

SOME THOUGHTS . . .

“Why is giving thanks so important to our Lord? I believe it demonstrates to Him that we recognize He is the Source of all things — praising Him for His rich kindness and acknowledging to Him that in His control there is purpose in every circumstance. Yes, it’s easy to say thank you for the blessing, but the ‘sacrifice of praise’ is to say thank you for all circumstances no matter the difficulty. Charles H. Spurgeon points us to the reason we can say thank you no matter what when he says,

‘When I can’t understand the finger of God,
I know I can always trust the heart of God.’” -John Maisel

“Many of the observances we associate with Christmas originally had little or nothing to do with the Messiah’s birth. * The ‘Yule’ tradition of lighting candles and burning logs belongs to Norse tradition. * Feasting, decorations or greenery, and exchanging gifts date back to the Romans or earlier. * Mistletoe, a plant sacred to the Druids, hung outside Viking homes as a sign of peace and welcome to strangers. * And Christmas cards—sent to friends and loved ones by . . . American families—date back only as far as 1843, when John Horsley designed and printed the first card . . .

“For the Christian, tradition and holiday festivity is an active expression of love and joy in the celebration of Jesus’ birth. But for those who do not know Him, those same holiday hallmarks too often are mocking reminders of the emptiness and futility of life apart from Christ.

“As we enjoy our Christmas holiday this year with friends, family, and loved ones, we would do well to take our cue from the Christmas traditions around us. * We should let the wishes of Christmas abundance remind us that Jesus came *‘that they might have life and might have it abundantly’* (John 10:10). * We should let the giving of gifts and cards remind us that the Son of Man came to serve and to *‘give His life a ransom for many’* (Mark 10:45). * Most important, we should let the desire for ‘peace on earth’ remind us that apart from the Prince of Peace, the heart of an individual cannot know true peace.

“This Christmas may all of us who know Him look beyond those wonderful and enjoyable outward festivities to the inner person of the heart, that we might touch the lives of those who truly need the Person of Christ in their Christmas—and their hearts.”

-Donald K. Campbell