

LUM SUNDAY DEVOTIONAL
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A HALLOWEEN SPECIAL! NO TRICKS—ONLY TREATS!

BLESSED THOUGHTS: “WHY DO KIDS ENJOY HALLOWEEN?”

Some “super-believers” believe that Halloween is a bad thing to celebrate, that somehow it’s a devilish festival. Meh! My home church in Pennsylvania actually sponsors a Trick or Treat on the Truck in the Church Parking Lot where all kids in the church’s neighborhood can get a ton of goodies from the tailgate of a truck (all the candy is donated by members). The kids enjoy this, and it’s a much safer way of getting their loot than going door to door. When I googled “Bible verses for Halloween” I got the fundamentalist warning that Halloween isn’t a Christian festival at all, but a Druid observance! Again: Not Really True! Sure, the ancient church did take over a common European folk observance called “Night of the Dead” and substituted a mass called “All Saints Day” to remember all their loved ones who had recently died. But that was a good idea. In fact, I used to do the same thing in my churches: we’d light candles in remembrance of our loved ones to remind us they live in the light of God—on the other side of the Cross!

ROMANS 14:9

9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

So, why do kids (and their parents and grandparents enjoy this holiday? I can think of three reasons. We all love to pretend, and especially we like to be pretend we’re like our heroes. When I was a kid, I always liked to dress up as a cowboy. Roy Rogers, the Lone Ranger, Hopalong Cassidy—they were good role models, both on the screen and in real life. Now my grandkids love to dress up as Lord-knows-what—but their Nana still can whip up their costumes just from pictures on the internet (I gave up on her fixing my parka). I always spend a day before Halloween helping my daughter set up her front yard with lights, spooky moving spiders, a giant spider web, and all kinds of Halloween stuff, just to make the day special for her and for all the kids who come. She has not always had an easy life, but—in her own words—“Here’s One Thing I can Go All Out On.”

True, Satan also likes to pretend!

2 CORINTHIANS 11:14

14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

Yeah, well, Satan is also very good at quoting Scripture. Satan did so three times when s/he tempted Jesus Christ. Should we, then, stop reading the Bible at home or in our churches, just because Satan did? Nah...

Well, but some people feel “uneasy” about Halloween because it may have had a pre-Christian past. Well, that turns out to be a long list, stuff that had a pre-Christian past, like mistletoe at Christmas, the Yule Log, New Year’s Eve fire crackers (the Chinese came up with that one), kissing the bride (don’t ask), the Easter Bunny and Easter baskets, Mother’s Day (grew out of a Confederate Mother’s Society after the American civil war) yet my Sunday School always handed out flowers on that Sunday anyway), etc. When you get told that Halloween is wrong, remember:

TITUS 1:15

15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.

I think another reason Halloween pops every year is that it’s a safe place to confront our fears. Even grownups need that. That’s why one of my favorite Cable TV channels runs scary movies all month in October. My childhood friends and I all freaked out the first time we saw “House of Wax in 3-D at our local theater. We knew it would scare us, but we went anyhow. I’m amazed our screams didn’t shatter the

light bulbs! But what are we all most afraid of? The Dark? Monsters? Spiders? Death? Old people (my age) live in fear of falling (I saw what a bad fall did to my Dad.) About getting scared with ghost stories (my kids' Grade 2 Teacher made me tell her class The Story of Chicken Heart every year because her kids enjoyed being scared – but in a safe place! Now childhood anxiety is perhaps the number one mental health problem in our day, and—if left untreated it can go on to substance abuse—and worse. I think we try to protect our kids too much, instead of helping them face their fears with our support and in a safe way.

But it's just not the children who need this. 365 times the Bible tells us to not be afraid because we have a God! That's one verse for every day in the year. Let's focus in one these promises:

JOSHUA 1:9

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

PSALM 23:4

4 Even though I walk through the darkest [literally, the shadow of death] valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

PSALM 27:1

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?

So there—have a safe and blessed October 31st, whatever that day means to you and yours. And let this special blessing remind you that there's an Age to Come in which there is no more darkness, no more fear, only Light and Good! That's the Third Reason: The Ultimate Treat, ETERNAL LIFE, handed out at Heaven's Door! And if God can hand out goodies like that at Heaven's s Door, we can, too, at ours!

CONCLUDING BLESSING, FROM ROMANS 8:

38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.