

Halloween, Trick or Treat?

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[0 : 00] Page 1177 And against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and pray in the Spirit on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests.

With this in mind, be alert, and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me, so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains.

[1 : 42] Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. Thank you very much, Harry. Well, please keep your Bible at the ready.

We're going to be looking at a few different passages this morning. Well, let's pray together.

Father, we ask that you would be present by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Not just present, but active. That you would be active through the word of God. speaking into each and every individual here.

Speaking to all of us together. That you would help us to understand better the world in which we live. And the kind of people we should live in this world.

[2 : 59] We ask for your help in all of this. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So, the title. You can't really see it, but I'll tell you what it is.

Halloween. Trick or Treat. So, is it a fun night for the kids? Or is it the sinister work of the devil? Now, for many people, Halloween is just a bit of innocent fun. A chance to dress up as a ghost, or even Spider-Man, and collect as many sweets as possible. For others, Halloween has a dark and a more fearful side.

A night when evil and death are celebrated, and the ways of Satan are explored. What do you think about Halloween? Well, we're going to look at God's Word, and see what it has to say, and how we as Christians should respond.

But before we get into God's Word, just a few things. Firstly, it is big business. In the US, Halloween is worth more than \$4 billion to the economy.

[4 : 10] Second only to Christmas. But it's not just in the US. Here, specially themed shops have opened up for the festival, and you can even buy cards, which you can send to people wishing them a scary Halloween.

Homes are decorated with pumpkin-shaped lights. Giant cobwebs are sprayed onto walls. Ghosts and witches hang from the front doors, and gardens are transformed into miniature graveyards.

Where we live, I think ours is the only house that doesn't have a decoration up at the minute. So is it just a bit of fancy dress with an opportunity for retail stores to make lots of money?

Well, it could be, but I think there's a little bit more to it than that. It does have very dark beginnings. Halloween has its roots in the Celtic festival of Samhain.

It is spelt S-A-M-H-A-I-N, pronounced Samhain. It marked the beginning of the Celtic year. Going back almost 2,000 years ago.

[5 : 15] The end of summer and the beginning of winter at that changeover point. Summer being the season of life when everything begins to grow, and winter being the season of death when everything begins to perish.

Now as summer ended and winter began, it was believed that Samhain, the lord of death, would send evil spirits to attack human beings, taking them from the world of life and bringing them to the world of death.

And to escape the attack, people would dress up as evil spirits in an attempt to try and fool the plan of Samhain. They thought if the evil spirits saw them dressed up, they would be overlooked as fellow evil spirits and they would be able to escape their attack.

Which explains, of course, the origins of the scary masks and costumes that people are going to be wearing. And also the lights, the pumpkin lights and bonfires that there may be, were also to try and dispel the evil spirits from getting close.

Now how much of that is all fable or real belief at that time? I don't know. I wasn't around there 2,000 years ago. And if you did a survey today and asked all the little children as they wandered around knocking on your door how much of the origins they know, I'm sure they don't know very much.

[6 : 43] I certainly don't know a lot about the origins of Halloween. But having said all of that, this has developed, or Halloween has developed, into a fascination with evil and death.

We can't get away from it. Movies from Hollywood like Nightmare on Elm Street and the Saw trilogy, I haven't seen it, don't worry, have only influenced it further. In fact, it won't be uncommon for people to try and contact the dead through various mediums and perhaps explore the darker side of life through games like the Ouija board.

So maybe it is a little bit more sinister than innocent. But you say, wasn't Christmas a pagan festival?

Well, yes, Christmas was a pagan festival and over the years it has become Christianized to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, God incarnate. Jesus, the God-man, coming into the world. So, why can't we do exactly the same with Halloween? Why can't we Christianize it? Well, that's exactly what some people have done. For some, Halloween is a religious festival.

[7 : 56] Halloween is a shortening of All Hallows' Eve, or what has become known better as All Souls' Day, celebrated on the 1st of November, and has now been part of the church calendar, I think, since the 600s.

So it's a time when people remember the dead and when some people will pray for the dead. Now, for followers of Jesus Christ, to remember and to give thanks to God for the lives of loved ones is a good thing.

I'd encourage us to do that, to remember and say thank you to God for the people who have influenced us in our lives. But to pray for the dead, that's a different matter altogether, because to pray for the dead is as profitable as asking the inhabitants of their local graveyard to cut their own grass and say get up out of the graves and cut your grass.

You see, the Bible makes it very clear in Hebrews 9, verse 27, I'll just quote it for you, that we are destined to die once and after that to face the judgment of Christ.

And at that time, at that judgment, God will bring those who love him and turn to him to his heaven, to his kingdom, his eternal kingdom of light.

[9 : 19] And he will separate those who have ignored him and rejected him to hell, to a kingdom of darkness. So praying for the dead is actually too late.

While our prayers are effective for people today, and I encourage people to pray for each other, it is effective now for those who are living, but our prayers are ineffective for those who have died.

So what are we to do with Halloween? What does the Bible say about it? Well, I've looked through the Bible and it never mentions Halloween, and it doesn't say anything about All Souls Day.

But it does have a lot to say about evil, death, and Satan, and who has the ultimate power. So let's have a look at what the Bible says about the devil and his ways.

The devil's trick. The devil, as some will say, is a made-up character. Well, he's not a made-up character. And death and evil are not just pretend ideas that just come out to haunt us on the 31st of October.

[10 : 32] No, the devil is very real, and his influence in the world is very real. Scripture calls him the god of this world, the prince, or the ruler of this world.

Meaning that he presides over and he leads the world's rebellion against God. Now, while we must take him seriously, we must also remember that he is primarily a trickster.

He's a liar. He's a fraud. He is an angel, or he masquerades as an angel of light. In fact, the Bible gives him the title of deceiver and father of lies.

in Revelation 12, verse 9, he is described as that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan who leads the whole world astray.

So he is chiefly a trickster. He tells lies to people. And I'm going to suggest this morning that one of the things we need to be careful of is not to believe the lies of the devil who will say that Halloween is all just a bit of fun and fancy dress.

[11 : 47] So don't take it so seriously. Why are you getting all excited about it? It's only pretend. It's fine. Now, while we don't want to over-hype Halloween and suggest that all the little kids who are going to be knocking on our doors this evening looking for sweets are somehow involved in a seance or involved as a devil's servant, I think that would be terribly unhelpful to think that way.

However, we do need to be careful that we don't dismiss it all as just simply fun and games. The mature Christian will take these things seriously.

The Apostle Peter says this in 2 Peter 5 verse 8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

You see, the ultimate purpose of the devil is to disrupt the work of God and to distract people from God. And one of the ways he will do this is to get us to think that evil and death and Satan are not real.

They're all just made up. So we must be on our guard. So let's have a look at three things under the heading of the devil's trick.

[13 : 12] Firstly, that evil is real. History and our own experience today tells us that evil is very present in our world. But what we don't always appreciate is that the devil stands behind it all.

He is, if you like, the chief instigator promoting it. Have a look at John's gospel, chapter 8, verse 42. John chapter 8, verse 42.

It's on page 1074. Now the context of this is Jesus is contrasting those who are children of God and those who are children of the devil.

And this is what it says, John 8, verse 42. Jesus said to them, he was speaking to the religious leaders, if God were your father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I'm here.

I have not come on my own, but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Why don't you understand what I'm saying? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

[14 : 31] You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He, the devil, was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. So in these couple of verses, we see that the devil is described as a murderer and a liar.

That is his character. And all those who do such things and those who approve of them are also children of the devil because the people he was speaking to were trying to plot the death of Jesus. But there's something else deeper than that. Murder and lying is not just a choice that we make. It's actually carrying out, if you notice carefully, verse 44, it is carrying out the desires of the devil.

So behind all evil in this world, be it the Holocaust in which more than six million Jews were murdered, or an unnoticed lie to your friend in the workplace, the devil stands behind it.

[15 : 47] We can't blame him, we are still responsible for our actions, but we must also understand that our wrong actions are fulfilling what the devil wants.

So our choices, our behavior, the things that we say, they're not just our free choice to behave and to act however we want. It's telling us very clearly that we are ruled by the evil influence of the devil. evil. So evil is very real. Well, evil's not the only thing. Death is also very real. In the Bible, when it talks about death, it's not just physical.

It is also something eternal and spiritual. And it is the consequences of our rebellion against God. Have a look here at Hebrews chapter 2, verses 14 to 15.

Hebrews 2, verses 14 to 15. It's on page 1202. And the context in this section here has been describing the person of Jesus, his work, and how Jesus defeated death.

[17 : 04] So Hebrews chapter 2, verse 14. It says, Since the children, that's us, have flesh and blood, that's how we're made.

It says, Jesus too shared in their humanity. He came into this world to be like one of us. So that, by his death, he might destroy him who holds the power of death.

And who's that? That is, the devil. And to free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Now we all know that death is something that happens to us all. But notice here that it is attributed as being under the power of the devil. In other words, his accusations, his charges against us, will lead to our death and our eternal separation from God. So without Christ, without his intervention, it is telling us that the whole world is held in slavery to the power of death and under its master, the devil.

[18:14] Death is not just the end. We don't just suddenly cease to exist. It is serious. If we are to die without Christ, it is to enter into an eternity with the devil.

evil. So evil is very real and death is very real. And all of this leads us to the conclusion that Satan and his work is very real and we ought to take it seriously.

Have a look at Acts chapter 13. Acts chapter 13.

It's on page 1107. Acts chapter 13 and starting at verse 6 and the context here is that Paul is on his first church planting trip with his buddies and they arrive on the island of Cyprus where they face opposition from Satan through a sorcerer.

Now a sorcerer was somebody who was involved in all kinds of things. They could use a mix of science. They could use drugs and the occult to try and trick people.

[19:39] So let's read from chapter 13 verse 6. They travelled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus who was an attendant of the proconsul Sergius Paulus.

The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas, the sorcerer, for that is what his name means, opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, You are a child of the devil, an enemy of everything that is right.

You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you.

You are going to be blind and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun. Immediately, mist and darkness came over him.

[20:51] Perhaps the reason for that was to symbolize or the imagery of the darkness of his life and the way he was following. Immediately, mist and darkness came over him and he groped about seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord. You see, it's not that Satan is not real, but that he is real and therefore we do need to take him seriously.

Like Elymas, people can and they do interact with Satan. I don't believe that people can speak directly to the dead, but I do believe that Satan can speak acting as if he were the dead.

and willing people as in this case here can be used by Satan to do his specific work. I'm just reminded of my brother Philip when he first came to Cork to university in the flats where he was living.

He was woken up one night to terrible commotion and terrible noise upstairs and he went upstairs to see what was going on.

[22:07] and Ouija boards or seance of some description was happening and he could feel the evil.

He could feel the presence of it all and he rang up Ted Kelly who was his pastor who came round and to pray for Philip for the people who were in that situation.

So it does happen. It is very real and we shouldn't take it lightly. So Halloween I suggest is not something to be passed off as just fun and fancy dress.

While there is much innocent fun involved there is a more sinister side. And behind it stands the work of the devil who wants to disrupt the work of God and distract people from God.

And he will use all that he can including Halloween to trick people into believing that evil and death and Satan are not real.

[23:09] Samhain and his evil spirits may be a fable that have been passed down through folklore but the devil and his schemes are not and they must be taken seriously.

So his biggest trick is to say to us it's all fun and games it's not real don't worry about it. Now having said all that as we think about what I've called the saviour's treat having said all of that we must be

careful that we don't make Halloween into something that it is not.

I don't believe that every kid and everybody who's going to be collecting sweets or buying pumpkins or anything else is involved in kind of satanic behaviour but we must also be careful not to make the devil into something that he is not.

Sometimes we can think that behind the scenes in this world in which we live there's a big battle between good and evil a little bit like Gandalf and Saruman in Lord of the Rings and we're all wondering who's going to win.

No we must never give the devil a position and a power that he doesn't have. The message of the Bible is very clear that the devil is a defeated enemy and he has no more power than God allows him.

[24 : 34] Perhaps the most famous incident is when he comes to Job and it is God who allows the devil to come to Job in the way that he does.

In fact the whole purpose of Jesus Christ coming into the world was to defeat him and to destroy his works. That comes in 1 John 3 verse 8.

But for us let's have a look at Mark's Gospel chapter 1. Mark's Gospel chapter 1. Now no sooner does Mark introduce us to the coming of Jesus and his ministry and immediately after Jesus is baptized we see that Jesus is confronted personally by Satan himself.

Chapter 1 verse 12 it says that once the Spirit sent Jesus out into the desert and he was in the desert for 40 days being tempted by Satan.

Now we know that Satan's purpose through the temptation was to distract Jesus from his task and what he came to do.

[25 : 50] But having failed to distract Jesus Jesus does go on to make very clear what he has come to do. Flick over to Mark's Gospel chapter 3 verse 22.

Mark's Gospel chapter 3 verse 22. And the context here is that Jesus has been driving out demons from people and the religious leaders think that because Jesus is driving out demons that Jesus must be some kind of evil spirit himself.

So Mark chapter 3 verse 22. And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said he that Jesus is possessed by Beelzebub that's another name for Satan.

By the prince of demons he is driving out demons. So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables. How can Satan drive out Satan?

If a kingdom is divided against itself that kingdom cannot stand. In the same way if a house is divided against itself that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided he cannot stand his end has come.

[27 : 10] In fact no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house.

Now pay close attention to verse 27 because Jesus here is stating his mission. Jesus is saying that he is the true strong man.

that he is the one who has come into the world to tie up Satan. To free people from his influence and captivity.

To carry off his possessions. As we saw earlier in John's gospel we are all born captive to Satan. We are all his children.

But Jesus has come to release us from his power. So that we can be his children. Jesus has come to release us from the grip and the fear of death and to give us life.

[28 : 12] He's come to bind Satan so that he can release us to bring us into his family. And as we will see Satan can't stop the mission or the ministry of Jesus.

So very quickly we'll look at three things here. Jesus' authority over evil. As Jesus begins his work he makes his mark in the world by destroying evil spirits and demons.

So back to Mark chapter 1 and verse 23. We see this throughout all the gospels that there's a strong emphasis on the way in which he deals with demons and evil spirits.

Verse 23 of chapter 1. And just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, What do you want with us Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are, the Holy One of God. Be quiet, said Jesus sternly. Come out of him. The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

[29 : 24] The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, What is this? A new teaching? And with authority? He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.

You see, the powers of evil, as powerful as they may be, are actually submissive to the powers of Jesus. They know who Jesus is, they know his name, they know what he has come to do, that he's come to destroy them, and they are afraid of Jesus.

So Jesus does have authority over evil, and not only that, he has authority over death. Look at Mark's Gospel chapter 5.

This is the story of Jairus' daughter. They had come initially to Jesus to tell him that Jairus' daughter was dying, and on his way, verse 35, we read that while Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler.

Your daughter is dead, they said. Why bother the teacher anymore? Verse 39, he went in and he said to them, why all this commotion and wailing?

[30 : 45] The child is not dead, but asleep. But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and he went in where the child was.

He took her by the hand and said to her, Talitha Coom, which means little girl, I say to you, get up. Immediately the girl stood up and walked around. She was twelve years old. At this they were completely astonished. death to Jesus was just like waking somebody up from their sleep.

In an early morning, just giving them a tap and they wake up. That's what it's like for Jesus. He has the supreme power. But that was only the beginning because throughout the rest of Mark's gospel, Jesus repeatedly says that he himself must be killed.

And after three days, he's going to rise again. So when Jesus does die, his disciples go looking for him in the tomb. Look at Mark's gospel, chapter 16.

[32 : 01] Mark's gospel, chapter 16, verse 5. So the story of Jairus' daughter was only a little picture, a little cameo, of a greater victory over death, Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

And in verse 5 of chapter 16, it says, as they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in his white robe sitting on his right side, an angel, and they were alarmed.

Don't be alarmed, he said. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He died. He has risen. He is not here.

See, look, have a look around the tomb. Search all you like. you won't find him. So, Jesus rose from the grave, defeating death, and the promise is that everybody who believes in him will also live.

Or as we read in Hebrews chapter 2, he destroys him who holds the power of death, and he takes away our fear. So, he has authority over evil and over death.

[33 : 13] And this all points to the fact that Jesus ultimately has authority over Satan. Have a look here at Colossians chapter 2 verse 13.

Colossians chapter 2. And that's on page 1183.

Colossians chapter 2. We're looking at all these different passages because there's no one place where it deals with all of these things together. Now, Jesus' authority over Satan is seen supremely when Jesus died on the cross.

We're going to pick it up in the middle of verse 13 of chapter 2, where it says, God made you alive. So, we'll read from there. God made you alive with Christ.

He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us. He took it away, nailing it to the cross.

[34 : 21] And having disarmed the powers and authorities, that's a reference to Satan and his angels, having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Now, for people looking at Jesus' death at a local and a physical level, Jesus, the man, just simply died. But on a cosmic and a spiritual level, Jesus' death was the once and for all defeat of Satan. Behind the cross, or if you like, at the cross, there was an invisible battle taking place, a battle that Jesus fights in our place, a battle that sees our release secured and Satan disarmed.

Let's have a look at those two issues, our release secured and Satan disarmed. Look at verse 14, as Jesus died, he was suffering the execution for you and for me. As it says at the beginning of verse 14, Jesus cancelled the written code.

It's telling us that he took the death sentence that you and I deserve for our rebellion against him. What was against us?

[35 : 47] Verse 14, Jesus took it away, nailing it to the cross. He paid the penalty. He became the death penalty for us, so that we don't have to die for our rebellion.

Because we had sided with the devil. Jesus has secured our release. But that's not all. As Jesus died, he also defeated Satan.

The power that Satan had over us to condemn us and to point at us and say, have you seen the way they've messed up, the way they sinned, the way they've done all these wrong things? The penalty for sin is death.

They deserve to be sentenced and to be killed. Well, that power to condemn has been completely taken away. Look at verse 15, the beginning. It says, he has disarmed the powers and authorities. So Satan can no longer threaten us with death and separation from God. He may try to. He may tell us all kinds of lies that were just not good enough for God.

[36 : 53] but as we've been saying, he's a trickster. He has no power. In fact, Jesus' death was a cosmic victory. He made, look at the end of verse 15, he made a public spectacle of them.

Here were the forces of evil thinking that they were getting rid of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. But he turned that event into a public spectacle for the whole world to see that Christ in the weakness, even in death itself, was triumphing over them by the cross.

So Satan has been disarmed. So Halloween reminds us, I think, of the trick of Satan, but it also reminds us of the Saviour's treat, that Jesus is the supreme power and authority.

When we submit to Christ and trust in his death, the power and the influence of Satan is broken. We are set free. As we were thinking about the pumpkin earlier, he transforms us from the inside, he takes all the mess, takes all the sin, deals with it all, and he replaces it with his light, so that we can shine for him.

So finally then, how are we to celebrate Halloween? Maybe you've already made your plans, and you've already set your mind very firmly what we're going to do.

[38 : 23] Well, this is what I think. I'm not going to tell you what to do, as far as trick-or-treating goes. That's up to you, and your mum and dad, and it's not the place of this church to tell you either whether you should trick-or-treat, or anything else.

I think we've looked at enough to say what we need to be careful of. but let me suggest two things in which I think we can positively engage with Halloween.

Firstly, if your parents here, or even older people and you do talk to others, engage with your children. Halloween is actually an ideal time to talk about big issues, like evil, and death, and Satan. When was the last time you had a conversation about those things with your kids? Now's your opportunity. Find out what they know about it, and more importantly, what the Bible teaches.

We've looked at a whole range of things in the Bible this morning. They need to know about the devil, who he is and what he does, because people will say he doesn't exist, he's not real.

[39 : 32] We also need to prepare them for the devil's tricks. Remember what we read in Ephesians, the armour of God, finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Put on the full armour of God so that you can stand against the devil's schemes. But don't stop there. This is the opportunity for us to talk about Jesus Christ, his victory over evil and over death and over Satan.

Tell them about how Jesus has come to set us free from the devil's influence. Tell them that Jesus has come to deal with death, so we don't need to fear it. It's not good enough to try and hide our kids from it and lock them inside for the night and pretend it's not happening.

We should talk to them and tell them everything about it so that they can better understand and even engage with their own friends in school and what they did over the weekend and what they think.

So engage with your children and then secondly, engage with the world itself. For a long time, and I think we as Christians struggle with this, that we've taken the attitude very often, not just at Halloween, but in all kinds of different ways, we retreat, don't we, and we hide from the world.

[40 : 50] But that was never God's intention. We're not to be a little holy huddle who are stuck away and don't relate to everybody else. It tells us very clearly we are to be in the world, but not of it.

In other words, we are to engage with the world. We are to be an influence for good. What's the point of having a pumpkin light if you hide it in your house? And what's the point in us being lights if we're shut away?

We are to be influences for good. We are to penetrate. We are to be out there. And please don't take that that I'm saying that you have to be involved in trick or treat.

I've said that. That's up to you what you do. Now, what have we done? Let me just give a couple of examples. In the past, we've welcomed kids to the door. We've given them their goodies and their sweeties and maybe even a bun as well.

And we use these little books here. Halloween, it's a scream. We didn't give them to the kids, but we gave them to the parents if they came with parents. So you can engage with kids.

[41 : 56] You don't have to put a sign up on your door and say, no sweeties in here, go away. You can offer something good. I sent a link around earlier on, a couple of weeks ago, which was sent on to me very helpfully, and it told about one family who had set up a hot chocolate stand outside their house.

And they had lots of goodies, and they were engaging with their neighbours and also giving out little books as well. So there's a whole host of different ways, and I encourage us to engage with the world and to think about it.

remember what it said at the end of the armour of God section? It finishes with a prayer, and the prayer was this, that whenever I open my mouth, words will be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.

In other words, when we put the armour of God on, we don't put armour on so that we can retreat. People who go out to battle don't put the armour on and then run away.

They put the armour on because they're going out into the battle. They are going out to engage. Which reminds us again that we are to engage sensibly, reasonably, intelligently with the world in which we live.

[43 : 16] But we can be strong as we engage with the world. So, this morning, let me encourage you to remember and take seriously the trick of Satan.

Evil is real, death is real, the devil himself is very real. But let us remember the treat of the Saviour, that he has conquered all evil, he rules over death, we do not need to fear the grave, and he has the power and authority over Satan.

We can stand strong if we are trusting in him, that we can be his people. So, enjoy your day and enjoy your evening in whatever you may do.

Let's pray. Our Father God, we thank you so much for the clarity of your word telling us all about the world in which we live in big ideas.

That there is a world full of darkness. There is a world in which the devil does roam, where he does influence.

[44 : 43] Help us to take this seriously. But help us to celebrate and to live in the victory of Jesus Christ and all that he has done.

We celebrate this morning the wonderful rescue that when we trust you we are brought from a kingdom of darkness into a kingdom of light. we are transferred from being children of the devil to being children of God.

We are taken from fear of death, where we welcome and look forward to an eternity with you. We thank you for Jesus.

I pray for every family represented here, for all of the children. Please help them to understand these things that are going on over the weekend. Help them to engage with it.

If they belong to you, that you would make them strong. To stand firm. To have a reason for the hope that they have. To have a different way of looking at Halloween.

[45 : 54] We pray for those who do not yet love you. That they would be challenged afresh to put their hope in Jesus. I pray for all of the parents that you would help them to make good and wise decisions.

Not just today, but throughout all of their lives. As we seek to bring up our children in a way that honors you. Help us to engage with the world, not just on a day or a night like tonight, but throughout the year.

Help us to be relevant. Help us not to run away and hide, but to engage. To equip ourselves with your armor. That we may take our stand.

And when we stand firm, to hold out the light of Christ. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Well, if you want to discuss or talk further about any of these things, if it's probed any questions, be delighted to talk with you further.

Amen.