

4. Halloween is over, masks off.

“Life is like a masquerade. There comes a midnight hour when everyone has to throw off his mask.” Soren Kierkegaard

When I was in Junior High, a familiar greeting on November 1st was: Halloween is over, take off your mask! Today, if we are honest we might ask – “Which one?” Because most of us have several masks – one for business, one for friends, one for family, still others for private life, even church.

We can wear masks for every occasion, but in essence they are all the same. They represent the image we choose to project to others, behind which we hide our true selves.

We learn to control our relationships by how much we let people know about the real person inside.

We live in two separate worlds – public and private. And in our private world we store the fantasies, fears, failures, hurts, insecurities that we desperately hope no one will uncover. When people ask, “How’s it going?” Our conditioned response is, “Great, never better!”

Why do we resist taking off our masks? Could it be because we want to impress our peers and avoid appearing as failures? Psychiatrist Paul Tournier taught: “No one can develop a full life without feeling understood by at least one person.”

Some of us are fortunate to have spouses and close friends who know a great deal about us and still offer love and support. But who is ultimately reliable? Who can understand us fully when we cannot truly know and understand ourselves? As one person said, “My greatest need is to have someone know me – really know me – and not turn away.”

I must confess that I still struggle with some of these issues in my own life. But, I discovered that I never need to say, if God knew the kind of person I am, He wouldn’t love me. Because God says, “I know everything about you, the worst as well as the best. I know you better than you know yourself.” Yes, the same God who made us knows all about us and loves us just the same. His love is unconditional, no matter what!

But, I also have a role to play in receiving such love. I need to be honest with God, myself and others. I need to acknowledge my need of forgiveness and a power beyond my own to overcome trials and temptations. I need to invite the spirit of God to take up residence in my inmost self, and bring about changes in that private part of me hidden behind a mask.

Yes, God can forgive the past, sort out the present, and guide the future. We don’t need to hide any longer. The persons he is freeing us to be on the inside can be the persons we dare to be on the outside. He can give us whatever we need to become authentic genuine persons. Yes, the midnight hour is approaching when everyone has to throw off his mask.

“For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be made known” (Matthew 10:26)..