

Sun., Oct. 31 -Halloween

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:16 “Let your light shine before all, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Reading of Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-21

Message: “Parable of the Pumpkin” [Christians Are Jack-O’-Lanterns]

Text: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that whomever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

Scripture: Psalm 139:23-24

Blurb: Did you know that carving a pumpkin tells the biblical story of salvation? Bring your kids this Sunday for a pumpkin-carving, good new-sharing experience! Happy Halloween!

[Recorded Worship Beginning]

WELCOME -Pastor Andrew

MEMORY VERSE: -Pastor Andrew

“Let your light shine before all, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” -Matthew 5:16

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

Oh Give Thanks! (Psalm 107)

My Lighthouse/This Little Light of Mine

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Live Worship Beginning]

GATHERING SONG: *Oh Give Thanks! (Psalm 107)* -Sanctify

WELCOME -Pastor David

MEMORY VERSE: -Pastor David

“Let your light shine before all, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” -Matthew 5:16

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

How Great Is Our God

O The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

Oh, God

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Both Recorded & Live Worship]

READING OF SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 3:14-21 (CEB)

In Ephesians 3, Paul describes how Jesus lives inside each of us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He spreads God's love abroad in our hearts. Ephesians 3:14-21,

14 This is why I kneel before the Father. 15 Every ethnic group in heaven or on earth is recognized by Him. 16 I ask that He will strengthen you in your inner selves from the riches of His glory through the Spirit. 17 I ask that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. As a result of having strong roots in love, 18 I ask that you'll have the power to grasp love's width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. 19 I ask that you'll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God.

20 Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by His power at work within us; 21 glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always. Amen.

PASTOR APPRECIATION -Gina Lindholm

PRAYERS -Pastor Cassi

MESSAGE: The Parable of the Pumpkin: Christians Are Jack-O'-Lanterns

PP#1: The Parable of the Pumpkin

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that whosoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

I. Intro

A. The Parable of the Pumpkin. John 3:16—you know it...say it with me! "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that whosoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life."

B. Holiday is it today? [Halloween]

-Halloween is America's second most celebrated holiday, second only to Christmas

-What is perhaps the most famous symbol and decoration of Halloween?

-[Pumpkin]

-[Display Pumpkin]

-[Start putting on apron]

PP#2: *Picture of a happy Jack-O'-Lantern, subtitled, Carving a pumpkin tells the biblical story of salvation!*

B. What do you do with pumpkins on Halloween?

-[Carve them into Jack-O'-Lanterns.]

-[Pullout and display carving utensils]

C. Now, sometimes Christians don't like Halloween and pumpkins

- They think it is just to scary and spooky. And sometimes people do make it that way
- But I want to tell you about how pumpkins can tell us all about Jesus
- Carving a Jack-O'-Lantern actually gives the story of Jesus, and how Jesus saves us
- I call it, like the first four books of the New Testament, "The Gospel According to Jack."

PP#3: Parable of the Pumpkin

1. God made all things good

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." -Genesis 1:1

II. Parable of the Pumpkin

A. Creation

- Where do pumpkins come from? [Vines, gardens, farms, etc.]
- Pumpkins were indigenous to America, and now are popular all over the world
- Who made the pumpkin? [God, along with everything]
- The pumpkin grows from the earth, part of creation.
 - It helps us remember that God made everything.
 - The round shape reminds us of the earth and all that God created
 - Including people. God made us, too.
 - Anybody remember who the first people were? [Adam and Eve]

Scripture: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." -Genesis 1:1

B. The Fall and Sin

- Yet something happened to God's creation. Adam & Eve did something in Garden of Eden.
- Do you know what it was that they did wrong? [Disobeyed God and ate the fruit]

PP#4: Parable of the Pumpkin

1. God made all things good

2. People brought sin into creation

"For since by man came death...for as in Adam all die..." -I Corinthians 15:21-22

- They disobeyed God; They ate the forbidden fruit.
- They did what they wanted to do instead of what God wanted them to do.
 - This is called SIN: Sin is putting ourselves before God.
 - Sin is doing what we want rather than what God wants.
- Sin was introduced into God's creation and really messed things all up.
- Adam and Eve didn't look any different, but something was wrong with their souls
 - And now they would die
- And they knew this because they were ashamed and hid from God
- All of God's creation had been touched with sin

Scripture: "For since by man came death...for as in Adam all die..." -I Corinthians 15:21-22

PP#5: Parable of the Pumpkin

1. God made all things good

2. People brought sin into creation

3. People are filled with sin

"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

C. The Human Condition

- Ever since Adam and Eve, humans have been sinful on the inside.
 - Now we may look OK on the outside, but on the inside, we're pretty messed up
 - Kind of like this pumpkin here.
 - On the outside it is very pretty.
 - Smooth, with pretty ridges
 - Deep orange color
 - [Take knife and cut hole out around the stem, continue talking]*
 - But on the inside, it is much different
 - It is not very pretty on the inside
 - Actually, it is really gross!
 - [Lift up stem piece and show dangling pumpkin guts]*
 - See how gross it is on the inside!
 - This is just like people, just like us.
 - We may look like we are OK on the outside; but on the inside we are full of sin
- Scripture: "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

PP#6: *Picture of pumpkin "guts," subtitled, "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...."* Galatians 5:19-21a

D. Identifying Sin

- [Take spoon and scrape the inside of the pumpkin while you continue]*
 - So we are full of sin; we are yucky on the inside.
 - Can you think of some ways people sin?
 - Sinful things people do
 - Some things we do that God does not like?
 - Could you please just call out some things?
 - [As people identify various sins, take out spoonfulls of pumpkin guts, hold it up and identify the sin mentioned, "Yes, here is a whole bunch of gross looking hatred..." Put spoonfuls of pumpkin guts into a glass bowl. Prompt for more sins until the pumpkin is cleaned out.]*
- Scripture: "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...." Galatians 5:19-21a

PP#7: Psalm 139:23-24

- [23] Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
- [24] See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

- We easily identify these sins in others, but we must also identify the sins within us.
- Consider, what are the sins you struggle with?
- Spend a moment and confess them to God in your hearts.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23-24

- [23] Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
- [24] See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

PP#8: Parable of the Pumpkin

- 2. People brought sin into creation
- 3. People are filled with sin
- 4. Forgiveness through Jesus

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that whosoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life.” -John 3:16

E. Forgiveness through Jesus Christ

- But the Good News is that God came to our rescue!
- God loved us so much that He does not leave us stuck in our sin
- So He sent His one and only Son to come among us, teach us the way God wants us to live, and then suffer on the cross and die for our sins and be raised again victorious over sin and death.

Scripture: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

PP#9: *Picture of a person kneeling and praying in front of a cross, subtitled, “As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” -Psalms 103:12*

- And Christ now comes to all of us, offering us forgiveness for our sins, taking away all that is in us that is bad and ugly, and creating us anew.
- Now, this can be a very unpleasant, painful process.
 - To confess our sins we need to acknowledge them, own them, admit them
 - When we turn our lives over to Christ, He takes us and cleanses us
 - He brings up all that is in us that is ungodly
 - It is a painful, cutting process, in which Christ opens us up to clean out our sin
 - Just like the knife that must cut open the pumpkin in order to clean it out
- We receive forgiveness when we receive Jesus Christ into our lives and repent of our sin
- Jesus then takes our sin away and removes it from us
- [*Take bowl of pumpkin guts and place them on the altar at the foot of the cross*]

Scripture “As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” -Psalms 103:12

PP#10: Parable of the Pumpkin

- 3. People are filled with sin
- 4. Forgiveness through Jesus
- 5. Joy in receiving Jesus

Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." -John 15:11

F. Joy in Receiving Jesus

-*[Carve out a simple face on the pumpkin: two triangle eyes and a great big happy grin. Don't show the people what you are carving. Continue by asking:]*

- Because our sins are gone, now Jesus can live within us
 - Forgiveness & cleansing have left room for Jesus to come inside & be Lord of our lives
 - The sins have to be taken away because Jesus won't be #2
 - He is Lord of all, or Lord not at all
 - Now what do you think this does to people who have their sins taken away and have Jesus living within them?
 - How do you think it makes them feel? [Glad, happy, etc.]
 - Often people are burdened with sin and are miserable in life
 - They may act like they are fine, but down deep they are not very happy
 - Yet when we turn to Jesus, repent of our sin and ask Him into our lives,
 - He takes our sins away
 - And that makes us very happy!
 - [Turn the carved pumpkin around so all can see it. Continue...]*
 - Jesus gives us such joy within. True and complete joy.
 - He gives us eternal happiness, not like anything we have ever had before.
- Scripture: Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." -John 15:11

PP#11: Parable of the Pumpkin

- 4. Forgiveness through Jesus
- 5. Joy in receiving Jesus
- 6. The Light of Jesus shines in us

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." -Matthew 5:16

G. The Light of Christ Shining Through Us

- When we have the joy of Christ, others can see it in us.
 - They notice how we are so happy
 - How we have meaning and purpose in life
 - They notice that we are different
 - We are caring and patient and love everyone
- By our lives others can see the joy of Jesus in us
 - [Light the votive candle with lighter or altar candle]*
- Jesus is the light of the world, and brings light into the world darkened with sin

-Others come to know the light of Christ through our witness

-When we live for Jesus, others see Jesus through us

-[Put votive candle in pumpkin through the mouth]

-Where do we place pumpkins on Halloween?

-[Out to shine in darkness to show people the way home]

-Our lives are a lantern for Christ in our world

Scripture: "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." -Matthew 5:16

PP#12: *Image of a jack-o'-lantern with a huge smile, subtitled, Share the Parable of the Pumpkin!*

III. Closing

A. So pumpkin may be a Halloween decoration, but it also reminds us of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

-It reminds us how God created all things

-Yet people rebelled against God and sin entered all of creation

-Although people may seem okay on the outside, yet we are sinful on the inside

-But Jesus Christ died for our sins

-All we need to do is repent of our sin and take Jesus as our Lord and Savior

-Then Jesus will remove our sin from us and come to live within us

-And give us joy that is real, complete and everlasting

-This joy shines through us by how we live differently

-And others come to know Christ through us

B. So as you are carving your pumpkins, share the Parable of the Pumpkin with your family

C. And whenever you see a jack-o'-lantern, remember the Good News of Jesus Christ

-Receive Christ in your life

-Live a life full of joy of a changed life

-By your witness, show God's love to everyone

IV. Let us pray.

"Dear God, thank you so much for your love for us, and how did not leave us in our sin but sent your Son to save us and bring us back to you. Lord, forgive us our sins and give your Son to us as our personal Lord and Savior. Help us to live for you in our lives and in all that we do so that others might come to know your Son as well. Give to us your grace. Amen."

[IN-PERSON WORSHIP ONLY] CLOSING SONG: *My Lighthouse/This Little Light of Mine* -Sanctify

OFFERING: -Pastor David

-Give of your monies to God's work through this church. You can give in person, mail it in, drop it off or, most conveniently, you can make an electronic transfer or a debit card payment on the church website or by using the "square" on the bulletin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David

Evening: Trunk-or-Treat 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday night: Meal and Groups

Next Sunday's message: Parable of the Candle

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

“Let your light shine before all, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” -Matthew 5:16

BENEDICTION -Pastor David