A WORD WITH YOU - By Ron Hutchcraft

10404 - "The Man Who Saved Thanksgiving"

Matthew 25:35-45

November 26, 2026

I think our granddaughter was about nine years old when she came home from school and said, "Mommy, Daddy, my favorite holiday, I know what it is. It's Thanksgiving." And they asked her why that is. Well, her daddy is our son and her mommy is Native American, so she came in with a unique perspective on Turkey Day. She said, "I love Thanksgiving because I'm a Pilgrim and an Indian!"

Actually, there were Pilgrims because there were Indians; one Indian in particular - Squanto. So many of our Pilgrim forefathers and mothers, you know, died that first winter; something like half of the Mayflower survivors. The survival of the Pilgrims was pretty much in serious doubt. And then came their brown-skinned miracle - a Native American who somehow spoke English.

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **"The Man Who Saved Thanksgiving."**

Now, a few years earlier, young Squanto had been carried off to England by traders who worked the Massachusetts coast. He learned English and the Bible. And then, thanks to a compassionate benefactor, he made it back home on another English trading vessel, only to find that his entire village had been wiped out by disease.

But God had amazingly equipped him to save the lives of another people. And because of what Squanto taught them, they reaped the bountiful harvest that made the difference, and sparked the gratitude in their hearts that brought together the Pilgrims and their Native American neighbors for, you know, that first Thanksgiving.

In a sense, when we're talking about the Pilgrims, they're sort of my people. And the lives of "my people" were saved by some of the first Americans. And in a sense, now it's our turn.

Now, in our word for today from the Word of God, Matthew 25:35-45, you can see that Jesus takes very seriously how we respond to those who are wounded and hurting. He says, "'I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger you invited me in. I needed clothes so you clothed Me. I was sick and you looked after Me. I was in prison and you came to visit Me.'

And then the righteous will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or needing clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and go to

visit You?' And the King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers, you did for Me.'" It's clear here that Jesus identifies with the wounded and the hurting.

Now, it isn't that Native Americans need non-Native people to come swooping in like white mini-saviors. No, they need for us to support them so they can fight for their own people. I've been privileged to be a part of watching that happen. Our ministry has seen the amazing potential of Native American young people whose lives have been radiated with hope by Jesus Christ - modern-day "Squantos." We've seen what happens when they go to reservations on our On Eagles' Wings teams and tell their Native brothers and sisters about a brown-skinned Savior named Jesus. Hope is born where hope has been needed for so long. I have been an eye-witness to so many of Native Americans coming to Christ through them.

But those young spiritual warriors are enabled to go by non-Native Jesus-followers who stand behind them with their prayer and their giving. It's like a holy, life-saving partnership. And the "children of the Pilgrims" are helping to save the lives of the "children of the first Americans." It's long overdue, but, thank God, it's happening. For Jesus has said, "He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom to the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners… (Isaiah 61:1b)

Look, you may not have any Native Americans at your Thanksgiving table this week, but you can take a little time to talk to God on their behalf. For most Americans, they're just not on our radar. But they are surely on God's radar when it says He "…determined the exact places every nation of man should live" (Acts 17:26), He made the people we call Indians the first Americans.

And just as my people battled to survive many years ago in Plymouth, so Native Americans are battling for survival today. Wouldn't this be a good time this Thanksgiving, to ask, "Lord, is there something you'd like me to do?" At minimum, He'll want you to fight for them in prayer.

So, in a spiritual sense, you can have some Native Americans at your table this Thanksgiving as you bring them to the Throne Room of our Father in heaven, who sent His Son for their people and my people.

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