Psalm 107:8-9.

Most of us think of Christmas as the last holiday of the year. But did you know that the Christian Calendar actually begins with Advent and ends shortly after Thanksgiving. That makes Thanksgiving the last celebrated holiday of the year in most Christian homes.

Traditionally children have been taught the origins of Thanksgiving as a celebration between the pilgrims and the Indians. An event that occurred during a time when common struggle brought people together in gratitude. I have seen that same sort of thing happen within our own community following the tornado. A common event which led to suffering uniting our town. I love the spirit of unity that emerged among us.

What I have been pondering is why that unity and willingness to share in each other's struggles seems to originate out of tragedy. Why is it so hard to keep that spirit of camaraderie going? This is what the Lord has placed on my heart..we have simply misunderstood the origin of Thanksgiving. Rather than originating Thanksgiving in an event we should see it emerging from attitudes of the heart.

Both the Indians and the pilgrims understood that the world was not something they could control but rather was under the control of something outside of themselves, yet was still spiritually connected to themselves. That is true for most of us who believe in God. Our faith journey begins at a point when we begin to understand that there is something bigger than ourselves. As we learn more about God we discover that He is not only spiritually connected to us but working for our good in the world. The more we learn about God, the more we see our need for God.

Humility is born out of that kind of understanding. We are not now nor have we ever been the center of the universe. We can no more control the weather, than we can the actions of another. And the truth is we struggle even to control ourselves apart from God. And all of us, who will gather around a Thanksgiving table this month, whether we are short or tall, smart or brilliant, poor or rich, weak or strong, challenged or able, are all in need of God's saving grace. That is the condition of the heart that provides a fertile soil in which a life of thanksgiving can grow. And when it is truly rooted there, we will find ourselves more connected to one another. We will seek to be in relationship with each other and be willing to enter into each other's struggles. We will see needs in our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our schools, our community, our world and we will work together to find solutions. The attitude of gratitude emerging from our hearts will show in the way we treat one another, the way we treat our resources, the way we use our God given talents, the way we pray and the way we break bread together at the table.

When the roots take hold, we will thank God for loving us, the short and the tall, the smart and the brilliant, the poor and the rich, the weak and the strong, the challenged and the able. Yes for loving us, for seeking after us, for empowering us, and for sending Jesus for all of us who are in need of His saving grace that is continually poured out in our lives from conception to conversion, and onto completion in eternity.

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through Psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in

your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, don't all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:16-17.