GLC Weekly

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The Pilgrims & Puritans Faith & Hope in The LORD; 5 Distinguishing Characteristics

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As we celebrate Thanksgiving this week in the United States, we remember the Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving they initiated in 1621 to give thanks to The LORD. A year before, 102 of them had crossed the Atlantic Ocean on the Mayflower. On 11 November 1620, when they landed at Plymouth, they wrote and signed a covenant with GOD and one another called the Mayflower Compact, which stated in part:



"IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN . . . Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith . . . a Voyage to plant the first Colony in the northern Parts . . . Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually, in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation. . . ."

They came to build a new Christian civilization "for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith," anchored in the Bible as the Word of GOD, with religious and civil liberty. Even though half of them died that first winter, their commitment to the vision remained unchanged. When they gathered their first harvest the following year, they decided to have a great Thanksgiving feast, and 90 of their Indian friends showed up with deer to celebrate with them. That was the first Thanksgiving.

The Pilgrims were known as "separatists" in England because they separated from the state church, the Church of England, to cultivate deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and build their lives on the Word of GOD with freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. Because of heavy persecution, they fled to Holland. After 12 years of living in another corrupt European culture, they decided to go to the New World and build a Christian civilization.

The Puritans were also students of the Word of GOD, but stayed in the Church of England a while longer to try to purify it from within. When that seemed impossible, they began migrating to America in 1629 and did so for the next 20 years.

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Both the Pilgrims and Puritans discerned that their survival and success in the New World was based on GOD's blessing and protection over them, and thus their walking in obedience and right relationship to Him.

Here are some observations from my pastor, Dr. Steve Holt, which he made in his sermon yesterday, drawing from his historical studies. The sermon was titled, "The Puritan Hope: His Dominion Is an Everlasting Dominion" (click to read his sermon notes). The Puritans:

- Sought to know the ways of The LORD and "the ancient paths" (Jeremiah 6:16);
- Gave the original vision of America being like a city on a hill;
- Sought to build "a holy commonwealth";
- Theme: "All for Christ for all of life";
- Focused on affections for Jesus;
- Gained head knowledge and transferred it to heart knowledge;
- Believed GOD's kingdom would forever grow;
- Did not view the world as a wreck to escape from, but as the property of Jesus Christ, whose kingdom is ever expanding;
- Based their view of GOD and government on Psalm 72 and other Scriptures;
- Believed Isaiah 9:7: "There will be no end to the increase of [His] government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

5 Distinguishing Characteristics of the Puritans:

1. The Puritans believed in being exegetical of the Scripture, not eisegetical of the times (they sought to understand what GOD was saying in His Word, not try to make the Bible conform to their thinking based on the thinking and news of their times).
2. The Puritans believed that the Church, despite many setbacks, was the hope of the world (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:33-37).
3. The Puritans believed that Jesus is King and Lord over all human governments (Daniel 4:34-35; Psalm 2:1-12).
4. The Puritans believed in the continual progression of the kingdom of GOD in England, in America, and to the ends of the earth (The Lord's Prayer; Psalm 22:27-28; 86:9; Revelation 6:2).
5. The Puritans believed in spiritual revival (and that the worst conditions were the best for spiritual revival – like our present time).

Psalm 110:1 is the most quoted Old Testament verse, and one the Pilgrims and Puritans anchored their hope: "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'" (see also: Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-35; Hebrews 1:13; 10:12-13).

PRAY that we who are Americans will remember, and bring to remembrance, the faith and great sacrifice of the Pilgrims and Puritans who gave their lives to birth this nation "for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith." And then pray that The LORD will bring a great spiritual revival across our nation, and give us the opportunity to rebuild Biblical and Judeo-Christian foundations, based on deep affection for Jesus Christ and the Word of GOD.

For the LORD, the sacred gift of life, the sacred gift of liberty, and the restoration and preservation of our nations under GOD,

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The purpose of the Global Life Campaign is to call and equip trustworthy disciples inspired by the Holy Spirit, to be a catalyst movement to establish principles and practices in nations that align with the Word of God and respect human life.