

Where I Was Wrong About Halloween

Recently I wrote a blog post about Halloween where I made the case that it is OK for Christians to celebrate the day. I was expecting a backlash, as this is a day that divides so many Christians, and those who don't like it *really* don't like it.

Part of my job as an artist and a filmmaker is to make people think and sometimes even poke people in an attempt to get them to see things a bit differently. That was the spirit with which I wrote the article—I wanted to show another view of things that some may not have thought of before.

Mainly, that some people see Halloween only as a cultural holiday (and not a spiritual one), and that we should not be afraid of darkness, but should go boldly into it to shine the light of Christ. That was my intent. But I made a mistake in leaving something very important out, and I want to both apologize to all my readers, and give you the fullness of my heart on the issue.

I realized I had made a mistake while, during my morning devotions, I was reading Romans 14. The entire chapter shows us how we are to deal with real philosophical difference in the body of Christ, and in my desire to make people think, I left out perhaps the most important part of the entire debate.

“I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. If your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food one for whom Christ died” (Rom. 14:14-15).

And again:

“Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but it is evil for the man who causes someone to fall by what he eats. ... The faith that you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves” (Rom. 14:20, 22).

In eight years of traveling the world and filming some of the most miraculous and outrageous things ever caught on film, God has done a great work in me and has shown me firsthand how much bigger and more powerful He is than anything the darkness can throw at Him.

But Romans 14 shows us that Christians will always have differences of opinion on these kinds of matters, and even if one person's faith speaks peace to them to go trick-or-treating with their kids, another person may feel a real conviction not to.

As Paul says earlier in the chapter, “He who observes the day observes it for the Lord, and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and the one who does not eat, in honor of the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God” (Rom. 14:6).

Ultimately, debates like whether or not it's OK to celebrate Halloween aren't really about who's right and who's wrong. It is about how we treat one another even in our differences of opinion.

Since writing that article, for instance, I've been called a whole host of names, been accused of being a gnostic, and even had YouTube videos made with the purpose of bashing me and showing just how dangerous of a person I am. (Do people have too much time on their hands or what?)

I wish those who are so zealously trying to discredit me and others would take Paul seriously in this same chapter when he says, “Who are you to judge another man's servant? To his own

master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4).

My other intent in writing the article was to bolster fellow Christians who for whatever reason had little to no trouble with Halloween, but had always felt pressure from others to abstain from the day. I wanted to give them an advocate of sorts, an argument telling them that they aren't crazy, nor are they terrible Christians for thinking such things. Unfortunately, I forgot about those who felt just as strongly against this day—as neither is strictly "right or wrong."

In the end, it boils down to what you feel the Lord is telling you. If you hate everything about Halloween, then don't do anything or find an alternative. If you see it as a purely cultural holiday and a chance to have some fun with your neighborhood and your kiddos, then walk in the freedom given you in Christ.

But no matter what you do or what your conscience tells you, remember that you are only truly responsible for yourself. Whatever you choose this Halloween, do it in honor and thanks to God, and don't judge anyone else for their decision.

"For one has faith to eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Do not let him who eats despise him who does not eat, and do not let him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has welcomed him" (Rom. 14:2-3).

In John 13:35, Jesus tells us that the world will know we are His disciples if we love one another. Unity is of utmost importance to God, and we have often done a terrible job of standing in love with one another even when we disagree.

I'm a tiny microcosm of this: I threw my beliefs out there and was destroyed by comments and YouTube videos for them. We will always believe differently on many things, but that doesn't mean we stop honoring one another and loving each other despite our differences of opinion.

So let me start with myself: If I came across as judgmental in any way, I humbly ask for your forgiveness. It was never my intent. I wholly honor those who do not, for whatever reasons, want to celebrate this day. I do what I do with my family in the full sight and submission to God, and I pray that every one of you do as well. Halloween is a day that often brings division in the church. My prayer this year is that it will instead bring unity.