

Alone but not alone – November 14, 2014

103 102 passengers and 30 sailors are on the official manifest list of the 100 foot Mayflower ship transporting the Pilgrims from Plymouth England to America but there was another unlisted passenger, number 103, that was also on board and very much real. The passenger's name: Death.

Death was a constant companion to those on board the Mayflower. Death took 45 away the first year of their arrival from November 1620 to November 1621. 3 by December 1620 and another 42 by April 1621. It took a full year for another ship to come to the colony (November 1621) dropping off an additional 35 more people to the colony.

I've often gone outside and looked at the rolling tree covered hills before me thinking:



"What would I be thinking if I was a Pilgrim staring at the unknown forest of the Northeast?"

Facing you are dense forests all along the coast as far as the eye can see. Behind you are the rolling, crashing and frigid waves of the Atlantic Ocean. Your only link to the civilized world is the Mayflower ship, your only escape pod. No one knows where you are at since you were blown off course and are now North of the Virginia land area. No one is coming to look for you and the next ship won't arrive for an entire year.

For sumer being done, all things stand upon them with a wetherbeaten face; and y^e whole countrie, full of woods & thickets, represented a wild & savage heiw. If they looked behind them, ther was y^e mighty ocean which they had passed, and was now as a [96]maine barr & goulfe to seperate them from all y^e civill parts of y^e world.¹

The Pilgrims heard stories of the forest before they left. The entire group debated on them. There are beasts in the forest. Savage beasts. The manner of death by these savage beasts make stout men's bones tremble. All the dangers were ranked in order:

4) "casulties of ye seas"

3) "famine, and nakednes, & ye wante, in a maner, of all things. The chang of aire, diate, & drinking of water, would infecte their bodies with sore sicknesses, and greevous diseases."

2) "wild beasts"

1) "salvage people, who are cruell, barbarous, & most trecherous, being most furious in their rage, and merciles"

It was the salvage people that frightened all. In their own words:

*move ye very bowels of men to grate within them, and make ye weake to **quake & tremble.***

What did they hear about the "savage people (noble red man)" of the northeast? That these savages weren't content to just kill the white man but they delighted in torturing him by skinning them alive, cutting off body parts and then eating it in front of the much alive victim.



not being contente only to kill, & take away life, but delight to torment men in y^e most bloodie maner that may be; fleaing some alive with y^e shells of fishes, cutting of y^e members & joynts of others by peesmeale, and broiling on y^e coles, eate y^e collops of their flesh in their sight whilst they live; with other cruelties horrible to be related.¹

These are just stories, hearsay and campfire tales to spook you - right? No. They were very real.

The book, "The Light and the Glory", documents the torture of 2 Jesuit missionaries (Father Brebeuf and Father Jogues) by the hands of the Iroquois Indians several decades after the landing of the Mayflower.

The first Iroquois torture was to pour boiling water over Father Brebeuf's naked body in mockery of the sacrament of baptism. When, by the grace of God, he denied them the pleasure of hearing him cry out in agony - for the pain of their victims was intoxicating to them - they tied a collar of metal hatches, heated red-hot, around his neck. Again Father Brebeuf disappointed them by remaining silent, and so they fastened a birchbark belt filled with pitch and resin around his waist and set it afire. And still he remained mute before his tormentors, his face set like flint.

Now Father Brebeuf did speak, but not in anguish. He called out encouragement to his fellow captives. Enraged, the Indians cut off his lips and tongue and rammed a hot iron down his throat. Then they cut strips of flesh from his arms and legs and devoured them before his eyes. But as he was dying, Father Brebeuf was gaining the victory, just as his Savior had on the Cross before him, and the Indians sensed it. In the end, they cut his heart out and ate it, and drank of his blood, in the hope that they could thus gain the spirit power that had given him more courage than any man they had ever seen.^{2 p80-81}

....
The Indians tore out their captives' fingernails with their teeth, gnawed their fingers, and cut off a thumb or forefinger of each. Father Jogues was not killed outright but was kept as a slave for the purpose of their future enjoyment through torturing him - torture so cruel that he longed for Christ to release him from life and let him be with Him in heaven.^{2 p81}

....
The myth of the noble savage was just that: a myth that was created a century later by romantic English poets and artist who had never crossed the ocean themselves, let alone witness the horrors of tribal warfare and custom.^{2 p80}

Theses survivor accounts are what the Pilgrims probably heard and maybe much worse - and they went anyway.

I've gone outside and looked at the darkness around me. The only light shining is the lamp outside the door. The trees and bushes in the distant all blur to one large black lump. What raises the adrenaline is when rustling in the darkness are heard nearby.



We've heard a family reunion of squealing pigs down in the creek area - not too far from the house (my neighbor has taken down 400 pound pigs on his property). At this point we fall back into the house for safety – not knowing where and how many pigs are out in the darkness.

The Pilgrim faced this situation as well. They weren't equipped with high powered million+ watt spotlights. They had a campfire and torches and beyond the limited range of the fire – darkness and the unknown. One night, at midnight, they were jolted awake to hideous and loud cries. Someone comforted them by saying it was a company of wolves.

*they made them a barricado (as usually they did every night) with loggs, staks, & thike pine bowes, y^e height of a man, leaving it open to leeward, partly to shelter them from y^e could & wind (making their fire in y^e midle, & lying round aboute it), and partly to defend them from any sudden assaults of y^e savags, if they should surround them. So being very weary, they betooke them to rest. But aboute midnight, [51] they heard a hideous & great crie, and their sentinell caled, "Arme, arme"; so they bestired them & stood to their armes, & shote of a cupple of moskets, and then the noys ceased. They concluded it was a **companie of wolves, or such like willd beasts**; for one of y^e sea men tould them he had often heard shuch a noyse in New-found land.¹*

The next day, the same cry but instead of wolves - a frontal assault by Indians shooting arrows!

*they heard a great & strange crie, which they knew to be the same voyces they heard in y^e night, though they varied their notes, & one of their company being abroad came runing in, & cried, "**Men, Indeans, Indeans**"; and wth all, their arowes came flying amongst them. Their men rane with all speed to recover their armes, as by y^e good providence of God they did. In y^e mean time, of those that were ther ready, tow muskets were discharged at them, & 2. more stood ready in y^e enterance of ther randevoue, but were comanded not to shoote till they could take full aime at them; & y^e other 2. charged againe with all speed, for ther were only 4. had armes ther, & defended y^e baricado which was first assaltd. The crie of y^e Indeans was dreadfull, espetially when they saw ther men rune out of y^e randevoue towourds y^e shallop, to recover their armes, the Indeans wheeling aboute upon them. But some ruñing out with coats of malle on, & cutlasses in their hands, they soone got their armes, & let flye amongst them, and quickly stopped their violence. ... Thus it pleased God to vanquish their enimies, and give them deliverance; and by his spetiall providence so to dispose that not any one of them were either hurte, or hitt, though their arrows came close by them, & on every side them, and sundry of their coats, which hunge up in y^e barricado, were shot throw & throw. Aterwards they gave God sollamne thanks & praise for their deliverance,¹*

All their tolls and tribulations that they went thru at the time one could begin saying where was God at this time. The Pilgrims came over to spread the gospel but nearly half died the first year.

Jesus was always there as a guiding hand and a protecting shepherd. Many died, but all of us will die at some point in time - what better way than to die doing the will of God by going to the nations and spreading the gospel.

RSV Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying that **through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**

RSV 1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and **he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.**

Standing in the truth has consequences as the Pilgrims discovered: Family will ignore you, Friends will forsake you, Strangers will mock you, Coworkers will avoid you, Churches will cast you out and Governments will come after you but there is one that will never fail or forsake you (Heb13:5-6). He will stick closer to you than a brother (Prov18:24).

RSV Hebrews 13:5-6

5 **Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never fail you nor forsake you."**

6 Hence we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?"

RSV Proverbs 18:24 There are friends who pretend to be friends, but **there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.**

You are here for a purpose. Jesus placed you here at this specific time in history for his purpose: To spread the gospel and to be a light in this dark world.

The pilgrim story shows the saving, guiding, protecting hand of Jesus. Become Jesus' hands and feet while on this earth.

RSV 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;

9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

Regards,

Called/Chosen + Hear + Believe + Repent + Confess + Baptize + Abide = Salvation -> Proclaim
Mt22:14 + Lk11:28 + Jn3:16 + Mk6:12 + Rm10:9 + Acts2:38 + Heb10:26 = 1 Pt 3:21 -> Mt28:19-20

¹ William Bradford, the first governor of the the Plymouth Colony in "*of Plimoth Plantation*"
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/24950/24950-h/24950-h.htm#Page_1

² "The Light and the Glory: 1492-1793", Peter Marshall and David Manuel, ISBN 979-0-8007-3271-4