



## **IS THANKSGIVING REALLY ABOUT THANKFULNESS?**

According to a quick Google search (and any basic memory I have from elementary school), Thanksgiving was:

The event that Americans commonly call the “First Thanksgiving” was celebrated by the Pilgrims after their first harvest in the New World in October 1621. This feast lasted three days and was attended by 90 Wampanoag Native American people and 53 Pilgrims (survivors of the Mayflower).

However, after I came to Christ, I’ve come to think of Thanksgiving more as a Christian holiday. Don’t get me wrong, I completely understand that Thanksgiving has nothing to do with Jesus and is an event based on history. But, as I mentioned, this is my own personal interpretation of the idea of being *thankful* rather than the actual holiday itself. To me, there’s nothing better than going home to be with the people I love and spending a day breaking bread with them after many months apart. The deep gratitude I have to spend time with them gets to me whenever this season comes around. Something bubbles up inside of me during the month of November that puts me in this state of mind where all I can do is think about how much the Lord has done for me. Also, I intentionally try to motivate myself during this month to be less about “me” and more about others; whether that’s saying yes to the thousandth thing my husband asks me to do even though he could do it himself, or even putting aside my own differences to help someone I don’t get along with. Maybe it’s the Pre-Christmas excitement because we all know that after Halloween pretty much everyone everywhere forgets that Thanksgiving exists. But, this perspective of thankfulness I strive for around this time of year is exactly why I personally consider Thanksgiving a Christian holiday.

I want to encourage you this month to spend more time thanking Jesus for what you do have rather than praying for what you don’t. Not only that, but take some time to remember that he is working for us much more powerfully in the unseen places, which despite lack of evidence, is another reason we should be praising our Lord rather than petitioning Him our grocery lists. Take some time this month to pray on behalf of someone you don’t care about that much, pray for good for them rather than waste a thought about what hurts they may have caused you, and remember that forgiveness is ever the heart of our Savior (see Matthew 6:15).

My last encouragement for you this month is to give. Because it is better to give rather than to receive:

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:8

Who knows, maybe you will start thinking of Thanksgiving as a Christian holiday too! My hope is that during this month, this season of gratitude will help point your prayers to praise, your perspective to be soaked in gratitude for every little thing the Lord has done for you, and that the "Peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding will cover your hearts and minds...(Philippians 4:7)," in such a way that your overflowing cup of thankfulness keeps you in a constant state of contentedness. *"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances (Philippians 4:11)."*