

Christians Are Like Pumpkins

Air Dates: November 21-25, 2022

Day One

It's pumpkin time again! At this time of year we see lots of those delicious pumpkins, some for eating, some for decorating. But did you ever think of this: Christians are like pumpkins! Now wait, that's not an insult. Let me explain.

First of all, we're like pumpkins because:

God picks us from the patch, brings us in, and washes all the dirt off of us.

For those who have been born from above, our salvation began when God picked us out of the patch. Jesus said in John 15:16: *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.* And Paul reminds us in Ephesians 1:4: *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

I never cease to be amazed at this truth, that God chose me. He picked me out of that dirty pumpkin patch of life and brought me into the fold of his care, made me his child and called me by name.

But you know, a pumpkin is of little use until you get it cleaned up. I don't know if you've ever picked a pumpkin or seen one right out of the pumpkin patch, but they are really dirty. They lie on the ground for many days and collect all kinds of dirt and mud, so when you bring them in, the first thing you have to do is get them cleaned up.

And that's the first thing God does for us when he chooses us from the dirty patch we were in. We read in 1 Corinthians 6:11: *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

And again in Titus 3:4-5: *But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we have done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

We come from different "pumpkin patches," with different kinds of dirt on us, but all of us had to be cleaned up by Jesus, didn't we? Think of what you were before Jesus brought you in from the patch. Think of where you would be without him.

Day Two

Christians are like pumpkins! This season when pumpkins are ripe and we use them for all kinds of delicious dishes, as well as decorations, it's interesting to see how we are like those pumpkins.

For example, pumpkins first must be picked from the patch, brought in and cleaned up. And when we are born from above and made new creations in Christ, he chooses us from our dirty pumpkin patches, and brings us into his family, and cleanses us from the sin and dirt of this world.

It is true that we never want to dwell on our past and live in regret. What God has forgiven and we have forsaken should no longer keep us in bondage. But it is also true that we need to remember where we were before Christ brought us in from our pumpkin patch. A. W. Tozer has written:

“The only sure defense against self-righteousness is to cultivate a quiet state of continual penitence. A sweet but sobering memory of our past guilt and a knowledge of our present imperfections are not incompatible with the joy of the Lord; and they are of inestimable aid in resisting the enemy.”

Remember your pumpkin patch today—the place you were before Christ picked you up and brought you in. Remember, and give thanks that he has redeemed you from that life and given you new life and hope for a bright future.

Because we've been given new life in Christ, our demeanor and our attitudes should be joyful, don't you think? You may be in a place you don't particularly want to be in, a job you're not crazy about, dealing with people you're not fond of. But you have a wonderful opportunity, right in that spot, to be a witness for Jesus simply by being a joyful, positive person. After all, you've been saved from the pumpkin patch and you have every reason to rejoice. So, today, wherever God has you now planted, make a commitment to rejoice all day long as you remember that you've been rescued from the pumpkin patch and made new in Christ.

Day Three

Have you ever cleaned out a pumpkin? At this time of year, we enjoy pumpkin pies and muffins and other delicious pumpkin dishes. But before we can use that pumpkin, we must clean it out on the inside, right?

God picks us from the patch, washes off the dirt of sin, and then he has to clean us up on the inside.

He cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff.

The Christian life is a process that begins at that moment that Jesus picks us out of the patch and cleans us up. Then begins the process of transforming us into the likeness of Jesus. This is a process that continues throughout all our earthly days. Sometimes that process can be painful, as we are confronted with the mess on the inside of us, the yucky stuff that is clogging us up.

Just as there are lots of seeds inside a pumpkin that have to be removed, so in our hearts there are many seeds that need to be cleaned out. Paul wrote to the Colossians: *You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips* (Colossians 3:7-8). And again he wrote: *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God* (2 Corinthians 7:1).

What seeds are still clogging up inside of you, contaminating your body and spirit? Years ago, I wrote this verse in my prayer journal, and I began to pray that God will help me clean up whatever it is that is contaminating my body and my spirit. And God has faithfully pointed many of those seeds out to me and given the grace and power to start cleaning them out.

Paul named some of these seeds that have to be cleaned out: Anger and rage must be scooped out of your heart. You know, when you allow anger to remain, it will quickly turn into bitterness, which is a deadly heart contamination. It will ruin your spirit and your physical body.

Malice and slander are seeds that we cannot afford to keep around. Regardless of how others treat you, you must not allow malice to reside in your heart toward them. It sours on you quickly and makes you miserable.

Scooping out the yucky stuff may not be pleasant, but it produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness, and that is very worthwhile and very wonderful.

Day Four

Since we're in the season of using pumpkins for food and decorations, I thought I'd point out how we Christians are somewhat like those pumpkins. First, God has to pick us from the "pumpkin patches" of our lives, clean us up, and then scoop out all the yucky stuff inside. We covered how the seeds that grow inside of us have to be truly cleaned out.

One of the favorite things to do with pumpkins at this harvest time is to make jack-o-lanterns. After scooping out all the yucky stuff from inside, then we carve a smiling face and put a candle inside to light it up. And the process is similar with how God changes us when we allow him to clean out all the yucky stuff inside.

He carves a new smiling face and puts his light inside of us to shine for all the world to see.

One of my favorite passages is Psalm 40:2-3: *He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.* With a new song to sing and a smile on your face, you truly become a light in your world, as Jesus intended when he said: *You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden* (Matthew 5:14).

Proverbs 15:13 says, *A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.* And again in verse 30: *Light in a messenger's eyes brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.*

Do you carry a cheerful look and a happy face into your world each day? I'm not talking about a phony smile or pretending that everything is right. But I am talking about allowing God's light inside of you to shine through you regardless of the circumstances. Anyone can look cheerful when everything is going right, but when life is tough, that's when the smiling face really makes a difference.

Did you know that when you smile, you get those endorphins going inside you and that can actually change the way you feel. And sometimes the smile comes first and the joy comes later, so, it's a very good discipline to just remember to smile more and let the light of Christ shine through you.

Day Five

Let's review how Christians are like pumpkins:

- First, God picks us from the patches of life, brings us into his family, and cleans us up.
- Then he digs inside of us and scoops out all the yucky stuff that is clogging us up.
- He gets rid of the seeds of anger and rage and malice—and all those other things which have kept us on bondage for too long.
- Then he puts a new look on our face, a new song in our heart, and puts his light inside us to shine through us for all the world to see.

This simple presentation can be very effective for children or adults. Just get a pumpkin and as you clean it up and scoop it out and put a smiling face on it with a candle inside, you can explain how in the same way God does this for us who have become his children through faith in Jesus Christ.

I have found that any kind of visual presentation along with a message increases its effectiveness many times. We remember what we see far longer than what we hear. So, I'm always looking for creative ways to make a message memorable and practical.

Let me remind us once again of how God has transformed us from the dirty pumpkins we were, taken us out of our sinful pumpkin patches and made us new creations in Christ. Psalm 30:11-12 expresses this so well: *You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. LORD my God, I will praise you forever.*