



# Wednesday November 26, 2025 Thanksgiving Eve

Let's have a show of hands. How many have already started preparing for Thanksgiving dinner tomorrow? How many kitchens are in disarray? How many turkeys are thawing that's supposed to be chopped up and the pumpkin pie's being baked. You know, I used to love the night before Thanksgiving when I was very young because I had the job of tearing up the slices of stale bread for the stuffing. Stove top stuffing be gone. None of that stuff, there was the real thing. And then I would have made sure that the water glasses were sparkling and the silverware were lined up next to the plates just so.

So, what would your table look like tomorrow or wherever you will land? In your mind, can you picture the place settings and all the food? And in your mind, I want you to instead of a turkey, imagine at the center of the table a warmly fresh baked loaf of bread. Can you smell it? In your mind, you know, can you actually smell it can't you, the warm yeast and the butter? And how delicious it is. And for that moment you can just take in the smell of everything, all the fears of the unknown just fall far away. We know what bread does for us. It fills us. It comforts us and gives us strength. Today, or this evening, as we talk about Thanksgiving in the middle of social insecurity and unrest, and we hold onto that simple, powerful image from John's Gospel that's the center of our holiday, actually, as Jesus as the bread of life. With that image in mind, we welcome Thanksgiving in these uncertain times.

This year, maybe right now in your life, things feel fragile. We live in a divided land. And for some, the bills are piling up. And there are health worries. It's easy to think of gratitude is something that we will defer until life gets easier. But scripture and history both remind us that Thanksgiving is not just for a season or a time of ease. It is actually a steady practice that anchors us when everything else is unsteady. Let's take an example from our history. Abraham Lincoln, in the middle of the civil war when the nation was broken and the outcome, uncertain, Lincoln issued his Thanksgiving proclamation in 1863. Friends and families were grieving. Cities were divided yet Lincoln still called the country to set apart a day for Thanksgiving and praise for our beneficent father



# Wednesday November 26, 2025

## Thanksgiving Eve

who dwelleth in the heavens. He recognized the pain, but he also insisted that we should remember God's goodness and asking people that we should acknowledge the gifts that we still have—shelter, food, the fruits of fruitful fields, and the hope that comes when we look beyond the current crisis.

Why bring up bread and Thanksgiving when the world feels chaotic? Because Thanksgiving is more than a day on our calendar. It's actually a way of living. We can call it Thanksliving, indeed. When things around us shake, when people disagree and jobs are uncertain and families feel vulnerable, Thanksgiving, Thanksliving anchors us. Jesus, our bread of life, helps us see that our center is not a political view or a bank balance, or even an image of a perfect family dinner. Our center is Christ who feeds our soul.

Let's look at some real-life moments in Scripture that help us trust this promise. Remember the Israelites and the wilderness. We heard a little bit about that in our Old Testament lesson. The Israelites, were scared and hungry and unsure, but God provided that manna from heaven, bread every morning. That bread was a daily gift, and it reminded the people that day by day, God was with them. And in the wilderness, when the future was uncertain, God gave them what they needed. Recall how Jesus fed the 5,000. It's the only miracle we have that's reported in every gospel. A crowd followed him not because they heard they had healed the sick and fed without authority, but they were tired and hungry. And a boy offers five loaves and two fish. And what does Jesus do? He blesses them. And this little offering became more than enough. Jesus took what the people had and he multiplied it.

So, Thanksgiving includes trusting that Jesus will take our small offerings, our time, our talent, our little acts of kindness, and use them for great good. Jesus is our bread of life. He not only is concerned about our physical hunger, he's the source of spiritual nourishment that will never die out. When we celebrate Thanksgiving with Jesus at the center at the table, we remember that our deepest needs are met by him, even in uncertain times. Jesus is steady. He's



# Wednesday November 26, 2025

## Thanksgiving Eve

the one who fills us with hope, not because circumstances are fixed, but because his presence is what's constant. Like we said, Thanksgiving is not just a meal. It's a way of life. How we celebrate Thanksgiving in the midst of social uncertainty. And we think about that now. How are we going to do that tomorrow with Jesus as the focus? And we remind ourselves of those concrete steps that we take. We remember what God has done. Gratitude is not a feeling. It's a practice. So, in my family, as we gather, we list three things that we are grateful for, thankful for. They can be small. Maybe it's just a warm bread, maybe bed. Maybe it's a friend who texted us, remembered us. Maybe it's a song that we listen to that puts a smile on our face. Naming blessings trains our heart to notice God's presence even when the headlines scream otherwise.

So, tomorrow, as we center our gatherings on Christ, right? Not perfection. Thanksgiving meals don't have to be perfect. And in honest conversations around the table can be more healing than imagining a picture-perfect meal. I'd share what we do, is I'm sure many of us do. We begin with a short prayer, or I'd share those quick memories of when God helped invite people to say the same of what they're grateful for. How you ever gone around the table and done that? It's a very uplifting experience. So, tomorrow at your table, tell your story of God's goodness in your life. We often underestimate how powerful our stories are, how our whole our testimony to someone else can be. Share what God has done recently in your life. Big or small, because stories build faith. And when others hear how God has provided in a hard season, it encourages them. Thanksgiving is, again, not just about what we are to feel, it's about proclaiming what God has done and trusting that He will keep His word to do more. There will be doubts. There will be pain that won't disappear simply because we've set one day aside and Lincoln knew that. He didn't pretend the war was over, but he modeled something important, gratitude as an act of faith. And when we practice gratitude rooted in Christ, it may not erase sorrow, but it refrains our relationship to sorrow. And we say that pain is maybe real, but God is still present. That kind of faith gives us courage to keep going.



# Wednesday November 26, 2025 Thanksgiving Eve

So, as we prepare for Thanksgiving, whether we're nervous or excited or a bit of both, let's make a choice. Let's choose to remember what we're grateful for. Let's choose to name our gifts. Let's choose to share our table. And let's choose to put Jesus at the center as bread of life. And when we do that, we will most likely experience how gratitude changes us more than our circumstances and that change is often the first step to take to real healing and wholeness. So tomorrow may you have a thankful heart and a generous table. Happy Thanksgiving.