



PARKSIDE CHAPEL

LIFE NEWS

The weekly newsletter article of Parkside Chapel

So Thankful

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What drives me crazy is how long the holiday season seems! From Thanksgiving to Christmas, it seems like one big party season.

Before we've even had our fill of turkey and stuffing, the stores have all switched to Christmas promotions and decorations. Black Friday Sale advertisements pound our mailboxes and inboxes. We spend the first week after Thanksgiving recovering from all the food, the travel, and the time off. And before you know it, Christmas music begins, and our eyes shift to Christmas preparations. We've hardly made it through Thanksgiving, and we're on to Christmas, and it seems almost impossible to get things done or that we should have to get things done. Is it worth starting only to put everything on hold? Try getting a contractor or trade to give you a bid. What you'll hear is, "Here's the price, and we'll start in the new year."

But... what I love about the holiday season is how long it is. I love that for a whole month after Thanksgiving, we are getting ready for Christmas. Thanksgiving is an event all to itself, but for many of us, it marks the beginning of our focus on Christmas. We put up our trees. We decorate our homes, inside and out. We light candles that remind us of home-baked cookies and treats. We surround ourselves with those things that warm our hearts, and we prepare ourselves to be filled up by time with family and friends.

However, like anything else, we can get so caught up in the activity of Christmas and the spirit of Christmas that we can overlook the point of Christmas. This is one of my favorite parts of our march from Nov 24 to Dec 25; in the process of getting ready, we are frequently reminded of Who made all these things possible. With every light on the tree, every nativity scene, and every Advent wreath, we are reminded that God loves us so much that He sent Jesus into the world to save us from sin and give us eternal life. It's like immersing ourselves in the goodness of God to stare reflectively into a

warm fire and think of how faithful He has been. Sometimes I just sit back and listen to the joyful banter of my wife and kids and thank God quietly for how kind and gracious He has been to us.

I once heard the phrase, "Happiness is being thankful for what you already have." That is why Christmas is the happiest time of year.

Not because of what we might get that year but because of what we already have. Whether we have an abundance or just a little when it comes to material possessions, Scripture says that we have the unfathomable riches of Christ.

Paul reminds us not to be anxious about anything, "*but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*" (Phil 4:6-7)

Being thankful seems to be the antidote for anxiety and a necessary ingredient for peace. Being thankful puts our hearts and minds in a position to receive the comfort of our Heavenly Father. It is truly humbling to meditate on the mercy and grace of God and dwell on the love of God because of what He has done for us in the gift of His Son. When we are genuinely grateful, we are more and more hopeful as our hearts are encouraged by a God who is so faithful.

This year, take a few moments each day to be thankful. In the space between the next activity, the next errand, or the next swipe of the credit card, give thanks to God for what He has already done. Have a happy Thanksgiving with your family and friends.

And may your hearts become so thankful as you prepare your hearts and homes for Christmas.

Because of Jesus,
Pastor Nigel