PRAISE

Thanksgiving

A Date On The Calendar

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A Date On The Calendar

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> *It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night.*
>
> I THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

It was dark and cold as my friend and I hopped into the car to head back to Darby.

We'd just enjoyed a lovely Thanksgiving dinner at a beautiful ranch high atop a Montana hill, with stunning mountain views and grateful hearts.

As we pulled onto the dirt road, I joyfully blurted out, "Well, it's legal now. Let's do it!"

Keeping with tradition, we'd both refused to listen to Christmas music until Thanksgiving was over. Now we were officially in the clear, free to sing Christmas songs into the night!

The tradition of Thanksgiving dates back to the Civil War, when President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November a national day of thanksgiving.

For years, Americans observed Thanksgiving and Christmas as two distinctly separate holidays. But in 1939, tradition took an unexpected turn.

That year, President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved Thanksgiving to November 23, hoping to give retailers more days for Christmas shopping. They worried Thanksgiving falling on November 30 would leave too little time for holiday sales.

The rest is history, but the change sparked quite a debate. Half the states accepted the new date, half kept the traditional one, and three states celebrated Thanksgiving on both dates!

It’s funny how changing a tradition can make people squirm, even in a season devoted to giving thanks.

First Thessalonians 5:16–18 encourages us to, “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

And Psalm 92:1–2 reminds us, “It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night.”

As I sat in church and sang today’s song, “Your Loving Kindness” by Matt Redman and Keith and Kristyn Getty, an overwhelming sense of gratitude washed over me, and tears streamed down my face.

The dates don’t matter, and the number of shopping days remaining until Christmas is irrelevant. What matters is the truth woven into these stirring lyrics: "How great is Your lovingkindness, O God of goodness. Our joy forever to sing the glad refrain of grace that saved us, of sweet forgiveness. O how great is Your lovingkindness."

And because of what the Lord has done for us, "What heart could fully comprehend Your mercies endless."

What a beautiful reminder our greatest blessings aren’t found beneath a Christmas tree or wrapped in pretty paper. They’re found in the immeasurable gift of Jesus and the hope, strength, and eternal riches we receive through Him.

So before we rush into counting shopping days or filling our calendars with holiday traditions, let’s pause. Let’s open our hearts, recognize God’s goodness, and give thanks—not just on Thanksgiving, but in every season and in every circumstance.

After all, a grateful heart doesn’t need a date on the calendar to celebrate God’s goodness!

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the priceless gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Forgive us when we become so caught up in traditions, preparations, and the busyness of life that we forget to recognize Your goodness.

Teach us to cultivate grateful hearts in every season, to rejoice in Your faithfulness, and to remember the countless ways You provide for us. May our lives become songs of thanksgiving to bring You glory, today and every day. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.

Karen Good

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