



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



Not My Home

Recently I attended a fundraiser with my family. We sat at a table with another family and became acquainted over dinner. As we exchanged the usual questions about our church affiliations, it was no surprise to hear them say how pleased they were with the preaching and teaching in their ministry. However, they also shared feeling disconnected from their church family, who seemed unfriendly.

Like so many who attend our churches weekly, they were members of the church, surrounded by other believers, and yet they felt lonely. They had attended the church for a little more than a year, but somehow didn't feel connected. Some have used this as just cause to move their membership from one church, only to find there were people in their new church just like the ones they left behind.

You may be familiar with the lyrics of the hymn, "This World Is Not My Home." It goes like this:

This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through / My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue; / The angels beckon me from Heaven's open door, / And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

After our experiences of loneliness in the church, sometimes we feel like adding another stanza to the hymn:

"This church is not my home; I'm just a-passing through. / My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the pew; / Their voices say to me no one is friendly here, / And I don't feel at home in this church, oh I fear."

Maybe you're saying yes, yes — that is how I feel! We all know that the focus of every Bible-teaching church is Christ. It is all about Him! Yet if He has not become the only Source of fulfill-

ment in the hearts of the lonely, then no member in our congregations will be able to fill that hole.

Jesus talked about our relationship with Him when He said, "I am the vine, you are the branches, apart from me you can do nothing." (John 14)

Don't miss this: Branches are connected by the vine. We were never meant to be isolated. The writer of Hebrews encouraged believers not to neglect to meet together. Instead, they were to encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:25)

We know there is power in the preaching of the gospel. But there is also power in our fellowship.

Sometimes words of encouragement from other members in the Body keep us afloat. As a young adult I, along with two other young people, had fallen in the Valley of Discouragement because of a series of events at our church. We were determined to leave — until an old deacon had a talk with us. Through his heartfelt tears and words of kindness, he encouraged us to stay at the church.

Our Christian journey is not always easy. There are times when it is just plain hard. But we are on this journey together. Just like the Navy SEALs, we must care enough for one another that we determine to leave no one behind!

If you are feeling lonely in your church, here are three recommendations:

1. Pray that the Lord will allow you to meet another family or friend who you can pray with and find as a source of encouragement. In fact, I challenge you not to wait until that person or family encourages you; you encourage them. ... [Read Full Article](#)

Desperate Gratitude

It doesn't take a national declaration for us to give thanks. Sometimes it takes a little desperation. In 1620 when the Pilgrims [stepped off the Mayflower](#) at Provincetown in Cape Cod, they were [more than 220 miles off course](#). They had planned to land at the mouth of the Hudson River in [what is now New York](#), but bad weather changed their plans. After spending 66 days at sea and experiencing nearly every imaginable hazard, they knew their survival was more than a matter of blind fate.

Desperate for Land

No one had to tell these landsick Pilgrims to give thanks. William Bradford, who would become the new colony's governor, [described the exhilarating experience](#) of finally making landfall in his book, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, "Being thus arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof."

Thanksgiving was a natural response to the Pilgrims' personal experience of God's provision in their lives. That provision continued as their history-making adventure unfolded.

Weeks into their settlement of Provincetown, [a dispute arose between the Pilgrims and the Nauset](#) tribe of Native Americans. This led the Pilgrims to find a different location for their colony, so they set sail for Plymouth. Upon their arrival in December 1620, they found an abandoned Native-American village called Patuxet. A few years earlier, all [the Native Americans there had either died of disease or left the village](#), leaving behind their cornfields and space cleared for living quarters.

It was the perfect place for the Pilgrims to set up their colony. But they would have to survive the winter first.

They almost didn't make it.

Desperate for Survival

[Bradford recorded](#), "In two or three months' time half of their company died, especially in January and February, being the depth of the winter, and wanting houses and other comforts; being infected with the scurvy and other diseases which this long voyage and their inaccommodate con-

dition had brought upon them. So there died sometimes two or three a day in the foresaid time, that of 100 and odd persons, scarce fifty remained."

With death at their doorstep, the Pilgrims were again in a desperate situation. If they didn't get help soon, they all would perish.

An unexpected blessing came in March of 1621, when the Pilgrims met [an Abenaki Indian named Samoset](#). [He introduced the Pilgrims to Chief Massasoit](#), leader of the Wampanoag Indians. Massasoit brought his English-speaking slave Squanto, the only surviving Patuxet native, to meet them. (Squanto survived the disease which had killed his people because he had been captured, brought to Europe and enslaved a few years earlier.)

When he met the Pilgrims, Chief Massasoit was also desperate for help. His tribe had been fighting the hostile Narragansett tribe, and needed a military ally. The meeting occurred at the precise moment each group realized it needed the other. Had they met any sooner or later, [it's likely the Pilgrims would not have been welcomed](#).

This unlikely meeting resulted in an unlikely treaty and created unlikely friends. The Pilgrims agreed to provide military assistance to the Wampanoags in exchange for wilderness survival training, and the rest is history. Squanto taught the Pilgrims everything they needed to have a stable food supply. As a result, their crops flourished. Their needs were met. They survived.

And they celebrated. Wouldn't you?

After all of the perils they had endured, thanksgiving was an easy choice. They understood as [Abraham Lincoln declared more than 200 years later](#), "No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God."

Desperate for Hope

Today we are more than 400 years removed from the desperate circumstances which led to the first Thanksgiving. Life is generally good for us. Because we know little of the desperation our forefathers experienced [Read Full Article](#)

