

# Scared to Death, Invited to Life

*Read Time: 5 Minutes, 11 Seconds*

I've been scared to death, but thankfully I have also been invited to life. I much prefer the latter because God is the One who invites us to live a full and abundant life. The Bible says a lot about this.

"God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him won't perish but will have eternal life. God didn't send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:16-17 ESV).

"Because of our God's deep compassion, the dawn from heaven will break upon us, to give light to those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide us on the path of peace" (Luke 1:78-79 ESV).

"I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38 NLT).

## **It Can Be Scary**

Halloween is upon us. As a kid, it scared me to death. There were things I both loved and hated about it. I loved the candy but there were certain houses in our neighborhood which gave large full-size candy bars. Inevitably, though, those houses were also the scariest.

They had fake spiderwebs all over the yard and the door. Large fake spiders and bats seemed to swoop down when the door was opened. Spooky music was playing and someone dressed as a devil or vampire was at the door daring us to come and get what he had.

I endured the scariness of Halloween for one reason and one reason only. Candy and lots of it. Many of the kids at school who were my age loved the scary things that happened at Halloween, but not me. I didn't like anything scary at all.

### **Is Halloween Christian?**

The origins of Halloween are a bit nebulous. Some say Halloween began as a celebration of All Saints Day and All Hallows Eve combined. It was the time the Catholic Church remembered the saints, those martyred for the faith and those who had departed the earth.

It was a time for lighting candles and placing them on the graves of the dead to remember them, abstaining from meat and eating vegetarian foods like apples and soul cakes. Soul cakes were small cakes filled with cinnamon, allspice, raisins or currants. The baker would make the mark of a cross on the top of the cake. These were baked on Oct. 31, All Hallows Eve, as an offering to the saints who had died.

The next day, All Saints Day, children would go from door to door begging for the cakes. This might be the beginning of the tradition we have today of trick or treating by going to our neighbors' homes.

### **Is Halloween Pagan?**

Another possible origin for Halloween is a Celtic festival commemorating the end of summer and harvest and the start of winter. They believed it was the time when the boundaries of the worlds of the living and dead became blurred.

During the festival, people would light bonfires to fend off ghosts. They also made sacrifices to the Celtic gods to protect them through the winter, wore costumes and attempted to tell each other's fortunes.

The origins of Halloween may have been Christian at one time but to me, the overemphasis today on evil costumes, scary stories and haunted houses has taken the day out of the realm of being Christian.

### **The Real Reason to Be Afraid**

Churches and organizations that hold parties that allow fun costumes, games, hay rides, bounce houses, Bible stories and Bible-based plays in a family atmosphere are great ways to take back this celebration and change it from an emphasis on evil to an emphasis on God.

Most of the time, though, even these events still have what I consider the biggest reason we should be afraid of Halloween. They still give away lots and lots of candy.

Remember how the early Christians baked soul cakes, which children went around begging for? The soul cake was sweet, but it did not have the concentrated processed sugar and the candy we give children today has. This emphasis on sugar is truly the scariest part of Halloween, even though it is the part our kids look forward to the most.

### **Candy Is a Killer**

In 2022, Americans are expected to spend over \$10.6 billion on candy for Halloween. That's over 600 million pounds of candy given to the most vulnerable of us all—our children.

According to Heart Foundation, about one in three American kids and teens are overweight or obese; nearly triple the rate in 1963. Among children today, obesity is causing a broad range of health problems that previously weren't seen until

adulthood. These include high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and elevated blood cholesterol levels. Childhood obesity is the number one health concern of American parents. It has topped drug abuse and smoking.

What is the cause of obesity? One big one is the overconsumption of sugar and junk food. When we find out one of our children has a disease that greatly curtail or even end his or her life, it will take the sweetness out of any celebration.

### **Halloween Is Not to Blame, We Are**

As neighbors and friends, we can help turn this around starting this October 31. At our house, costumed children will receive cutie oranges, Christian or positive stickers, small toys, glow sticks or other fun items. Every year, parents look me in the eyes and say, "Thank you for not giving candy."

We can make this holiday what we want it to be. It can be a fun time for children to celebrate in a positive way or we can contribute to a sweet tooth that in later years may lead to full-blown addiction and possible early death.

For more on this subject, listen to episode number 156 of Sweet Grace for Your Journey podcast, Invited to Life.

To take my free quiz to figure if you or others are sugar addicts, go here:

Bring *Charisma* magazine home with a subscription today!

**Teresa Shields Parker** is the author of six books and two study guides, including her No. 1 bestseller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. Her sixth book, *Sweet Surrender: Breaking Strongholds*, is live on Amazon. She blogs at . She is also a Christian weight loss coach (check out her coaching group at Overcomers Academy) and speaker. Don't miss her podcast, *Sweet Grace for Your Journey*, available on CPN. This

*article first appeared on .*