

Tonight, I would like to preach about the celebration of Halloween. I know I've preached it before. It's been 3 years, believe it or not.

Some Christians would strongly disagree with my perspective on this subject, and with what I am prepared to preach about it. I think that the reason for that is that many preachers have jumped on the bandwagon, and have prohibited their congregations from participating in it in any way.

Halloween is dark, and a little spooky, and it has questionable roots, and the safe bet is to just not do it. But can I tell you something? I've never been one to play it safe when it comes to preaching! I guess that might be hereditary. And when it comes to what everyone else is preaching, I'm not all that interested.

In fact, I think most preachers preach the word of God. The bigger problem is that most of them don't preach enough of it! But with this subject, many preachers seem to have a preoccupation with it, and I think they completely miss common sense, and they take something that ought to be fun, especially for kids, and replace it with guilt and conviction.

Tonight, I will preach "Taking the fear out of Halloween."

(PRAYER)

Let me start out by reading a Pseudo-quote to you. It's actually several quotes morphed together that reflect the strongest arguments against the celebration of Halloween:

"Halloween is a celebration that has its' dark roots to the ancient druids. They believe Sam Hane, the lord of death sent evil spirits abroad to attack humans who could only escape by wearing disguises and looking like evil spirits themselves. The approaching dark winter made the evil spirits rejoice and play nasty tricks. Today, Halloween is embraced by witches and other evil practitioners and is the #1 day of the year for spirit worship. When Christian parents allow their children to dress up and participate in Halloween celebrations, they are opening them up to fellowshiping with these evil spirits. Christians must never have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, and therefore it is a sin and dangerous for Christians to have anything to do with Halloween."

Oh, maybe not word for word, but has anyone else heard it before? That's it a sin to carve pumpkins or let your kids trick or treat? It's pretty convincing when you first hear it, isn't it?

I mean, here we are as Christians, saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, and then a person up to you, or comes to the pulpit and starts talking about evil spirits, and they name them by name and they obviously know more about the subject than you do, and it can be intimidating. In the end, you conclude that they must be right.

You want to do the right thing, and you know you hear from your mother or brother, or some other church that they are saying it's bad, and you start to think, maybe I should just stay away from it?

The way some tell it, God despises Halloween and you and your children are flirting with the powers of darkness. If you keep going, those spirits may get a foothold in your life, because you've compromised your faith and you are taking part in this abomination. It has become a hot button topic.

We want to live upright before God, and for years we thought that it was just innocent fun, but now somebody has come along and now we begin to doubt. So what is a Christian to do?

Well, let me start out by saying, I don't even consider Halloween to be a holiday. We might call it one, just to identify it, but the actual origin of the word is Holy Day which would at least imply that it has it has special meaning or recognizes a significant historical event. It's a day or memorial or commemoration for something important.

July 4th, we celebrate the birth of our nation, I give thanks to God for my freedom and the price that has been paid for them. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of our Savior and the gift of eternal life to the entire world. Halloween isn't ANY of that. It doesn't commemorate anything special, and it holds no significant value at least not for the Christian.

I would call it an event, not a holiday. But you something? That doesn't mean it isn't a WHOLE LOT OF FUN! When I think back to my childhood, I would say that some of the best memories of my life are connected with the costumes, and running around the neighborhood getting candy, and the good that comes out of the pumpkins, and the hay rides and everything that goes along with the celebration. Those are among my very best memories.

I loved it. Absolutely LOVED it. But now the question becomes, now that I am grown, and now that I am spiritually matured, do I regret it?

And my answer is, regret it? I wished I could do it again! I wished you could shrink me back down, and I had the energy to run around the neighborhood, and beg for candy and the stomach to eat it all without throwing up! The only thing I regret is when people put apples in the bag. Otherwise, I don't regret any of it.

I wished more people and more preachers would ask themselves this question, because most of them had a blast trick or treating when they were kids! A lot fewer preachers would preach against it if they asked themselves and answer honestly, do you regret it?!

You say but you are a preacher, you should be warning people, and I say folks, God is bigger than Halloween. And whether or not Halloween is good or evil depends on how you handle it. I've said many times before there are very few things that are inherently good or bad.

I can take a rifle and put it in the hands of a soldier and that rifle becomes a tool use to defend the innocent and defend freedom, or I can place that same gun in the hands of criminal and it could be used as a tool for evil.

I can take an automobile, a car, and use that car to get people to church and use it for good. Or I can use it as a getaway car in a robbery. A car is neither good or evil.

Most anything you can name can be used for good, or they can be used for evil.

So what about this Halloween thing. Let me start out by saying that I am in agreement with the anti-Halloween participation crowd, that Christians should not have any fellowship with darkness. It says in Deut 18-

¹⁰ There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, that's speaking of child sacrifices. or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.

¹¹ Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD

The fact that God hates child sacrifice should go without saying. But also, there are many other occult activities that Christians should not be participating in. That includes, Ouija boards, séances, palm reading, fortune telling, crystal balls, tarot card, witchcraft anything dealing with the occult, Christians are to stay far, far from those things.

As a Christian and as a preacher, I will not defend any of those practices. The reason people seek dark spirits, is because they are seeking some kind of advantage or some spiritual insight, but when you go to the powers of darkness and the occult, you are literally making a deal with the devil to do so. And when you deal with the devil, you will never come out ahead.

It will always be a negative transaction. It will cost you dearly and may end up costing you soul. But I would hope, that you would not let your celebration of Halloween go that way. I hope you have better sense than that. If you do any of that, you have bigger problems than trick or treat.

But now, dressing up as a super hero, or carving a jack-o-lantern, and going around and saying trick or treat and getting candy is not the same, no matter how hard somebody tries to join the two together.

The celebration of Halloween by the Christian should never include, witchcraft, séances or the occult in any fashion.

You know a few years ago, my daughter carved a pumpkin that looked exactly like Barak Obama. It was incredible! I didn't see it at first, but as soon as I got it, it was like WOW!

And you know, we lit a fire in it and put it out, but let me tell you something, we didn't put it out to ward off evil spirits! We put it out there and said, "Wow, this is fun! It looks like the president! How cool is that!"

If you want to throw out jack-o-lanterns because they MIGHT be connected with a pagan practice to ward off evil spirits, then you need to be consistent.

You also need to throw out the Mistletoe, and the Holly, and throw out Poinsettias and throw out the Christmas tree for the same reason. Our current Christmas traditions have MUCH DARKER roots and they are not conjecture; they are documented. That's to be on the safe side. But like I said, I'm not here to preach on the safe side.

I'm here to preach freedom in Jesus Christ, not bind people with legalism and bad doctrine. I'm showing restraint by the way. I haven't even expressed how silly I think the other crowd is.

We didn't do it to ward off evil spirits! We did it because it was fun! And I put up garland at Christmas time because it looks pretty! Do you see the difference?

I have 7 reasons why, I think it's OK for Christians to celebrate Halloween, if they want to.

First, the #1 argument that the anti-celebration crowd has against Halloween is the origin of Halloween. Most of the opponents of Halloween will tell you with 100% certainty that it has its' roots in Wiccan worship and ancient European Pagan practices including witchcraft, and child sacrifice.

The reality is, it might have happened, but did you know there is not one shred of evidence that it ever did actually happen! Historians cannot corroborate those claims. All the claims are made by Wiccan (practicing witches though they take offense to being described that way) have all surfaced in relatively modern times. But there is no actual evidence, no real documentation to actually support that.

There is no written records, because druid didn't keep written records. What is being claimed now is mostly a matter of conjecture. Everything that is said is based on legends and myths.

We can't say today with any certainty what the ancient druids were doing 1500 years ago. There is no evidence to reveal anything.

However, it IS a documented historical fact that the origin of the name Halloween comes from "All Hallows Eve" that comes from an event that the church started to celebrate, and remember Christian Saints that have died. That happened back in the 700's and even the date, October 31st was chosen. The very next day, November 1, was "All Saints Day." That is documented history!

So I one side, you have the Wiccans claiming that October 31st belonged to them first, but the evidence shows it just is likely the other way around. The Wiccans claimed that the church hijacked their holiday, but it may be that the Wiccan stole it from the church, but really- we don't know for sure.

So the people who oppose Halloween claim it comes from very evil roots, may believe it, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's true. We just don't know for sure. That means the very foundation of the argument against Halloween is based on conjecture, not evidence.

#2 Reason that I think it's OK to participate in Halloween is that even if it "Might" have Pagan roots, which I am not conceding it does, "Who cares?"

You know, when I was a kid, I didn't know anything about Samhein, I never heard of a druid, I knew what a witch was because I saw the Wizard of Oz, all I knew is I wanted to go out and get candy! I was in it for the candy.

It didn't matter to me. Now one would say, "But it matters to God." Even if there is a chance that it has its' origins in darkness and even it just might be centered around ancient witchcraft or spirit worship, shouldn't we just avoid it? Shouldn't we just not participate? If there is any possibility, should we just not avoid the whole celebration all together? Let me read something to you. I'm reading 1 Cor 10 starting in verse 25, I'm reading the amplified version...

25 [As to meat offered to idols]

Paul is talking about meat, he's talking about food. Wouldn't you agree that meat offered to idols comes from a very dark origin? It comes from a wicked past. We're talking about food that would have been sacrificed to a false god, actually sacrificed to a demon.

[As to meat offered to idols] eat anything that is sold in the meat market without raising any question *or* investigating on the grounds of conscientious scruples,

26 For the [whole] earth is the Lord's and everything that is in it.

Paul said, when it comes to a piece of meat, if it's good meat eat it. Don't even ask where it came from.

Now if you back up earlier in the chapter, Paul describes how such a meat would come to into actually being sacrifice to idols. He says, now clearly don't take part in any ceremony that would bring recognition or honor to these false gods or demons. But if down the line, you come across a good piece of meat, honestly, then enjoy it.

You know the Bible doesn't say anything about Halloween. So we need to make some comparisons and use a little common sense.

If a group of witches went down to mosquito lake or the fairgrounds, and had a ceremony and practiced witchcraft down there casting spells and boiling bat wings, on October 31, don't go there! You are a Christian, you don't belong there!

But you see, the parallel lesson here is where something comes from doesn't matter. What matters is what it means to you!

26 For the [whole] earth is the Lord's and everything that is in it.

He goes on to explain further-

27 In case one of the unbelievers invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is served to you without examining into its source because of conscientious scruples.

He said when an unbelieving neighbor invites you to a meal, when he invites you to a cookout, a birthday party, GO! Eat whatever they put in front of you and don't even ask where it came from.

This was very radical to the Jews. You see, if they were going to cross ethnic and cultural barriers, they had to get past whether something was lawful for them to eat or not. They had to get past the fact that something might have been offered at an earlier time to idols. They had to get past the fact that there might have been pork chops on the menu.

Then in verse 31-

31 So then, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you may do, do all for the honor *and* glory of God.

If you want to let your kid dress up as Cinderella or Batman, and go around the neighborhood and get candy, then go ahead and do it. Don't even examine where the custom came from. You can still do it with God's blessing. Whatever you do, do unto the Lord.

We don't need to isolate ourselves from the world, nor should we.

#3 Reason, that I think it's OK to enjoy Halloween, is because if Christians don't do it, who will? Who is that going to leave? What I'm saying is that if

Christians don't participate, we won't be taking a stand against it. We'll just be isolating ourselves. We will actually be creating a division from the people we are called to actually witness to. These are the very people that we need to evangelize!

Why else would Paul agree that it is OK to eat a meal that had been sacrificed to idols with an unbeliever, if it isn't so that we can witness to them?! It's so that by doing so, he can find some common ground with them.

Paul says,

I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

Paul says, we need to rub elbows with these people so that we can reach them, so that we can share the plan of salvation. If you want to become an effective witness, you might want to try to fit it in a little bit. You think about this, *you have families, you have neighbors, all walking up and down the street, and they are walking right up to your house!*

They are all walking right up to your door! You have a tremendous opportunity, to meet people! You have the opportunity to show people kindness. You have the opportunity to show people that Christians aren't weird! Or at least not that weird. We're not bizarre. We're not mean, we're not judgmental, or any of the other things people might say about us!

I don't know that there is a better chance all year to really meet your neighbors! People will come up who you might never, ever talk to otherwise.

Or you are going around the neighborhood with your kids. You know what? You can introduce yourself. Compliment the kids on the costumes. Give them a bigger candy bar than anyone else on the street! Show them kindness! And you know what else? You can do all that, and say God bless you when it's over!

It is a tremendous opportunity to shine your light for Christ. But not if you aren't home. And the lights are off, and there ain't no jack-o-lanterns on your porch! It completely defies logic.

Now we have many churches that now offer a Halloween alternative. They get the kids to the church, they even put on costumes sometimes, they load

them up with candy and they call it something else! Let me ask you something.

Who are you fooling?

You wouldn't be having the party if it weren't for Halloween! And if celebrating Halloween automatically associate you with the devil, then I say this.

I've been practicing a Halloween alternative for my entire life! Ever since I was a little kid, I've never celebrated anything that brought me into fellowship or communion with the devil. I've trick or treated many times, and stays saved every time.

I put on costumes, carved pumpkins, went out for candy and not one time did I ever consort with witches or demons in doing so. When my kids were small, I helped them put on costumes, we went around, and I never had to consort with demons to get candy. In fact, my neighbors were just handing it out! And we got lots of candy.

We have these Halloween alternatives in the church. Are we telling our kids that they are missing out on something? You have a Halloween alternative, who shows up? You can invite every kid in the neighborhood but the only ones that will show up are the church kids!

The rest of the kids are going trick or treating! And what you do is effectively remove Christians from their neighborhoods, and isolate them. They're all walking past your house wondering why it's dark and why you ain't handing out candy!

It is the perfect time, to get to know your neighbors and even shine your light for Christ.

#4. I want to address the argument against Halloween, is that there really isn't much that's Christian about it. It's true. There isn't much that is Christian about the celebration of Halloween. There is practically nothing that is inherently Christian about Halloween or Trick or treat.

I admit, I do not sit around thinking about dead Saints. There is not much Christian, but does that mean that we still can't enjoy it?

I will remind you, there is not much inherently Christian about checkers. Not the regular kind, or the Chinese kind. There is nothing inherently Christian about football, or family appropriate TV, or old cars, or Disney World, or fishing. There is nothing Christian about any of these things. These are all called entertainment.

Now of course, we can take any of these things too far, but God put us in this world, and it's all right for us to enjoy life. And we can thank God, for bringing good things into that life.

There may not be much Christian about Halloween, but we can thank God for it any way! We can thank God, for the fun, and thank God for the Children, we can thank God for the neighbors, and the treats, and the memories and the laughter! We can thank God for the Christian fellowship that we have with other believers who aren't afraid of Halloween. We can thank God for his goodness as we enjoy all the celebrations and good times in life!

#5 Even if it a special day, that has special significance for witches, I am not a witch. I am not a Warlock. I am not a Satanic priest. When it comes to the celebration of Halloween, I am a kid. I have always been a kid, I am a big kid. And like all kids, I am in it for the candy. I am a child. I am a child of God!

And there is no reason I should look at any date on the calendar, and be afraid of that date! I will not cower in fear of October 31st.

2 Tim 1:7 ⁷ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

I don't need to be afraid of anything.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

I'm certain that Satan has his talons in Halloween and he wants his place in it. He's out to get a foothold, but that's nothing new! Satan has always been out to take territory that doesn't belong to him. Why should we Christians retreat?

What's wrong with us, taking back that territory that he has stolen from us? What's wrong with taking it back? October 31st does not belong to Satan.

This is the day that the Lord has made. October 31 does not belong to the devil, and I got no interest in giving it to him.

#6 Is because kids love it. And you can poll 10 kids or 1,000 kids on why they love Halloween, and **not one** of them will say-

"I love Halloween because it's a celebration of the death god Samhein..."

Not one of them will cite that reason. In fact, I did a very scientific study and found out that 100% of children like costumes. And 200% like candy. Did you know that?

(And did you know that 79% of statistics are made up?)

Well, I never met a kid that didn't like candy. The candy is fun. The hay rides are fun. The costumes are fun. And even the scary stuff is fun! We're talking good times! Children are having a blast. Children love Halloween!

What child doesn't want to dress up and run around the neighborhood, pretending to be a Pirate or a princess or whatever they want to be just for a couple hours! What child doesn't want to stick their hand inside a slimy pumpkin?

I saw a kid one time stick his head in a slimy pumpkin. That was Samuel. Good times, good good times. Kids love Halloween. And in all my years, I've never known a single child, not once, not ever, get demon possessed because their parents let them put on a costume and go trick or treating. NOT ONCE! Never seen it happen.

#7 But I do know a few children that never went trick or treating. They never put on a costume. They never went trick or treating. They never carved a pumpkin. Went you went past their house on trick or treat night, it was dark. There was no candy being passed out.

I know kids that were never allowed to participate in trick or treat or Halloween and now that they are grown, they resent it! Some years, they got to go to the Halloween alternative. They dressed up as Bible characters. Imagine that. 50 kids in bath robes & flip flops. Which Bible Character are you? All of them. Look just the rest of the kids, all the same. Fun, fun fun.

I know I'm having fun with the but the outcome is very serious. I know several people right now that are pretty far out in the far country.

I'm saying this. Don't take away their childhood. Let them have fun. Let them enjoy the Grace of God as they create memories in their lives. When you start taking away Trick or Treat, you start taking away Santa Clause, you start getting heavy handed, you will push them away. When they grow up, they aren't going to want much to do with the faith that you are offering them.

And don't let anybody else weight you down. Don't let anybody else burden you with their convictions. If I'm going to ere as a pastor, I'm going to ere on the side of Grace. I know this, nobody has ever been saved by the law. Nobody has ever been saved by legalism. Nobody has ever been saved by fanaticism but everybody I know needs the grace of God.

Every single person who is saved is saved by grace. In Col 2 Paul says-

¹⁶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

If you want to dress up your child in a costume, go ahead.

If you want to put on a costume yourself, go ahead.

If you want to out with them and get a whole pillow case full of candy, that's fine.

If you want to carve a pumpkin, that's great. **So then, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you may do, do all for the honor *and* glory of God.**

And I'll only add one thing. Have fun.