

SERMON - THANKSGIVING DAY - 27 NOVEMBER 2008
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

Deut. 26:9-10 (KJV)

And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. ¹⁰And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God:

Some fifteen years ago, Lili and I made a trip across a lot of this country on the Fourth of July, driving from Charlotte to Scranton, Pennsylvania, on our way to Montreal. That particular day of that particular trip has become one of our favorite memories. It was a day that showed us how beautiful our country is, how spacious, how grand, truly a land that flows with milk in honey, a fair land.

There are memories of small towns quietly waking in the morning with their green lawns and front porch houses. There was the small town in Virginia where we ate lunch in a meat and three café and enjoyed the conversations with the locals. There is the memory of a colonial era stone house in West Virginia where there was a grand holiday picnic going on. There was the fireworks that we observed from a ridge overlooking a beautiful valley as we had dinner in Scranton that night.

We so often forget how blessed we are to be able to live in the United States of America. We so often forget how God for so many years blessed us who live here on this land which He has given us, this fair land.

God promised the children of Israel a land of plenty, a land that would not just sustain them but a land where they could prosper, where there would be more than just enough but a rich land.

Our ancestors came to this land, some by choice others by force, some seeking a better life, others escaping persecution, but all of them making their impression on who we are

today as Americans.

For better or worse, we are Americans.

Today, we come together to thank God for those blessings that He has given us this year. We may not be bringing the first fruits of our farm harvest these days but we can come offering our sincere thanks for a roof over our head, food in the pantry and the opportunity to live a life style that is better than 98 percent of the rest of the world.

This year there is a lot of discussion about the economy, about the fears that many people in this country have about the future and their survival in it. There is a lot of talk about what should be done to steer us through this mess.

But in all of this chatter I have yet to hear anyone say that we need to turn back to God. I have yet to hear of any of our national or state or local leaders calling on us to pray, to pray to God for his guidance, for his aid.

It is like that we, as a country, have adopted Mammon as our national deity.

Today, let us together not only give thanks to God for the good things he has blessed us with but to ask first for his forgiveness for the mess that we have created, the mess caused by rampant greed and avarice and then to pray for his guidance and protection for this great land of ours, this fair land, this land flowing with milk and honey.

Amen.