

FROM GORY TO GLORY: REDEEMING HALLOWEEN

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Every year at the end of October I find myself asking the following question, “What to do with Halloween?” As a follower of Jesus and as a parent it’s something of a dilemma I find myself in. My boys, as most children, want to participate in the fun activities that accompany Halloween, not to mention all the goodies and candy that comes with it. Yet realizing the pagan even occult overtones surrounding the Halloween season, I am compelled to do my best to protect their young and impressionable hearts and minds as well as my own. Just what are we to do with this quandary that Halloween presents?

I think we learn to do with Halloween what God does with everything else in this world – redeem it. A significant aspect of redemption is the concept of exchange. So for example, you can redeem a check or a bond in exchange for money. In Christian theology, Jesus Christ redeemed or exchanged His life by dying on the cross on our behalf so that we might live. And in the case of Halloween, I believe we can redeem all the blood, fright, gore, and death in exchange for light, peace, glory, and life.

We do this by not fixating on the evil and grotesque aspects of what Halloween represents but by teaching our kids to keep things in perspective. Halloween this year (2010) just so happens to fall on a Sunday. So when my boys excitedly said today, “Sunday is Halloween,” I reminded them that Sunday is first and foremost the Lord’s Day and second, it’s Reformation Sunday. We redeem Halloween by exchanging the fright of the season for the light of Christ and the gory costumes for the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17).

In Isaiah 47:4, we read, “Our Redeemer - the LORD Almighty is His name.” And if God in Christ Jesus has redeemed us from the macabre that Halloween represents, then I don’t think we ought to focus on what we’ve been redeemed from and instead focus on Who our redeemer is!