

I have been asked by many people on various occasions, “*Pastor, what are you preaching on this Sunday?*” My response to them, every single time, is “*Jesus*”. They usually give me a smile and sometimes a follow up question, “*I mean, what scripture/text are you preaching on?*” Some people give the impression that of course I am preaching on Jesus, but others are surprised by my response, which troubles me. Why would that be a surprise?

I have attended “funerals” (and I put funeral in quotes because it was anything but that) in which the star of the show was the deceased, with no mention of Jesus whatsoever. As I sat there, agonizing over the fact that people were not getting what they needed, I had to resist the urge to either get up and leave or get up and take over the preaching. What people need is Jesus and for a pastor to fail to deliver Jesus is nothing other than irresponsible and unfaithful. Jesus is what I strive to give you.

As I write this, I am still stinging from the most recent funeral I attended (Just ask my confirmation class. They heard the full story). My heart still aches for those who were/are mourning. The person presiding, instead of preaching the Gospel, gave a eulogy filled with stories about the deceased and ended by grossly twisting scripture. I was angry, saddened, grieved and a whole host of other emotions. People need Jesus even when they want something/one else. Kids may want cake, candy, chocolate, cookies, etc for supper, but any responsible parent knows that is not what they need. They need healthy food with the occasional feel-good food. Good parents give their children what they need.

I write this because sometimes Jesus gets lost in the shuffle, especially at Christmas. There are presents to buy, a house to clean and decorate, cookies to bake and travel plans to be made. All of this is fine and dandy, but do not forget Jesus. When I think of past Christmases, I cannot remember many of the gifts I have received (actually, I am struggling to remember any specific gift). But, as I think of past Christmases, I can remember Jesus. If I may quote a cliché, **Jesus is the gift that keeps on giving**. He never gets old, wears out or falls apart. Jesus never becomes obsolete, old fashioned or dilapidated. Jesus is always and forever and that is who you truly need. What am I preaching on this Christmas?”
Do you really need to ask? 😊

Jesus, always Jesus!