

Sessions – Halloween 2

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Halloween - Session 2

Let's kick off with the Bible - always a good way to start !!

1 Thessalonians 2.1-7 - "You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. **For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.** On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed – God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children so we cared for you."

Halloween is a huge festival in most of the 'Western world'. The famous quote on the doorstep is "Trick or Treat"... Often this is totally innocent, but as we know, it's not always so innocent with some people doing crazy things to others.

But here Paul was talking to the church he'd helped in a place called Thessaloniki in Greece. He was getting them to remember why and how he had come to them in the first place with the good news about Jesus. Instead of some of the greed and selfishness we see in a few parts of the church today, Paul came with a totally different attitude.. Despite opposition, he spoke the truth about Jesus without using flattery or greed, without covering anything up. He didn't assert his authority but instead cared for them as a mother should care for her children.

But here was something else Paul said - "For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you". Paul's treat in bringing the gospel to the Thessalonians was also that he did not use any tricks - he didn't have wrong motives.

So are we saying you shouldn't do any tricks on Halloween? Nope, of course not - have a look at the idea below! Instead, what this Bible passage tells us is that we should always be real with people, we shouldn't be afraid to speak God's truth - even on Halloween - because we love them!

An idea - inspired by what I heard a church in Leeds do

Why not go out with the young people and do trick or treat on people's doorsteps. But as Christians what the church in Leeds did was turn things upside down (as Jesus did) - or should we say, 'right way up' !!

What the church did is offer people this option: we'll do a trick for you, or we'll give you a treat - you let them decide!

Note - it would probably be a good idea to get some magicians with you (or at least one). Alternatively, learn a few decent magic tricks and practice them well...

You could also make up some kind of card and give it out. But do something professional and non cheesy if you do. God deserves our best - quality shines through!

Why this idea?

The church went for the whole 'it's better to give than receive' approach recorded in Acts 20.25:

" In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

These words of Jesus aren't recorded in the Gospels - as John 21.25 tells us, not all of what Jesus did is written in the Bible - so let's not be too religious not doing things because we don't find them in the Bible as long as they're in line with Biblical principles.

Trick or Treat

John 10.10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

See, here is the world's greatest deception, the world's biggest lie, the world's biggest trick... It's the one that you should live your life without God. God's enemy is satan. He tried to take God's place and so God had him removed from heaven. Now satan goes round trying to rob, kill and destroy people. He uses people who come out with ideas like 'God is outdated' or 'God hates people' or 'there is no God'. People fall for these tricks and so people are lost - this is what Jesus says. He calls people that don't know him, 'lost'.

It's like being in the dark in a forest without a map or any way out. Someone comes up and says, 'try some of this food' or 'why not make something for yourself out of wood'. Or people get you to start creating new species of tree. Some people start investigating the bugs or the birds in the forest. All these aren't bad by themselves as God created them. But you are still lost. Over time you start to forget that you are lost. In the end you don't even think about being lost or even what it is. But the truth is that you are still lost. You still need a light to show you the way out or even reveal to you that you are lost. What Jesus says is that he is the light, he is the way (John 14.6). On the other side is another place where all these things still exist, but where there is light. Where the light is, there are better colours, better flavours and better sights. But these things can only be appreciated in the light. That light is Jesus.

This Halloween, point people to the light. People don't see that they are lost and that satan only wants to steal, kill and destroy. They need someone with a light - a light-carrier - to show them the way; the way that leads to abundant life. Jesus says that you are like a lamp on a hill (Matthew 5.14-16), so don't put your lamp under a shade this Halloween. Let your light shine - let your good deeds glow so that people will see Jesus in you and recognise that he is **the** light and **the** life and **the** way.

Matthew 5.14-16 (The Message)

Read this out loud:

Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Reflection Time

Play LZ7 - This Little Light. Youtube it if you need to, or buy LZ7 'Light'. Also available on iTunes etc. There are a couple version of this.

Now spend some time in prayer and feeding back some ideas about being light-carriers this and every Halloween. Remember that the light shines brightest in the dark. God is with you :)