Bible says in Proverbs 17:22 – A joyful heart (laughter) is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.

We don’t want a broken spirit and dried up bones do we? I’m going to give us a chance to take our medicine this morning, so you can laugh at this…

A man dies and goes to heaven, and of course, St. Peter meets him at the Pearly Gates.

St. Peter says to him, “Here’s how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven.

You tell me all the good things you’ve done in your life, and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in.”

“Okay,” the man says, “I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart.”  
“That’s wonderful,” says St. Peter, “that’s worth 3 points!”

“3 points?” he says. “Well, I attended church all my life and put up the pastor’s jokes… I supported the ministry financially with my 10% tithe, plus I served”  
“Terrific!” says St. Peter. “That’s certainly worth 1 point.”

“1 point?!!” “I served in a soup kitchen and opened a shelter for homeless veterans.” “Fantastic, that’s good for 2 more points,” he says.

“2 points!?!!” Exasperated, the man cries out… “At this rate  
the only way I’ll get into heaven is by the grace of God.”

“Bingo, 100 points! Come on in!”

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

I’ve heard Tony & Donna teaching the children before about what that means. I love the illustration they use to make the point.

Being a Christian is like being a pumpkin.

* God picks you special from the patch.
* He brings you in
* Washes off all the dirt of sin.

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

What’s that you might ask? Self and the desires of our flesh that are contrary/adverse to what the Holy Spirit needs to scoop out.

Seeds of:

* Sexual immorality
* Idolatry (not making God #1)
* Witchcraft
* Hatred
* Discord
* Jealousy
* Fits of rage
* Greed
* Creating division
* Envy
* Drunkenness. All of which are found in Galatians 5:19-20.

God, through Paul warns that “yucky stuff” like that has to be removed because, V21, those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

When God empty’s us of all the “yucky stuff”, we are free!

Free for him to carve a big, brand new beautiful smiling face for us and to put the light of His Holy Spirit in us to then shine for all the world to see… and be drawn to... Like a moth to a flame.

God makes us noticeably different from all of the other pumpkins!

* Uncommon
* Extraordinary
* Which is part of the definition of the word “Holy”.
* Fruits of the Spirit (Love, Joy, Peace, Patience… Galatians 5:22-23)

Bible says that God doesn’t show favoritism… He extends the same offer of saving grace to every pumpkin in the patch.

Every nation, tribe and tongue.

We praise God for His amazing grace, help, hope, healing, comfort, blessing, protection, power & purpose that we receive by faith.

God’s grace has a name… Jesus

Only through sacrificial death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, God’s only Son, can the Holy Spirit cleanse us from sin.

That in it’s self is but one reason why some pumpkins miss out…

they somehow believe that God would not make the way to heaven so narrow… Matthew 7:13-14

From our perspective, however, it seems like God has made the way of grace so huge, wide and noticeable, that all should be able to see… turning from their sin, to faith in God.

Because there is no other “g”od that sacrificed there Son to forgive our sin…

There is another reason why some pumpkins miss out…

They like the dirtiness of sin…

* They don’t want God to wash/cleanse them from sin. John 3:19-20
* They don’t want their top cut and the “yucky stuff” scooped out
* They don’t want to be “set apart” to live God’s uncommon/extraordinary way.
* Some don’t want God’s love and compassion to shine from their lives so that the other pumpkins can see God through them.

They are happy looking down on and judging the other pumpkins in the patch.

God says to choose wisely… Luke 9:57-62

God, Yahweh, our Creator deserves to be the #1 priority in the life of the believer…

Not #1 on a list of ten, but #1 on a list of one.

That way He is with us wherever we go, in whatever we face.

That way we don’t have to cry out for “Jesus to take the wheel” when life gets tough, because we’ve stopped making the choice to drive.

* Us serving Him, not Him serving us.
* Him being pilot, us being the passenger.
* We are the pumpkins, He is the cleaner/scraper/filler.

There are some more reasons some pumpkins miss out…

Some pumpkins would rather be in control, and be served… rather than serving. Thank goodness, that isn’t you!

We live to please God

Galatians 1:10

1 Thessalonians 2:4

Why would anyone do otherwise?

John 12:43

They may have turned to God, said a prayer, asked for forgiveness, etc… but didn’t allow God to wash them all the way off…

Or they didn’t allow God to cut the top and scrape out the “yucky stuff” of “self” so God could make them beautiful inside.

They appear “common”, “ordinary”, “unholy”.

Matthew 7:21-23

We know that it’s what’s inside that makes our outside look “uncommon”/“extraordinary” (regardless of age, race, gender, social status, etc…)

2 Corinthians 5:17

Matthew 6:9-10

“Your Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven”

What is heaven like?

New like we’ve never seen before!

* The Glory of God is present – Revelation 21:11
* All light, no darkness – Revelation 21:14
* Total restoration/Complete healing – Revelation 22:1-2
* Supernatural Love, joy, peace, patience

Heaven is the place of “no mores”

* No more tears
* No more sorrow
* No more pain
* No more suffering

So what does it look like when “heaven comes to earth” and we are filled with the Holy Spirit of God?

New like we’ve never seen before!

* The Glory of God is present in us – Revelation 21:11
* All light, no darkness of sin in us – Revelation 21:14
* Total restoration/Complete healing – Revelation 22:1-2
* Supernatural Love, joy, peace, patience…

Living lives of “no mores”

* No more tears
* No more sorrow
* No more pain
* No more suffering

Where we once may have caused hurt, pain, confusion, distress in the lives of others… we now bring the attributes of heaven to others.

The Holy Spirit changes us from seeing and being what’s wrong with the world, to seeing and being the change that our sin sick world needs.

* Colossians 3:23-24
* Colossians 3:17

But first we must repent (turn away from the dirt and yuck and turn to Him) so that He can fill us with His Holy Spirit… (God’s Power)… to do what we can not do on our own.

Help the other pumpkins to see the value in allowing God do this work in them, bringing as many more with us as possible.

Are you leaving behind you a trail of “uncommon”/“extraordinary”/“obedient faith for others to follow?

That is God’s Kingdom come and His will being done on earth as it is in heaven…

CLOSING SONG