

**A Grace Gathering  
5 November 2023**

**A Special Season of Remembrance:  
Thanksgiving and the Coming of the Promised One**

The final weeks of our calendar-year provide for us profoundly wonderful occasions to join family and friends. For me, it begins with the celebration of the benevolences of God in directing, providing, and preserving us. We celebrate it as a wonderful shadow of God's great commitment to us with anticipation of the day when we will worship Him for His goodness most fully and forever.

In the darkest days of the American Civil conflict, Abraham Lincoln, our sixteenth president, declared to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November, as a day of Thanksgiving. The precedent retrospective set by the three-day celebration of a successful harvest at Plymouth in 1621.

Though a shadow of gratitude for temporal blessing, the Advent Season is much more. In the weeks ahead we will memorialize the coming of the Christ for us, the assumption human existence to embody our tragedy on the cross, causing us to be filled with great anticipation that the kingdoms of this world will be given to Him. It should put a smile on our faces and buoyancy in our steps even as the colorful leaves of autumn shrivel and brown only to fall to the earth because after the darkness comes light, after winter comes spring, after earth comes heaven.



To prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of our Lord, I have chosen a single verse of Holy Scripture. The context is Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to gather a love-gift of appreciation for the beleaguered saints in Judea. To motivate them, he reminds them of the impoverishment of Christ that they might become rich, a spiritual truth that is the foundation of the exhortation. I want to focus on the spiritual truth.

**"FOR YOU KNOW THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
THAT, THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR OUR SAKES  
HE BECAME POOR,  
THAT YOU THROUGH HIS POVERTY  
MIGHT BECOME RICH (II COR. 8:9)."**

**The fact stated:**

**"You know:"** An indescribable mystery of redemption

**"... the grace:"** A mystery in the incomprehensible love of God for his enemies (Rom. 5).

**"... of our Lord Jesus Christ:"** The source, the incomprehensible condescension.

**The fact explained:**

**"That:"** This introduces the action of God in Christ, the purpose of His action.

**"For your sakes:"** this tells us for whom He did this; it was for you and me.

**"He became poor:"** This explains how He accomplished the task, the incarnation and Calvary (the proof: the resurrection and ascension).

**The consequence revealed:"**

**"That:"** This introduces the goal for the display of the incomprehensible love of God.

**"... you through His poverty:"** This explains how Jesus accomplished the redemption of you and me.

**"... might become rich:"** This states the purpose and meaning of His accomplishments.



The Quiet Moment of Thankfulness

Congregational Song: “At Calvary” (1893), William R. Newell [1868-1956])

The Service of the Bread

Solo:

“The Service of the Cup”

Congregational Song: “Standing on the Promises” (1886, Kelso K. Carter, [1849-1920])

Testimonies:

Concluding Prayer

