



NEW LIFE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)

Vol. 24 No. 42

LORD’S DAY 18 OCTOBER 2020

ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i>
<i>Call to Worship</i>	Isaiah 51:7-8, 11-12	John 1:1-4
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Jonathan Kim
<i>Opening Hymn</i>	RHC 3 – “Love Divine”	---
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 82	---
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Jeremiah 2:1-2	Hebrews 1:1-2
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>Jeremiah Pleading with us</i>	<i>The Gospel Era</i>
<i>Closing Hymn</i>	RHC 47 – “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”	---
<i>Benediction</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 33

Q: What is justification?

A: Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Comments:

Justification means pronouncing a person righteous; it is the opposite of *condemnation*. It is said to be an *act*, because it is done at once; and an act of God’s *free grace*, because we can do nothing of ourselves to deserve it. It consists of two parts – *pardon* and *acceptance*; and we are taught also that the *cause* of it is not our own goodness, but *Christ’s*, and that Christ’s righteousness becomes ours through *faith*.

Scriptural Reference:

Romans 3:24, Ephesians 1:7, Romans 5:19, Galatians 2:16

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”

2 John 9

This Week

“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good is of God: but he that doth evil hath not seen God.”

3 John 11

Next Week

“....Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.”

Jeremiah 3:12

The Christian Perspective of Halloween

Introduction

It is coming to October again this year and the all-important Protestant Reformation day on the 31 October, which is to be properly remembered by God's people, but is sadly neglected or forgotten by many Christians today. Instead, Halloween has taken centre stage. It is celebrated in many countries today, even by Christians and churches alike as a time of fun for kids and adults. Many supermarkets and convenient stores are selling these wares such as witches' costumes, cauldrons, brooms, vampire's apparel, skeletons, candles, amulets, tarot cards, voodoo dolls, spells, charms, and chants.

In some kindergartens, child care centres and night spots, events are organised for children to go door-to-door to get candy and play ghostly tricks on others. It is also notorious as a season of witches, imps, ghouls, goblins, ghosts and spirits that will come alive and haunt the earth. Sadly some, including less discerning Christians, see Halloween as just a harmless season of fun and not a ghastly and demonically inspired night to be avoided as commanded by the Lord (Leviticus 19:27-31, Deut 18:9-14). The Harry Potter series popularised this diabolical event as J. K. Rowling wrote favourably on it as the main character, Harry, was involved with Halloween as well.

As Christians, should we allow our children and ourselves to have some fun and participate in Halloween? Is it alright to go trick-or-treating? Can we dress our homes or our kids up in skeletons and witches or diabolical costumes on that day for some malevolent fun and horror theme parties? Let us discuss from a biblical perspective.

Halloween's Origins

Some information on the objective history of the event or celebration of Halloween will help here. The word Halloween is derived from the term "All Hallows Eve" which occurred on October 31, the end of summer in Northwestern Europe. "All Saints Day" or "All Hallows Day" was the next Day, November 1st. Therefore, Halloween is the eve of All Saints Day.

According to a source, the origins of Halloween can be traced back to ancient Ireland and Scotland. On October 31st, the Celts celebrated the end of summer. This was important because it was when animal herders would move their animals into barns and pens and prepare to ride out the winter. This was also the time of the crop harvests. This annual change of season and lifestyle was marked by a festival called Samhain - pronounced 'sow-ane' - and means 'end of summer'. To commemorate the event, Druids built huge sacred bonfires, where the people gathered to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to the Celtic deities. During the celebration, the Celts wore costumes, typically consisting of animal heads and skins, and attempted to tell each other's fortunes. When the celebration was over, they re-lit their hearth fires, which they had extinguished earlier that evening, from the sacred bonfire to help protect them during the coming winter (see <http://www.history.com/topics/halloween>)

There was much superstition associated with this season including the belief in the supernatural like the fairies, and that the spirits of the dead wandered around looking for bodies to inhabit. Since the living did not want to be possessed by spirits, they dressed up in costumes and paraded around, making noises to confuse and frighten the spirits away. The new year began for the Celts on November 1. So, the day of Samhain was believed to be a day that was in neither the year past nor the year to come. Often, many would surprise one another as a result with ghostly tricks and treats.

Later, around the 5th century, as the Catholic Church developed and moved into the area, instead of adding a new day to celebrate, it took over the Samhain celebration. November 1st became "All Hallows Eve" where all the saints of the Catholic church were honoured. A later custom developed where some would go door-to-door on November 2, requesting for food in exchange for the promise of saying prayers for some of the dead relatives of each house. This arose out of the religious belief that the dead were in a state of limbo before they went to heaven or hell and that the prayers of the living could influence the outcome. This may have been the precursor to Trick-or Treat.

Halloween Superstitions

Halloween has always been a holiday filled with dark mystery, magic and superstition. It began as a Celtic end-of-summer festival during which people felt especially close to deceased relatives and friends. For these “friendly spirits”, they set places at the dinner table, left treats on doorsteps and along the side of the road and lit candles to help loved ones find their way back to the spirit world. Today's Halloween ghosts are often depicted as more fearsome and malevolent, and our customs and superstitions are scarier too. We avoid crossing paths with black cats, afraid that they might bring us bad luck. This idea has its roots in the middle ages when many people believed that witches avoided detection by turning themselves into cats. Many try not to walk under ladders for the same reason. This superstition may have come from the ancient Egyptians, who believed that triangles were sacred; it also may have something to do with the fact that walking under a leaning ladder tends to be fairly unsafe. And around Halloween, especially, we try to avoid breaking mirrors, stepping on cracks in the road or spilling salt (adapted from <http://www.history.com/topics/halloween>).

So, it appears that the origins of Halloween are a mixture of old Celtic pagan rituals, superstition, and early Catholic traditions. As blood bought true believers set apart for Christ, we are to be separate and to have nothing to do with anything contrary to the biblical teachings of scriptures which clearly forbid the celebration of occultic events or practices (Leviticus 19:27-30, Deuteronomy 18; 9-14).

Obedience to the Word of God

As Christians, we are interested in what the inspired word of God has to say to guide us in the straight and narrow way and concerning such occultic events as well, like Halloween. The word of God warns us solemnly against dabbling in the supernatural or the occult, like consulting witches, the star gazers (including feng shui or geomancy) or astrologers or those who read horoscopes, spiritists or necromancers in consultation with the dead, (i.e. Halloween has to do with the spirits of the dead) with mediums, bomohs (Malay shaman) and neo paganistic worship, that are prevalent today (Jeremiah 27:9).

Revelation 21:8 says, *‘But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, **and sorcerers**, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.’*

Moses in Deuteronomy 18:10-12 warns, *"Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his 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..."*

The Word of God clearly admonishes us against occultic practices like necromancy, astrology, spirits consultation, and witches. God condemns not only the practice but also the people who are involved in it (Isaiah 47:12, 13, Jeremiah 27:9, Galatians 5:20 and Revelation 21:8)..

As Christians, we are sanctified and set part for and by God. We are to have nothing to do with the occult like Halloween, tarot Cards, yoga, horoscopes astrology, contacting the dead, séances, lucky charms, talisman, amulets and diabolical supernatural powers. These are all anti biblical and diabolical and can harm a Christian's effective witness and fellowship with God and open the Christian to demonic oppression and even satanic entanglement for some (Philippians 5:1-5; James 4:7, 8). Most Christians should know this and make an effort to avoid all these unedifying activities (including our children). But some are still ensnared by these **ancient pagan connections and present occultic practices** and need to be **delivered from this spiritual bondage and slavery of the evil one** (1 Thessalonians 5:21, 22).

Biblical Separation and Holiness

The Christian is consecrated for God, and as commanded by our Lord (2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Leviticus 19:27-31, Jeremiah 27:9, Isaiah 47:12,13) to be separated from evil and is not to be involved with or support the occult, witchcraft, demonism, or any other thing that uplifts the occult. **To do so is to**

contradict God's word, dabble in demonic spirits, and invite entanglement with satanic forces and judgment from God. As the Halloween celebration has to do with malevolent games and evil practices, we are to take a firm stand, warn and remonstrate with others of its dangers and compromise.

On the other hand, some are willing to compromise and have said that it is not wrong to dress up in a costume and go door-to-door saying 'Trick or Treat'. It is just fun for the kids. The answer to that is found in 1 Corinthians 6:9-12 and 1 Corinthians 10:23, 31 which tells us all things are lawful but all things are not profitable nor expedient according to God's will for us. Halloween is neither edifying nor glorifying to God. This is a very clear matter. It is totally forbidden for us to participate in it. We are to obey the Lord and not satisfy our kids' whims at the expense of God's holy law.

It is a proven historical fact that Halloween has pagan origins that are an abomination to God, therefore a Christian who wants to honour and please God should not follow the world in allowing our kids to dress up in malevolent costumes and go door-to-door for the fun of Halloween. On another note, for conscience's (not just yours but others as well) sake and our obedience to God, one should not as a Christian cause others to stumble by our approval or participation in it or tacit approval of it (1 Corinthians 8:13).

Conclusion

The fallen and depraved world today is greatly influenced by the seduction of the occult and many are not aware of its grave perils to their souls eternally. It is like playing with fire or venomous snakes and scorpions and not knowing the serious consequences that they can have on us. The world of entertainment, night spots and even some churches and schools have become so desensitised to the subtle and insidious invasion of the occult and the diabolical holiday of Halloween that many secular (and even Christian) kindergartens and preschools have even embraced it as a fun time of parties and games for the children. **Even some Christian parents have unwittingly or knowingly embraced it and encouraged their children to participate in this malevolent entertainment as well.** 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 say that we should be separate from the world and spiritual corruption of the world.

Though some Halloween fans say the occasion is only harmless fantasy or fun, and Halloween is perceived as a child's fun holiday, many are oblivious that there is a darker side to it. It displeases and offends God when we rejoice in evil and entertain Satan and his devices. We need to pray for wisdom and courage to stand up to the pressures of friends, neighbours and even some school teachers, notwithstanding the fun and parties and costume selection for our children. Dutifully seek out the will of God and obey it. Honestly examine the issue before the holy and just God.

We should **educate our children and churches on the importance of remembering the 16th century Protestant Reformation instead, as a biblical substitute** for this event and teach them about the reformers and their teachings and stand. We need to make a clear stand against it, before it adversely affects our children's spiritual well-being and our family, Christian school or church. **Believers are to be discerning and to separate ourselves from the compromise of sin and evil, for the devil is a roaring lion** seeking any that he may devour in these last days. We are not to be contaminated and compromised by promoting or participating in this diabolical celebration which is a serious affront and abomination to the most holy God (Lev19:27:31). Let us heed this sober warning from his word, fear God, reflect on and take the advice of James seriously:

James 4:7-8: Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

— adapted from the bulletin of *Sovereign Hope BP Church, Singapore*

NEWS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Worshippers, as the Church Premises reopens for Morning Worship Service please note that there will be strict social distancing measures put in place. Face coverings must be worn in the church at all times out of consideration for all worshippers.

Tithes & Offerings – There will be an offering box at the entrance to the Church Sanctuary for you to place your offerings in.

Weekly Prayer Meeting will be held online every Friday, 7pm. Please speak with Pr Mok for more information.

Reformation Sunday – 25th October 2020

Worship Service Collections: 04/10/20 - £1185.00

CHURCH NOTICE

Dear fellow worshippers and friends,

We are pleased to inform the worshippers and visitors of New Life Bible Presbyterian Church that the church will resume holding worship services in the Church premise on Sunday mornings.

The church activities will take place as follows:

- Sunday Morning Worship Service, 11am – Church Premises & Online
- Sunday Afternoon Worship Service, 3pm – Online only
- Friday Prayer Meeting, 7pm – Online only

Changes introduced to the Worship Services held at the church premises

In compliance with the current Government guidelines, the following changes have been introduced:

- Worship services will be limited to 60 minutes duration.
- No singing and offering collection during the worship service. Offerings can be made at the offering box when entering or exiting the church.
- All Bibles and hymn books will be kept and unavailable for use.
- Adopt a 2-metre social distancing seating arrangement (household members may sit with each other).
- Face coverings to be worn in the church **at all times** out of consideration for all worshippers. For young children under the age of 11, the use of face covering is optional. **Please ensure you bring your own face covering.**
- No socialising with anyone outside of your household or support bubble within the Church premises.
- No socialising in a group of more than SIX outside the Church premises.
- No food and drinks will be made available (Fellowship Lunch has been temporarily suspended).
- No access to non-essential areas of the church – this includes the Fellowship Hall and kitchen.
- New movement arrangements to be adopted (please follow directions).
- Temperature measurements will be taken for every worshipper and visitor.
- Worshippers and visitors are required to complete the contact details slip for the NHS Test & Trace service. These details will be kept securely in church for 21 days and then destroyed. They will only be submitted to Test & Trace if a Covid-19 case occurs.
- Alternatively, please download the NHS COVID-19 Mobile App and scan one of the QR codes in the Church entrance to check-in.

To join our online services or to obtain further updates, please visit the church website (www.newlifebpc.org.uk) or call the church manse (020 73280869).

With the Lord's blessing,

John Poh & Jonathan Kim
Task Force Members

RHC003 – Love Divine

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n
to earth come down;
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All thy faithful
mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, Pure
unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation; Enter ev'ry
trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit, Into
ev'ry troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit, Let us find that
second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning, Alpha and
Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, Set our hearts
at liberty.

Come, almighty to deliver, Let us all Thy life
receive;
Suddenly return and never, Never more Thy
temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, Serve
Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory
in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation, Pure and
spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation, Perfectly
restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory, Till in heav'n
we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in
wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley

RHC047 - Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my
Father!
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions,
they fail not:
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

(Chorus)
Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy
faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and
harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses
above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and
love.

(Chorus)
Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to
guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow -
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand
beside!

(Chorus)

Thomas O. Chisholm