

Knowing Jesus: Our Signature!

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A noun, we use our signature to sign our name. Music has a time signature and a key signature. A signature gives identity. An adjective, as in a chef's signature dish, a writer's signature style, a singer's signature song. Preachers have signature sermons.

About 25 years ago, an eldership invited me to visit with them as a first step toward possibly becoming the preaching minister for that church. I sent the requisite cassette tapes, sharing favorite sermons. On the Sunday I visited the church, I preached one of my signature sermons. That evening as I met with the elders, one elder commented, "It seems that all you ever preach about is Jesus." (I did not accept the job!)

I wish I could say that my signature message has always been Jesus. I fear it was not so in my early ministry. But for the past 45 years, my signature message has firmly focused on this polar north star--the mission of God in this world is made visible through Jesus, God's eternal purpose to bring everything under the Lordship of Jesus in His Kingdom, the church, empowered by his indwelling presence. The message is Jesus—who he is, what he does, the importance of knowing Jesus. The preeminence of Christ is the core of faith.

I am on a lifelong pursuit of Jesus, to understand and explain his splendor, majesty, and grandeur. Jesus is my mission in life. The Good News of Jesus must be the center of faith, the center of what we do and why we do it. The saving work of God through Jesus Christ, pointing to the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose, is a mission bigger than any of us. God's is the grandest purpose ever imagined. All else pales in comparison.

Too often, sermons fail to shine the spotlight on Jesus. Even if such sermons are helpful, they are a shadow. Preaching great Bible truths begins with Jesus, can never omit Jesus. Preachers, preach Jesus! God's message powerfully alters life—my life, your life, and the lives of all in the world who faithfully follow him.

Let us be a church that is desperately in love with Jesus, a church that hangs on his every word, a church whose whole being is infused with his presence. A church that constantly talks about Jesus, a church that is focused on Jesus's purpose, a church that exalts and honors him. A church that believes Jesus, seeks to belong only to Jesus, and is becoming more and more like Jesus!