



Thanksgiving Message:

A Tale of Two Mountains

(Hebrews 12:18-24, 28-29)

Hebrews 12:18-24 and 28-29

(English Standard Version)

- ¹⁸ You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm;
- ¹⁹ to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰ because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.”
- ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”

Hebrews 12:18-24 and 28-29

(English Standard Version)

²² But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. . .

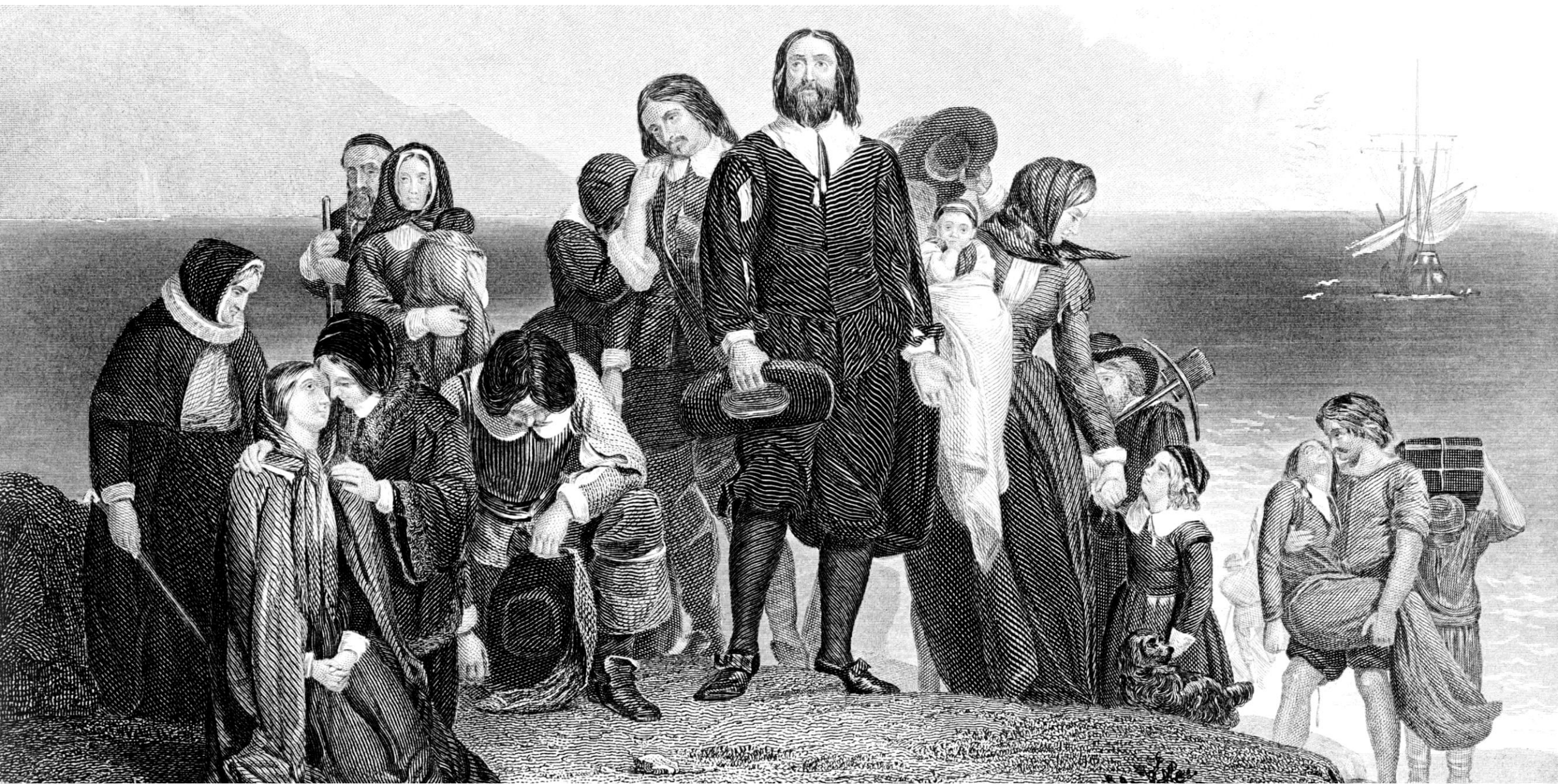
Hebrews 12:18-24 and 28-29

(English Standard Version)

- ²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,
- ²⁹ for our “God is a consuming fire.”

A Time of Thanksgiving





Religious Background

- The “Pilgrims” were Protestants who called themselves “Saints” (vs. “Strangers”) and were known as “Separatists” by others—for separating from the Church of England in contrast to the “Puritans” who attempted to reform the Church of England from within. (The Puritans would flee religious persecution in England and settle in Boston in 1630.)
- The Pilgrims: Plymouth, Massachusetts, 1620
- The Puritans: Boston, Massachusetts, 1630

Historical Background

(from National Endowment for the Humanities)

- “In 1608, the future Pilgrims exiled themselves to Amsterdam, where the Dutch had greater tolerance for radical Protestants. Soon they decamped southward for Leiden, a textile center where they formed a little English-speaking immigrant community and worshiped God as they pleased, unmolested. . . .
- By 1617, the Separatists were getting anxious to move again. Their biggest concern after a decade in this foreign land was that their children were becoming Dutch . . .
- They did not sail from Plymouth harbor until the disastrously late date of 6 September 1620, assuring that they would arrive in America after the growing season and at the onset of winter.”
- Of the 103 passengers, only 53 survived the first winter

Historical Background

(from National Endowment for the Humanities)

- “In March [1621], a lone Indian warrior named Samoset appeared and greeted the settlers, improbably, in English. Soon, the Pilgrims formed an alliance with the Wampanoags and their chief, Massasoit. Only a few years before, the tribe had lost 50 to 90 percent of its population to an epidemic borne by European coastal fisherman. Devastated by death, both groups were vulnerable to attack or domination by other Indian tribes. They needed each other.

Historical Background

(from National Endowment for the Humanities)

- With spring, under the careful guidance of a Wampanoag friend, Tisquantum, the settlers planted corn, squash, and beans, with herring for fertilizer. They began building more houses, and fishing for cod and bass . . . As autumn came, the Pilgrims gathered to, in a “special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors” . . . **That was the first Thanksgiving.** There is no record of an invitation to the Wampanoags, but Massasoit appeared at the feast with ninety men. They stayed for three days and went out and bagged five deer to add venison to the menu.

Plimoth Patuxet Living Musuem (f.k.a. Plymouth Plantation)



We are all “Pilgrims”

- **Pilgrim:** “A religious devotee who journeys to a shrine or sacred place; a traveler”
- “For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13:14).
- “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Philippians 3:20-21).

A Tale of Two Mountains

Mount Sinai



Mount Zion



Mt. Sinai and the Covenant of the Law



Hebrews 12:18-21

Mt. Sinai and the Covenant of the Law

- ¹⁸ You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm;
- ¹⁹ to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰ because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.”
- ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”

Galatians 3:10-12

The Law Condemns

- ¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law and do them.”
- ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith. (Or, *The one who by faith is righteous will live.*)
- ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.”

Mt. Zion and the Covenant of Grace



Hebrews 12: 22-24

Mt. Zion and the Covenant of Grace

²² But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. . .

Galatians 3:23-25

Freed from the Law by Grace

- ²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.
- ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.
- ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,

Galatians 3:26-27 (ESV)

“Put on Christ”

- ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, **through faith.**
- ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ **have put on Christ.**

Galatians 3:26-29 (NLT)

Like a New Set of Clothes

- ²⁶ For you are all children [*sons*] of God **through faith in Christ Jesus**.
- ²⁷ And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have **put on Christ** [*like putting on new clothes*].
- ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile [*Greek*], slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- ²⁹ And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children [*seed, descendants*] of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

Galatians 3:13-14

Receive the Holy Spirit

- ¹³ **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law** by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” —
- ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so **that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.**
- “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**” (Ephesians 1:13).

Hebrews 12: 28-29

Reverent Worship of an “Awesome” God

- ²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, **let us be thankful**, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,
- ²⁹ for our “God is a consuming fire.”



Let Us Pray

A silhouette of two hands raised in prayer, holding a glowing white cross. The background is a warm, golden sunset over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon. The hands are positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image, with the cross centered between them. The overall mood is peaceful and spiritual.