

Remnant Life Church
10.29.23
When Evil is Disguised
Psalm 8

We are about to finally get past the worst day of the year

- Some people will not identify that day in their own lives until the last day of December
- Many review their past year and identify one day as the best and one day as the worst
- But I believe the worse day of the year is the same day year after year – October 31
 - Halloween – like many things that are in every way anti-God – it has been more and more disguised to appear somehow innocent and it is not!
 - Although today there is a boldness about it that is more in your face than ever before with little regard for how evil it appears
- What is most important, however, is that Christians know what it is and take the proper precautions to protect themselves but especially their children from being drawn into what it represents

For several weeks now, stores have been pushing costumes, candy, and decorations

- TV networks have devoted much of their programming to horror themed shows and movies
- And of course, Hollywood, in all of its filth and depravity, dives deeper and deeper into the demonic and the macabre

But what is it that people enjoy so much about this day?

- In lists of favorite holidays, Halloween is listed at the top of the list second only to Christmas.
 - That means it is ahead of Easter and even Thanksgiving
- One fourth of all the candy sold each year in the US is purchased for Halloween
 - Just a few years ago, in this country alone, nearly 9 billion was spent at Halloween
 - On top of that, another 500 million was spent on costumes...for pets
- Most people when asked about its appeal site the opportunity to dress up, act in bizarre ways without being judged – in other words, do whatever they want
- It is said that it is a day of fantasy and, of all things, honoring the dead
 - But when one well-meaning but very misguided person was asked what that they loved about the day said it was because it is a celebration of God's victory over evil and death
 - I can assure you, that is not what Halloween is about!

Let me give you a brief history of how it came about:

Centuries ago in ancient England, the Celts lived and there were a group of pagan priests in Gaul who became known as Druids

- Now the Druids were very secretive meaning they kept virtually no written records and most of what we have about them come from references in historical Greco-Roman accounts, and later European mediaeval writers

- And it was the invasion of the Roman Empire by emperors Tiberius and Claudius into Gaul that suppressed and ended the Druid ways
- Later writings would occasionally reference the Druids but usually as sorcerers who opposed the coming of Christianity

The origins of Halloween date back to the time of the Druids who lived primarily in Ireland, the UK and northern France

- Now the new year on the Druid calendar begins on November 1
- Just prior to that day they celebrate the day of their pagan gods known as the Vigil of Samhain (*Sah-win*)
 - October 31 marks the end of the time of harvest and the beginning of the long, cold and dark nights of winter - a time commonly associated with death
 - It was also during this celebration that the Druid priests were thought to have the ability to predict the future and offer hope to the people for the coming year
 - An ability given to them, they believed, by Sahwin
- The Celts determined that as the days grew shorter and the nights longer, the sun god was growing weaker and Sahwin was growing stronger
 - October 31 was, they believed, the day when the barrier between the worlds of the living and the dead was the weakest and the spirits could freely move back and forth between the realms
 - To protect themselves and the people from these roaming evil spirits, huge bonfires would be built to burn the old crops and the animals being sacrificed
 - During this ritual, the priests would put on costumes, usually animal heads and skins, as they attempted to predict each other's futures
 - The bonfires, costumes, carved pumpkins and scary decorations, all common symbols of Halloween today, were originally intended to scare away the evil spirits that had been released to roam the earth on that night

I tell you all of this, which is only a small portion of the background, so that you are aware that Halloween is not just another day created by Hallmark and the candy industry – it is a day born out of blood, evil, the demonic, and the occultic worship of satan.

Now what I could do at this point is talk about satan, who he is, and the danger of allowing any aspect of his intent into your life...and while all of that is certainly true, I am not going to do that because we, as children of God, do not focus our attention on the one who has already been defeated – our focus, our adulation, our worship is given to the King of Kings, and Lord and Lords, our Savior and our Redeemer

Instead, I want to spend the remainder of our time together this morning being reminded of the power, sovereignty, and glory of our majestic God!

READ – *Psalms 8:1-9*

- The first thing you notice about this Psalm is that the first verse and the last verse are identical
 - This type of Psalm is often referred to as an envelope or bracket Psalm

- David makes a declaration (*Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth...*) he then goes on to justify that statement
- Then at the conclusion he restates the declaration as if to say, “This is what all of that meant.”
- It would be wonderful to go verse by verse through this brief chapter to examine what David meant by proclaiming the Glory and majesty of the name of God, but I want to look at just two points, two blessings really this morning, as it relates to His power over the darkness and evil of Halloween

1. Verse 3 – *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place...*
 - a. Our first blessing is that He is Lord God Creator of all things!
 - b. Why would the things of the sky have so much meaning to David in his description of the awesomeness of God?
 - c. We can figure that out by asking a simple question, where did David spend the majority of the first portion of his life?
 - i. Out on the hillsides of Bethlehem with the sheep – he was a shepherd
 - ii. I have heard it said that there are different skies depending on where you live
 1. This is not referring to constellations
 2. It is talking about the ambient light of cities and towns
 - a. The less light there is around you the more brilliant the stars are
 3. David was out in the middle of nowhere where the only light available at night was the light of a fire
 4. The stars must have been absolutely breathtaking!
 - iii. David saw first-hand the majesty of God’s creation, so much so that it caused him to wonder why God would even care about us
 1. And he was only aware of such a small measure of the sky when today we know so much more of the endless expanse of God’s creation
 2. Yet even that small amount caused David to say that they are the work of Your fingers.
 - a. Not the work of His hands, or arms but only His fingers
 - b. Creation of all things was an “easy” thing for the Almighty
 - d. Now recognize one other thing
 - i. David asked, what is man that you are mindful of him?
 - ii. I assure you this morning, He IS mindful of you
 1. Psalm 139:13 - *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.*
 2. Isa 49:1 - *Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother’s womb he has spoken my name.*
 3. Jer 1:5 - *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart...*

- e. The majesty, might, and power of Almighty God knew you before you were even born. He loves you, wants the best for you, and sent Jesus to die for you!
 - i. Should we be concerned or scared even just a little of something that goes bump in the night?
 - ii. Should we want to allow even a little bit of that darkness into our lives when the creator, author and source of all light loves us?
2. *Verse 2 – From the lips of children and infants You have ordained praise because of Your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.*
- a. Our second blessing is that He has conquered the enemy!
 - b. As I have said to you so many times – the war between good and evil is over, the war has been won
 - c. But the battles continue
 - i. In this second verse, David uses the word “praise” although in the original Hebrew the word is translated as “strength”
 1. So listen to it again using that translation
 2. *You have ordained strength because of your enemies...*
 - ii. In other words, God does not need an army to overcome His enemies
 - iii. He can do that through the smallest and humblest ways...an infant born in a meager manger to two common ordinary people in a backwater town with no worldly fanfare
 - d. The infant David was most likely referring to here in the 2nd verse was Moses
 - i. Moses, born of Hebrew slave parents became nearly as powerful as Pharaoh
 - ii. God then brought Moses back to Egypt from the land of his exile in Midia to free God’s people
 - e. However, Moses – like Joshua, David and Solomon - was a forerunner to the One who was yet to be born
 - i. The One who free not only a nation, a people from the chains of slavery
 - ii. But free all of humanity from the chains of sin
 - iii. Jesus Christ
 - f. We must remember that God had then, as He does today, all of His creation at His disposal to defeat the darkness of the enemy
 - g. But we cannot allow ourselves to be pulled into the things of darkness because all it takes is one time of exposure for our hearts and minds to be changed
 - h. Let me give you an example of that in closing

Katerina and I watched an interview several years ago of a man by the name of Brian Hugh Warner (b. Jan 5, 1969)

- He grew up in a typical, very normal home outside of Canton, Ohio
- There was the influence of the church in his life – his mother episcopalian, his father Roman Catholic
- Brian attended Heritage Christian School until he was 15 and then went to public school
- Shortly after his first week of public school, Brian attracted the attention of John, a big, “cool” kid

- It wasn't good attention as Brian said John punched him in the face claiming "you looked at my girlfriend"
- So Brian said he had to figure a way to befriend him so not to get beat up every day
 - It started with him giving John his mother's diet pills to sell
 - And it turned out that both liked the same kind of music
- At John's house one weekend his parents and older brother were not home and so one night John asked Brian, "Do you want to see something scary?"
 - Brian recounted that he really did not want to see something scary but out of fear of jeopardizing his friendship he agreed
- They went to a barn away from the house in the corner of the property and climbed up into the loft of the barn
 - It was there that he saw a makeshift satanic altar
 - Pigeons and squirrels cut open
 - Satanic symbols all over the walls
 - Hanging animal carcass
 - Blood everywhere; soaked into the hay
- John held out a book called the Necromicon
 - A book of incantations and spells
 - He told Brian that if they were spoken aloud it would bring about evil spirits and the perhaps the apocalypse
 - The book if a fictional work of literature and Hollywood but there is still in it danger
- John told Brian to open the book and start reading but don't tell my brother we did this, or I'll kill you
- Brian said he did not want to do this but, as he was about to start reading, John's older brother came home
 - He said they could hear him yelling, 'You guys had better not be up there!'
 - They ran out the back of the barn into the woods down a path to a clearing taking the book with them
- They eventually came to a foundation of sorts with an earthen cellar door
 - Down into the cellar – again, John threatened Brian to start to reading
 - Dark, water dripping, hands shaking, Brian starts to read by the light of a small BIC lighter
- It was while he was reading, whispering that they both thought they heard "Do you believe in satan?"
 - Brian said he had read enough of the Bible to know that what they were doing was not good
 - As he continued to read, he sensed a very evil presence
 - He said he knew they were messing with things that they should not be messing with
 - He felt as if they were about to unleash something terrible
- It so frightened them both that he dropped the book and lighter ran out of the cellar back into the woods to get back to John's house
- The next morning they retraced their steps back to get the book
 - In the light they found the path, not quite as scary and followed it to where they were the night before

- When they came to the same clearing there was no foundation, there was no cellar door, there was nothing but the clearing
- Brian said that from that day on, things in his life were very different
 - He said I became the worse monster that I could have ever dreamed of because what I read became a part of me and my life
 - I had underestimated the power of the occult and still do to this very day
- You may be asking why is this significant since you do not know the name Brian Hugh Warner
- But you do know him just not by that name
- Brian Hugh Warner later took the name Marilyn Manson
- And it was that encounter with the occult when he was 15 years old that changed the course of his life and plunged him into a darkness that he says he cannot escape

Halloween is not a time of innocence

- It has become cloaked by Madison Avenue in order to guard the revenue generating machine it has become
- An excuse to keep pumping out more and more grotesque movies from Hollywood (modern-day Babylon)
- And it is a way that the enemy has deceptively made his way into the homes and hearts of millions of people, many of them unwitting Christians

What you must do is determine that you will not open the door to the enemy by embracing the evil in innocent clothing

- Is it evil for little children to dress up in cute costumes and get some candy?
- You must be the judge of that
- But what accompanies all of that is certainly evil
 - It is in the obsessiveness with death, gore, and the demonic
 - It is cloaked in “harmless” television shows and movies
 - It is the pressure of our culture that you don’t want to be labeled a religious nut or right wing extremist
- Yet what is the cost?
 - Our children should not be watching horror movies, shows about ghosts and spirits, or anything associated with the occult
 - Come to think of it why should any of us?

Our focus, my dear church family, is not on the enemy or the things of his realm

- Yes, we need to know his plans in order to stand against and combat them
- But our focus is on the majesty and greatness of our loving God
- He is the creator of all things and has them to use at His pleasure and will for His divine purposes
- And He has conquered death, hell, satan, and evil through the resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ
- *Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*