

WBNP #26 - Thanksgiving Part 3

Good Evening. A Puritan's Mind brings you the old time radio program *The Wild Boar News Podcast* from Sunny South Florida. Welcome, I'm Dr. Matthew McMahon.

Thanksgiving, its more than just Turkey day.

After 1815, prophetically, there were no further annual proclamations of Thanksgiving until the Civil War, when Abraham Lincoln declared November 26, 1863, the last Thursday in November, a Day of Thanksgiving. In early July of 1863, there were some 50,000 American casualties at the Battle of Gettysburg, and President Lincoln traveled to the field of battle some four months afterward to deliver the "Gettysburg Address." Deeply moved by the sacrifice of these soldiers, Lincoln first committed his life to Christ while walking among the graves there. He later explained: "When I left Springfield [to become President] 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."

During this time of internal strife in the United States, and at this turning point in his own spiritual life, President Lincoln issued the following proclamation.

PROCLAMATION OF THANKSGIVING BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful years and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the Source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they can not fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence....

In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the

laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere, except in the theater of military conflict, while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than theretofore.

Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Abraham Lincoln (October 3, 1863, passed by an Act of Congress.)

More later...

This is Dr. Matthew McMahon signing off.