

Thanksgiving – the Indian Side

Thanksgiving 2016 is behind us. But before we say goodbye to it ...

Most of us know the story of the first Thanksgiving – at least, the Pilgrim version. But what about the Indian viewpoint? There is an amazing story of the way God used an Indian named Squanto as a special instrument of His providence.

Historical accounts of Squanto's life vary, but historians believe that around 1608 – and more than a decade before the Pilgrims landed in the New World – a group of English traders, led by a Capt. Hunt, sailed to what is today Plymouth, Massachusetts. When the trusting Wampanoag Indians came out to trade, Hunt took them prisoner, transported them to Spain, and sold them into slavery.

But God had a plan for one of the captured Indians – a boy named Squanto.

Squanto was bought by a well-meaning Spanish monk who treated him well and taught him the Christian faith. Squanto eventually made his way to England and worked in the stable of a man named John Slaney. Slaney sympathized with Squanto's desire to return home, and he promised to put the Indian on the first vessel bound for America.

It wasn't until 1619 – 10 years after Squanto was first kidnapped – that a ship was found. Finally, after a decade of exile and heartbreak, Squanto was on his way home. When he arrived in Massachusetts, however, more heartbreak awaited him. An epidemic had wiped out Squanto's entire village.



We can only imagine what must have gone through Squanto's mind. Why had God allowed him to return home against all odds, only to find his loved ones dead?

A year later, the answer came. A shipload of English families arrived and settled on the very land once occupied by Squanto's people. Squanto went to meet them, greeting the startled Pilgrims in English.

According to the diary of Pilgrim Gov. William Bradford, Squanto "became a special instrument sent of God for (our) good ... He showed (us) how to plant (our) corn, where to take fish and to procure other commodities ... and was also (our) pilot to bring (us) to unknown places for (our) profit, and never left (us) till he died."

(more)

When Squanto lay dying of a fever, Bradford wrote that their Indian friend “desired the Governor to pray for him, that he might go to the Englishmen’s God in heaven.” Squanto bequeathed his possessions to his English friends “as remembrances of his love.”

Who but God could so miraculously weave together the lives of a lonely Indian and a struggling band of Englishmen? It’s hard not to make the comparisons with the biblical story of Joseph, who was also sold into slavery – and whom God likewise used as a special instrument for good.

Consider your own journey on this earth.

As an associate in Life Care and Century Park, called to serve those who need your talents and compassion, God is using *you* as a special instrument for good.

Be proud of the contributions you are making.

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God (Hebrews 13:16 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter