



**Being Like The Pumpkin
Various Text
Westport Christian Church
October 25, 2009**

This time of the year is one of my favorite. The temperature changes, the leaves are beautiful and the harvest time is beginning. A couple of weeks ago we touched on the term harvest and what it means. For the farmers it means work and a return on your investment. For the hunters it means a time to get outside and enjoy God's creation. For the turkey farmer it means just a few more weeks until Thanksgiving, then a return on their investment as well.

For some, fall not only brings harvest, but it also brings pumpkins. The other day I was driving around and I was amazed at all the pumpkins.

So today, I would like for us to see what we may have in common with the pumpkin. We will use various text of Scripture to help us to understand the comparison of the pumpkin and the Christian walk.

The first thing I want us to see and understand is. . .

I. We are Created By God

God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen 1:27 NASU)

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created through Him and for Him. (Col

1:16 NASU)

"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." (Rev 4:11 NASU)

I need to share with you something right here from the start. It is something that some may not want to hear, but it is the truth straight from the Word of God. Every person on this earth came from the same seed, Adam. But what about after the flood? Each and every person is a descendant of Noah.

That means the people who live in Greensburg, Mexico, England, Africa, Afghanistan and Iraq are all from the same family. There is only one race and that is the human race!

Even though we all came from the same seed like the pumpkin we too are different. Different sizes, shapes, color, abilities, and talents. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly. (Rom 12:6)

In I Cor. 12 Paul writes about different gifts and ministries and how Christians, the church needs to work together for the glory of God.

In Matthew 25 we read, "For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. "To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. "Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. "In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. "But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. "Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. "The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, "Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' "His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

"Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, "Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.' "His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man,

reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. "And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' "But his master answered and said to him, "You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. "Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. "Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' . . . 30 "Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt 25:14-30 NASU) In that Passage, Jesus is telling a parable about the things God has given to us and how we must use them or we will be punished. It doesn't matter how big or how small we think our talent or ministry may be, what count is what we do with what we have! That is what counts. Consider the size of the postage stamp, its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing till it gets there!

Just like the pumpkin, God has created us for a purpose. What purpose are you filling?

Just like the pumpkin. . .

II. We Must Remain Attached To The Vine

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. (John 15:1-6)

Let take a look at the word 'abide.' The meaning here is to stay in relation too, continue, be present in or remain. It has the understanding to bond. Think about that for a moment, to bond to something is like gluing something together. It adheres one to the another. That is how our relationship with Christ is suppose to be. We are to be bonded to Him, remain attached. I remember a few years ago when I was about seven years old. I got into my grandpa's garden to look things over. Now, I knew that it was ok for me to look, but I shouldn't touch any thing. But there it was, the most beautiful pepper I had ever seen. All I wanted to do was touch it. But as I was just about to touch that pepper, the dog ran out in the garden and knowing grand-dad didn't want the dog in the

garden I turned real fast to yell at the dog while holding onto the pepper, and guess what happened? That's right. The pepper was now in my hand!

What was I going to do? The pepper wasn't ready to pick, and I couldn't just throw it away, after all granddad would know. So I did what I thought was the best, I stuck it back into the plant where it was and I ran behind the barn so no one would ever know. But you know what happened don't you. That pepper instead of growing bigger begins to dry up. I couldn't understand, it was back in the plant, but it wasn't connected, it wasn't attached, it had lost that bonding power.

Jesus said, if we don't stay connected to Him then we dry up! Just like that pepper you see, we can come and get stuck in the plant, in this building, but unless we are connected, bonded to Him then we will slowly dry up. There are people every Sunday that attend a church of their choice but they not connected to Jesus, the true vine.

Just like the pumpkin we must remain attached to the vine. Are you connected, attached to the One True Vine?

Also, like the pumpkin. . .

III. It Takes Time To Mature

The pumpkin takes time to grow and develop and the same is true for us. We must grow and develop in our Christian life. We must grow in our relationship and service to the Lord. We must send our roots down deep into the truths of God's Word, growing and building upon its foundation.

In sharing with the kids at the "Good News Club," I use the wordless book. Each page in the book share a part of the gospel plan of salvation. The last page in the book is green which tells us we are to grow in the Lord. We grow in the Lord by studying His word. Do you know more today about God's word than you did last year at this time? If the answer is no, then you need to answer the question why.

Not only are we to grow in our knowledge, but we are to grow in our service to the Lord as well. How do we grow in our service to the Lord? By serving other people. It truly is that simple. We serve God by serving people. Telling them about the Lord and what He wants to do for them. Reaching out with the love of Christ and doing what you can to meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. After you become a Christian we are to serve. Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45 NASU)

"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." (John 13:14-15 NASU)

If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. (James 2:15-17 NASU)

We are saved by grace, through faith in Christ, at our baptism, to do good works. We are not saved by works, but we serve others because we are saved. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt 5:16 NASU)

That means allowing ourselves to be stretched beyond being comfortable. Now, what happens if I put on one of Ronda's Tee shirts? It would stretch, would it not? Now, even if she washes it, it will not go back to the same shape it was, will it? No, and that is how we need to grow in our service to God. We must step out allowing ourselves to be stretched then we get a moment of rest, but not to long. Some people don't mind being stretched a little but when they get to the rest stage they don't want to go on.

However, we must go at it again. Do you see what is happening. Soon we are comfortable with where we have stretched to and are capable of stretching some more. If we don't then we won't grow, as a Christian as well as a congregation.

Growing to maturity leads to bearing fruit. So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; Col 1:10

I would like to encourage you to ask God to help you grow in the direction that He would have. Also, ask Him to help us to grow as a congregation. You need to understand how a little bit of faith will get you heading in the right direction. Things such as revivals, Bible study, Biblical education classes are things that bring us to maturity. Keeping our eyes focused on Christ the author and perfecter of our faith.

We must receive nourishment from God's Word, growing in His grace and knowledge, allowing ourselves to mature that we may bear fruit that will last far beyond our time on this earth.

Are you allowing yourself to grow to maturity so that you will leave behind you seeds for the Kingdom?

Conclusion; A small child had recently been baptized. One of her classmates asked her what it was like to be a Christian. She was caught off guard and didn't know how to answer when she looked up and saw a jack-o-lantern on the desk. She answered, "It's like being a pumpkin". Her classmate asked her to explain that!

"Well, God picks you from the patch and brings you in and washes off all the dirt on the outside that you got from being around all the other pumpkins. Then he cuts off the top and takes all the yucky stuff out from inside. He removes all the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, and all those other bad things. Then he carves you a new smiley face and puts his light inside of you to shine for all to see! It is our choice to either stay outside and rot on the vine or come inside and be something new and bright!" (Author Unknown)

I hope that the next time you see a pumpkin that you see it from a different angle. Knowing that we have something in common with the pumpkin. That just like the pumpkin we were created by God the creator. Created in His image that we may bring glory to Him. We must remain connected to the vine the source of life. And by remaining attached to the Vine we can grow and become mature that we may produce fruit for the Kingdom.

God has provided soil for our roots to grow. It is His Word. He has given to us the stimulate that we need to develop. It is the Holy Spirit. He has given to us the Living Water, which is Christ Jesus our Lord. All we must do is stay attached, grow in His grace, and produce fruit for the Kingdom. Don't be left in the garden of life to rot away but allow yourself to bring glory to God!

AMEN!