

Sermon Title: Jesus, a far better Santa! 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

What do we know about Santa?

- "He sees you when you're sleeping... He knows when you're awake... He knows when you've been bad or good... So be good for goodness sake!"
- "He's making a list... He's checking it twice... He's going to find out who's naughty and nice... Santa Claus is coming to town!"

How should we respond to this information about Santa?

- "We better watch out... We better not cry... We better not pout... I'm telling you why, Santa Claus is coming to town!"

I don't know if this song is the best source of information about Santa, but I do know that the Bible is the best source of information about Jesus, the true reason for this season! And let me tell you, **Jesus is a far better Santa!**

Jesus truly does see us when we are sleeping... & He knows when we're awake... **Because He is seated at the right hand of God in heaven!**

Jesus knows when we've been bad or good... He is God, & beyond that, **He lives to make intercession for us...** His death & resurrection covers our sin!

It is not our goodness that brings gifts into our lives (Santa), it is Christ's goodness, His perfection, that bestows gifts... heavenly, eternal, gifts to us!

God really does have "a list" & He truly does "check it twice"... **Once to declare our guilt, twice to declare Jesus Christ's righteous payment for it!**

God knows that we've been more naughty than nice... But thankfully, **Jesus Christ has already come to town!** He has already gone to the cross for us!

This is the story of God's love! **"For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."** This is the good news of Christmas... it's true meaning!

Today we wrap up our study in 1 Corinthians... but we also kick start our new advent sermon series titled **"The Gifts That Keep Giving!"**

No one seems to mind that we start celebrating Christmas early, so today we're going to start advent a week early w/ **the lighting of the "love" candle.**

Love is certainly a gift that God keeps on giving... but it's also a gift we can give!

Vs. 13-14 - "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." These are final words from Paul...

Before we dive into these 2 verses, let's go back to the Santa song... In response to who he is, what should our response be? *"We better watch out... We better not cry... We better not pout... because Santa Claus is coming to town!"*

We are to be watchful because there is something to be lost/gained... gifts! We are to be strong (not cry) b/c there is something to be lost/gained... gifts! We are to be courageous (not pout) b/c there is something to be lost/gained...

Since Santa Claus is coming to town, we need to be on our best behavior! But what about the fact that Jesus Christ is coming to town again... Response?

We are to **"be watchful"**... So that we will be found faithful when He comes!

We are to **"stand firm in the faith"** – We must not waver from **the truth!**

We are to **"act like men/women"** – Be image bearers of God (creation mandate)!

We are to **"be strong"** – People who give to others out of our **abundance!**

"Let all that you do be done in love!" - In all things, we are to give the gift of love, because the greatest of these... **1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13 is love!**

Amidst this Santa-saturated, wish-list focused, what's-in-it-for-me holiday season... Give the gift of love, out of the abundance you have in Christ!

- **Love is patient...** How can you love with patience? _____
- **Love is kind...** How can you love with kindness? _____
- **Love does not envy...** _____
- **Love does not boast...** _____
- **Love is not arrogant...** _____
- **Love is not rude...** _____
- **Love does not insist on its own way...** _____
- **Love is not irritable...** _____
- **Love is not resentful...** _____
- **Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth...** _____
- **Love bears all things...** _____
- **Love believes all things...** _____
- **Love hopes all things...** _____
- **Love endures all things...** _____
- **Love never ends...** So give this gift, b/c it is a gift that keeps on giving!

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