

No Place like Home for the Holidays



There is something special about wanting to be home with family for the holidays. I suppose that is the desire of most of us. While thinking about this subject, my mind went back to the first Thanksgiving and the first Christmas.

The Pilgrims found themselves in a strange new land where they had endured great hardship just to maintain life. I feel sure that many of them longed for the warm embrace and fellowship of friends and family from the old country. After a very hard and trying year, they planned a day to give thanks for the provisions God had given them. Thanksgiving may be one of the few holidays we observe that has kept its true meaning—a reminder to gather and give thanks for the goodness of God.

The Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, decreed that the entire Roman Empire was to be taxed, every man returning to his city of origin to pay the tax. Since Joseph was of the lineage of David, he and Mary were required to make the trip from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judaea. The journey was a distance of about seventy-six miles with a very expectant Mary either walking or riding a donkey. Note the decree that “all the world should be taxed,” a decree that assured Mary and Joseph would be in the God-appointed place—Bethlehem—when Jesus was born. (Read Luke 2:1-5.) “And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:6-7).

We may sometimes wonder why we are taxed to the limit with the cares of life. Think how Mary must have felt when Joseph brought the news that she would have to travel in her condition. Fulfilling prophecy probably was not on her mind during that long, uncomfortable trip. However, the end result was worth her discomfort: Mary gave birth to the Savior of the world.

Christ came once in the manger but now He comes into our hearts so that we may become the children of God. We may not understand the twists and turns of life but the end result—eternity with God—will make our discomfort worth it all!

Let us keep the real meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas fresh in our minds regardless of where we celebrate them. It was through much suffering and discomforts these two holidays were established. Let us be reminded of how truly blessed we are. We may go through sadness, sickness, and sorrow but the Lord balances it with happiness, blessings, and joy. Even though we may not be able to be home for the holidays and with our earthly family, we can be thankful that we have the Lord ever with us.

“They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us”

(Matthew 1:23). ❁



Happy Holidays from Ladies Ministries!