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## A Special Thanksgiving Day Message from Leah Fullman

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Human Resources



Thanksgiving has always been a special holiday in my family.

Everybody gathered at the family farm in Tennessee. It was a cozy white house my grandfather built. As the family grew, so did the house—he kept adding bedrooms and my grandmother decorated each one uniquely. The red room. The pink room. The purple room.

My grandparents were the most gracious of hosts. My grandmother prepared a magnificent feast, most of which was food from the farm.

Family came from everywhere—great uncles, second cousins twice removed, the crazy aunt, somebody’s college roommate who had nowhere else to go—you never knew who was coming or when they would wander in.

Not that it mattered. The door was never locked anyway. I don't think it was ever actually closed, to be honest. It swung to and fro all day as family members streamed in, calling "dibs" on their favorite bedroom, negotiating a trade if someone had already claimed their favorite room.

The day was a celebration of reunions. Every time someone walked through the door, everybody already in the house would shout their name. Rosanna! Jake! Luke! Every person was seen, was known, was loved.

But, around sunset, a brief calm settled over the house as the family gathered around a very large table.

The evening was a celebration of provision and covenant. My grandfather prayed over every person there, grateful they came to his table. He offered both physical sustenance and spiritual nourishment, inviting everybody into a deeper relationship with God and each other.

As lovely as my grandparents' farmhouse was on Thanksgiving, it is a mere glimpse of the beauty that awaits us in our Heavenly Father's home.

Jesus has promised us:

*"There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am" (John 14: 2-3).*

At my grandparents' farm, we never knew who was going to turn up. Cousins would arrive with their roommate in tow, or a new person from church with no family nearby would come over. We had a saying, "There's always room for one more." If we ran out of beds, we slept on sofas and floors. If the table was full, we squeezed in another chair.

But, at God's House, He is preparing a place for you.

Let that sink in. Over 100 billion people have ever lived on planet Earth, and yet, you are known. God is preparing a place specifically for you. He's not going to find space for you if you happen to wander in with your roommate. He is expecting you. You belong at His Table.

There is a genuine peace I feel knowing that I belong in God's Home and at His Table.

However, I also know that I don't have to wait until I enter our Heavenly Father's home to feel that sense of belonging.

I belong to God's Church.

I belong to Pepperdine.

Pepperdine welcomes everyone to the table because every student, faculty, and staff member is known, is seen, is loved.

As we enter this holiday season, I pray that each of you feels the love of the Father, and I pray that you remember you belong to God, you belong to the Church, and you belong to Pepperdine.

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