

“I believe in the holy Christian church, the communion of saints”

LIVING THE CREED: CONNECTING LIFE AND FAITH IN THE APOSTLES CREED · AUGUST 7, 2022 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

(1 Peter 2:9)

Do We Really Believe in the Church?

The challenge of the church

The challenge within us

Considering what it means to believe in the church

A Church Worth Believing In

The church is holy

- Made holy in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Peter 2:9)
- Becoming holy through the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:3)

The church is universal/catholic/Christian

- What “catholic” means and doesn’t mean
- The universal mission of the church (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)
- The multi-everything nature of the church (Revelation 7:9-10; Galatians 3:26-29)

The church is a communion of saints

- “Communion” as community unified by Christ for Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)
- What are “saints”? (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Living Out Our Belief in the Church

Seeing the church through the eyes of Jesus

Expanding our vision through the global church

Being the church through the power of the Holy Spirit

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When did you first “go to church”? Was it as a child or as a teenager or as an adult? What do you recall about your first experiences of church?
2. This week we continue our series, “Living the Creed” by exploring this statement from the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in the holy catholic/Christian church, the communion of saints.” Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through His Word, and then continue with the study.
3. Many people refer to Pentecost as the “birthday” of the church. Read Acts 1:7-8 and 2:1-21. What do you notice here about what God is doing in this new community of disciples of Jesus we call the church?
4. Read some or all the following Bible passages. What do these passages tell us about the church?:
 - Matthew 16:13-20
 - Matthew 28:18-20
 - Acts 20:28
 - 1 Corinthians 1:2
 - 1 Corinthians 10:16-17
 - Galatians 3:26-29
 - Ephesians 1:22-23
 - Ephesians 2:19-20
 - Ephesians 4:4-6
 - Ephesians 5:26-27
 - Hebrews 10:24-25
 - Hebrews 12:23
 - 1 Peter 2:9-10
 - Revelation 7:9-10
5. Why do many people you know (or even you) struggle with the church? How might any of the verses we just explored speak to those issues?
6. What is one thing you learned through this study or sense God is speaking to you about your life and faith? If you’re in a small group, share that with one another. If you are on your own, write it down and share it with someone this week. Conclude your study in prayer.

DIG DEEPER

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize 1 Peter 2:9 or Ephesians 4:4-6
- Are there ways you have become embittered or cynical about the church? Take some time to pray or journal about. Ask God if there is anything He is calling you to do in relation to these things? Is there any way you need to ask God to soften your heart?
- Watch the Bible Project video, “Pentecost: Acts 1-7”: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-acts-1/>
- Consider reading:
 - o Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*
 - o Mark Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*