

Five Sundays Before Christmas
Terre Haute Tribune-Star
November 25, 2017

Okay. Here we are. Thankful Thursday is over. All that's left is a hard piece of dressing and hopefully enough turkey for just one more sandwich. Black Friday is over. All that's left is the litter of the thousands of sale flyers. Hopefully no one was injured, tempers remained under control, and you didn't make a complete fool of yourself by knocking that pregnant lady and her little old grandmother to the ground so you could grab the last just-gotta-have item from the shelf. Small Business Saturday is in full swing as you read this, and Cyber Monday will dawn in about thirty-six hours. Whew. Makes me tired just writing about it.

So, here we go crashing into another holiday season. I'm not complaining, for I love Christmas. I love everything about it from the shopping to the baking to the decorating to the music to the friends and families that gather around the tree. The song is correct when it says, "It's the most wonderful time of the year."

But it's also the most stressful, exhausting, demanding, depressing, and difficult time of the year. I don't have to explain that to you, because I know you've all felt this way at least once or twice during December. I know I have.

But here's the thing about all of that that we tend to forget. Despite each of those demanding activities, one thing happens to us over and over again. It's the one thing that can plant peace and calmness in the midst of the chaos. The one thing that puts perspective in its proper place. The one thing that will define and redefine the reason we celebrate Christmas in the first place. The one thing that will happen to us five times between today and Christmas.

What is that one thing? It's called Sunday—and that means going to church. There are five times we can go to church to keep our feet grounded while our hearts soar heavenward. Five times we can go to church to bring focus to Christmas. Five times to gather with other Christians to celebrate the birth of our King. Five times to prepare ourselves for the big day.

From now to Christmas, let's get serious about Christmas. Let's prepare our hearts for the coming of the King. While we shop and bake and make what we hope is the perfect gift for those we love, let's use these five Sundays to reflect on the perfect gift our Savior. When we get overwhelmed at all we have to do and all we want to do but can't do because we don't have enough time, let's use these five Sundays to reflect on how the birth of Jesus changes our priorities: we want to make disciples, not gifts.

Five Sundays to prepare for the coming of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Five Sundays to worship His name. Five Sundays to worship, to sing, to praise, to hear God's Word spoken into your life.

Tomorrow is the first of the five Sundays. See you at church?