

Trick or Truth: All Hallows' Eve

Announcements:

- Church in the park - recap and thankful (hope you all did okay finding us!) - **purpose!**
- Family Camp - final reminder, details, **sign up: BY TOMORROW!**
- Voting Coming Up - **Mid terms** a big deal. (person, lesser of evils, platform, policy, public websites: abortion, gender affirming, sexuality, marriage, etc - **if politics stays in lane**. but **becomes spiritual**, we must speak into it... **(Bible speaks to all!)** Texas becoming **a swing state... many moved here, why? Radical Islam/France ...watch out for wolves in sheep's clothing...** (will share **more specifics next Sunday, Nov. 1st...**) **Civic Duty, Sovereignty of God**
- Baby Dedication - (3rd Service)
 - Parent Names: Garrett and Haley Alton
 - Child's Name: **Wyatt Alton** (10 mo old)

We teach expositional (**finished Jude!**) but we're **taking a break for two weeks** (**timely!**)

- **Unique... Historical!**

2-part series title: **"Hallowed Holidays?"** (question mark = **intentional!**) **10/25 and 11/1...**

- **Catholic roots**, Protestant Reforms, and other pagan/western influences. **Compass spinning!**

Next Week: **The Saints' Communion: All Saints' Day Corporate Communion**

- (**All Souls' Day**) connected to **Day of the dead** in central/south america (**Catholic infused!**)
- **Allhallowtide: Three in one...** (**All Saints' Day; All Souls' Day; All Hallows Eve...**)

This Week: **Trick or Truth: All Hallows' Eve...** (**most time spent on Reformation Day!**)

Every year, **on October 31st**, you can expect...

- From church harvest festivals: house decorating, pumpkin carving; to drunken sex parties; haunted houses; gory images; and in the midst... innocent kids dressing up for fun and candy...
- **Trick or Treat: A simple Q:** give me something good, or something unpleasant may happen!

Goal: historical truths (not **viral rumors**). (**fact check me, yourself, later...**)

Legalistics & licentiousness, aiming to **offend both of you!**

(**All five on one slide please**)

- **The Eve: Roots of All Hallows' Eve...**
- **The Door: The Reformation on Oct 31st...**
- **The Truth: What Luther Helped Restore...**
- **The Tricks: Halloween Facts & Fiction...**
- **The Light: How to Respond Righteously...**

Hallow = "holy, set apart, consecrated, saint" (**All Hallows = All Saints**). **Even** = "evening" ("**All Hallows' Even**" shortens to "**Hallowe'en**") - **find it interesting the name itself has the word Holy in it, really?**

- **Matthew 6:9** - "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, **Hallowed be Your name.**"
- **Tension:** two reputations (one Christian; one cultural) (**a hodge podge casserole!**)

Anchor text:

- 1 Thess. 5:21-22 - "Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil."
- Context: Mainly addressing prophetic speech & Christian living, but broader principle applies!

Pray

The Eve: Roots of All Hallows' Eve...

All Saints' Day - The church remembered the faithful saints/martyrs. (details next week...)

- Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox (late spring), Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, some Reformed churches (though vary in theology and practice)

A holy evening. In ancient times and the middle ages, holy days began at evening (Gen 1:5 - "...the evening and the morning were the first day"; (vigils & eves) Christmas Eve works the same way...

A little history as to how we got here:

- (All on one slide please)
- c. AD 155 — Polycarp martyred in Smyrna; his church remembers him yearly
- AD 303–311 — Diocletian's persecution; too many martyrs to name one by one
 - so a common day was needed (later in the 300s, Ephrem the Syrian and John Chrysostom mention a feast of all the martyrs...)
- AD 609/610 — Rome's Pantheon rededicated to Mary and all the martyrs (Pope Boniface IV)
 - **Image: Pantheon in Rome**: (pan = "all," theos = "gods") - A pagan temple to the Roman gods; later consecrated to Mary and the Martyrs.
- AD 731–741 — Pope Gregory III sets November 1 for all saints (Old St. Peter's Basilica)
- AD 830s — All Saints' Day observed across the Western church (still to this day)
 - Already kept in England and Germany by about 800, then spread across the West!
 - Eve = All Hallows' Eve - a mass service to celebrate the "holy ones"... (OG = Hallow!)

Now Biblically Speaking...

- Psalms 116:15 - "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints..."
- Pair with Rev 6:9-11 "Martyrs" and Hebrews 11 "Hall of Faith" ...
- Hebrews 12:1-2 - "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..."
- In this regard, Protestants and Catholics agree; However...

Every believer is a saint. Mention briefly... (save full treatment for next week...)

- 1 Corinthians 1:2 - "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints..." (same w/ Romans, Ephesians, and Philippians intros...)

The drift: from remembering to relying... (save full treatment for next week...)

- Generally, Catholics venerate (revere/honor) saints and ask them to pray for us.
- Protestants revere the saints as examples of faith but pray only to God through Christ...
- 1 Timothy 2:5 - "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."

- The danger is not in remembering; but it is in relying... (a different gospel (Gal. 1:6-9))

The Door: The Reformation on October 31, 1517... (catch the date!?)

The man: Martin Luther! - portrait of Luther - anyone have or want that haircut?

- Originally Luder (made a vow to St. Anne after a terrifying thunderstorm) (Augustinian Friar (AKA: Catholic Monk)) - spent years trying to earn peace with God but struggled to find it... He was a professor of Scripture in Wittenberg, Germany - the story is building!

The spark.

- Portrait of Pope Leo X - Went on a religious fundraising campaign to help rebuild:
- St. Peter's Basilica - Vatican City, Rome - traditional burial site of St. Peter. OG Constantine
- Big problem: funded through indulgences.
- Image of Indulgence certificate (ripping off the poor ("Council of Trent" ended the selling)
 - Purgatory - purification after death for those who die in God's grace but still owe temporal punishment for sins already forgiven.
 - An indulgence reduces or cancels that punishment, granted from the "treasury of merit" of Christ and the saints, in return for prayers, pilgrimages, good works, or donations - for oneself or a loved one.
- I reject this! (2 Cor. 5:8 - absent from body, present with Lord) - More next week on this...
- Back to the 16th century (Johann Tetzel image) - A Dominican friar - "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." (attributed) Like hot cakes! Merit based...

The Castle Church

- Image: Castle Church in Wittenberg - Door not OG; Luther buried! Dedicated: All Saints'
- The issue: Relics! (17,000+ (said to include straw from the manger, a thorn from His crown, and vials of Mary's milk) - displayed around All Saints' Day!
- Pilgrims who venerated these relics and gave offerings could earn more indulgences...
- None remain today; we know them from Cranach's 1509 catalog (St. Christopher image!).
- Back to 1517, Luther's timing was intentional...

The 95 Theses.

- The date for certain: October 31, 1517. (Reformation Day!)
- Luther wrote to Archbishop Albrecht, urging the correction of indulgence preaching.
- Tradition (good early sources) Luther posted on the doors of Castle Church (public debate!)
- Image of 95 Theses (Berlin State Library) - OG in Latin for Scholarly debate...
- Luther was still a Catholic monk - not starting a new church, just seeking reform. The full Reformation came later...
 - The Theses were copied, translated, and carried across Germany within weeks.

A Couple Samples:

- "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent' (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." (Luther, Thesis 1) - Amen! Not indulgences/relics...
- "They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory." (Luther, Thesis 27) - Let's go Luther! Punk rock, man!

- "Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters." (Luther, Thesis 36) - though purgatory, kicking ball in right direction...

1521, Diet of Worms:

- Luther appeared before imperial authorities and refused to retract his writings without being convinced by Scripture and reason.
- Where did that courage come from? Years of wrestling with the Book of Romans...

The Truth: What Luther Helped Restore...

The breakthrough:

- Romans 1:16-17 - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" - Luther had dreaded "the righteousness of God" as God's standard for punishing sinners; here he saw it is a gift given through faith. He felt "born again," entering paradise "through open gates." - for the burdened and heavy laden = rest!

The heart of it:

- Romans 3:23-24 - "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..."
 - This cuts directly against indulgences! Forgiveness can't be bought when it has already been given freely!
- The greatest trick ever played on the human heart is the idea that we can pay our own way to God. The truth is that Christ has paid it all, and we receive Him by faith!

Peace follows it.

- Romans 5:1, ESV - "Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" - Luther never found it in the monastery; indulgences could never give it.
 - Because justification rests on Christ's finished work, not ours, a believer can have assurance before God instead of constant fear. - Which paper are you holding?!?!

Lastly, The Church's Treasure:

- Thesis 62: "The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God." (Luther, Thesis 62) - The "treasure of the church" is not "treasury of merit" = **HEART!**

Now, a word of charity/clarity toward our Catholic neighbors listening in...

- We oppose the system, not the people... Every heart drifts this way; the medieval church just built a system around that instinct... Let me remind you:
- Hebrews 10:11-14 - "...every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God... For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." - Nothing is left for an indulgence to cover!

So here we are, more than five centuries later...

- Reformation Day, All Hallows' Eve, or simply Halloween? Total change of gear...

The Tricks: Halloween Facts & Fiction...

Halloween Roots:

- Ancient: Samhain; Druids (connection debated)
- Medieval & folk: Going door-to-door; Costumes; Jack-o'-lanterns
- Modern & Consumer: "Trick or treat"; Candy; Horror imagery

Samhain/Druids:

- Many people make a hard claim here. Truth is, the connecting dots are spotty...
- **Samhain (SOW-in)** was a Gaelic festival (Ireland and Scotland) around November 1st marking harvest's end and the beginning of winter - gathering, feasting, bonfires, stories about the "otherworld..."
- **The Druids** were the Celts' learned priestly class - but they left no writings of their own; what we know comes from Romans and later Christian monks.
- Possible roots, but vague... no god named Samhain, but certainly a pre-Christian festival.

Going door to door:

- Traces back to "souling" in medieval Britain, a Christian custom tied to All Souls' Day on November 2. The poor, and later children, went from house to house offering to pray for the household's dead in exchange for small spiced "soul cakes." - OG Christian (Catholic)...

Costumes

- "Guising" (short for "disguising"), in Scotland since the 1500s: masked performers went house to house, usually at Christmas and New Year. By the 1800s, Scottish and Irish young people were guising on Halloween, singing or telling a joke for fruit, nuts, or coins. Immigrants brought it to North America. Most of what we practice is from the 1800s on...

Jack-o-lanterns:

- Began in Ireland and Scotland as carved turnips and other root vegetables holding a coal or candle (image: Donegal turnip, c. 1900). In folklore, to frighten off wandering spirits - ward off evil, not participate in it. North Americans switched to pumpkins in the late 1800s (for ease!)

Trick or treat:

- The newest custom - North American, 1920s-30s (first in print: Alberta, Canada, 1927). Drew on souling and guising, plus American Halloween pranks (tipping outhouses, soaping windows, unhinging gates) - the original "trick." Towns promoted door-to-door treats to displace the pranks. Paused under WWII sugar rationing, boomed in the 1950s.

Candy:

- England Medieval Soul cakes... 1800s fruit, nuts, and coins... 1920s homemade cookies and popcorn balls... then packaged candy after WWII.

Horror:

- Witches and black cats come mostly from late-medieval and early modern superstition. Victorian-era postcards made them playful icons... so yeah some older roots...

- The darker horror came later: 1930s monster movies, slasher films like Halloween (1978), and the haunted-attraction industry. The **secular entertainment industry made it what it is today**.

Practices Vary

- Wiccan and occult groups treat it as a sacred night ("the veil is thin")
- Haunted houses, horror films, drunken parties, sexual and grotesque costumes
- Innocent kids dressing up as superheroes; neighbors out on porches
- Harvest festivals, hay rides, church trunk-or-treats, homes sharing the Gospel!
- **Not all are equal in practice! - you would agree!?**

Summary:

- **Halloween is a tangled story** of harvest, fear, folk superstition, Christian/Catholic practices through the ages, immigration, and modern secular culture. **Not all practice the same!**

The Light: How to Respond Righteously...

Reject two extremes.

- Not careless naive participation nor fearful legalistic withdrawal..., but **balanced discernment!**

Don't fear the darkness.

- Some Christians are filled with fear of the "night of darkness" - **why?**
- Colossians 1:13, 2:15 - "**He has delivered us from the power of darkness** and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love... Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it..."
- 1 John 4:4 - "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because **He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**"
- **Even if you choose not to participate, God has not given you a spirit of fear (2 Tim. 1:7)!**
- Use the night to **teach our children Christ's triumph over evil**.

At the same time (and in the same breath)...

Don't celebrate the darkness. (let me offend the licentious ones first...)

- Ephesians 5:8-11 - "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose [reprove] them.**" - granted in context dealing with sins we all walked in (not just one night of the year). but the **principle applies broadly** to any day/action!
- **Pray about** the parties, movies, costumes, and decorations (death imagery? immodesty?). Daughters as sexy nurses, sons as axe killers - glorifies God? **You too, parents**... Carnality!
- Deut. 18:10-12, NIV - "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. **Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord...**" - Gal 5 lists some of the same among others...
- This verse **deals directly** with things like astrology, witchcraft, divination, Ouija boards, séances, and tarot cards - not necessarily **what you wear or put on your porch**, but **pray and ask God to show you...**

- Acts 19:19 - “Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all” - If God is showing you something, be obedient!

Enjoy christian freedom and obey your conscience. (let me offend the legalistic ones next...)

- A kid dressed as a firefighter or ballerina asking neighbors for candy is far from what we just discussed!
- Or one who uses the night to reach their neighbors, or churches offering an alternative to shine the light - **bless God for that!**
- One night a year, people come to your door - what an **opportunity to redeem it!**

Don't judge one another. (love your neighbor more than your personal freedoms...)

- Romans 14:5,10,13 - “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ...But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way...” - See 1 Corinthians 8-10...
- Paul addressed believers who **disagreed over food and special days**. Applied to Halloween, families who abstain and families who hand out candy can both honor Christ, as long as neither judges the other or causes a brother to stumble.
 - ***This applies to disputable matters, not practices Scripture clearly forbids. (some outfits, decorations, and parties - you know!)

Three responses: Abstain | Participate Selectively | Engage Missionally.

- **Hockey, soft pass** = Yuk... (soft pass!)

Shine on your street.

- Matthew 5:16 - “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” - personally, I think it's hard to do that in hiding. Find a way to engage with your neighbors! (even if not on Hallows' Eve...)

Closing:

John 8:12 - “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’”

- **End with The Gospel! Darkness has been crushed! We live in the light!**

Bridge to Part 2 (next-week slide): **The Saints' Communion**, November 1, with the Lord's Table...

PRAY