

## So Far from Want

The *Mayflower* transported the first English Puritans, known today as the Pilgrims, from Plymouth, England, to the New World in November 1620.

There were 102 passengers, and a crew estimated to have been about 30.

During the winter, the passengers remained on board the *Mayflower*, suffering an outbreak of contagious diseases described as a mixture of scurvy, pneumonia and tuberculosis. When it ended, only 53 passengers remained – just over half. Half of the crew died as well. In the spring, they built huts ashore, and the passengers disembarked from the *Mayflower* on March 21, 1621.

Edward Winslow was one of the leaders of the Plymouth Colony. He described the second winter of the Pilgrims. In a letter dated Dec. 12, 1621, he wrote:

*Our corn i.e. wheat did prove well, and God be praised, we had a good increase of Indian corn, and our barley indifferent good, but our peas not worth the gathering, for we feared they were too late sown. They came up very well, and blossomed, but the sun parched them in the blossom. Our harvest being gotten, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week.*

*At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.*

It is fascinating to read of the immense hardships faced by those first settlers in the New World. One would expect their sense of loss and suffering to have been so severe that it would have dominated their correspondence and recollections. Instead, their focus was not on their lack, but on their plenty.

With what little they had, with thanksgiving, they sought to make others partakers of their plenty.

How do you see yourself? So far from plenty that you can only complain? Or “so far from want” that, out of gratitude, you seek to share what little you have with others?

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter