

One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church - Ephesians 2:11-22
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

We believe in the church? Kind of an interesting take in our day. The church has tended to be a mess. Scandals, fallen leaders, huge fights, sexual abuse, and leaders who have used people to make themselves rich are among the issues the church has faced. Thinking about the church can be complicated. I guarantee that some of us have been harmed and hurt by the church, finding it difficult to go to church, no less actually say you believe in the church. Yet, here it is in the Nicene Creed and therefore on our lips as we recite it. Why would they include this statement in this statement of faith.

Lets just begin with some honesty, the church is made up of redeemed and rescued people, yet they are still sinners in need of grace. Furthermore, not everyone who attends, joins, and even leads the church are genuinely saved. Yet, the church is God's idea, and Jesus promised that He would build His church. So we need to define what we are talking about when we say we believe in the church. We have repeated this here at Genesis over and over. The New Testament concept of church is usually different from what we think about. Generally, when we think of church we think of a place or building, an event (going to church), a set of programs, or a hierarchy of leaders. Yet, in the New Testament the church is a people called by God, rescued by Jesus, and filled with the Spirit in community shaped by the Gospel. This community is made visible in local expressions, local churches such as Genesis who exist as an outpost of God's mission in a community. The church is also global, the community of people around the globe who are our brothers and sisters. We have more in common with Iraqi, Nigerian, or Phillipino Christians than we do our neighbors, they are family. And the church is eternal. One day the redeemed church of Jesus made from every tribe, language, and culture will gather around the throne to voice praises to Jesus for all eternity. So, when Jesus proclaims that He will build His church (Matthew 16:18), He is guaranteeing that His purpose on the church will be accomplished, and that His death and resurrection will redeem a people for God.

As the Nicene Creed states "We believe in the church," it uses four adjectives to describe the church. The church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The foundation for these adjectives is found in our text this week, one of many passages that affirms these terms which have historically been referred to the marks of the church. One, holy, catholic, and apostolic defines the nature of the global and eternal church and determines if a local congregation is actually a New Testament church. First, the church is one. This is a reference to the unity of Jesus' people. Skeptics among us will cry foul right here. The church one, seriously. There are 45,000 different denominations, how can we confess the unity of the church. It may look that way when we focus on the things that divide us. Yet, the truths that unite us are actually bigger and way more binding. The true church is united in the Gospel, believing and pronouncing the beautifully story of God's rescue through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. We are united in our mission, to see the Gospel proclaimed to all nations. And we are united in our core doctrines, those outlined in the Nicene Creed.

Second, the church is holy. Again, sometimes it seems like it just aint so. Sin wrecks local churches and the stories sometimes ends up in the headlines. But being holy in Scripture is not primarily about behavior. The word holy means to be set apart, separate, different. When the Holy Spirit called us to salvation He made us holy, set apart for the purpose of God. Those who are made holy will move toward holy living.

Third, the church is, wait, what? Catholic? Are you saying we are catholic? Actually, yes, we are saying this. The word catholic comes from a Greek word that means universal. The Roman Catholic Church at a point in history made the decision that they alone were the true church, which was not a pronouncement that was theirs to make. Nevertheless, the true universal church is made up of all the local churches who preach the true Gospel, live in the mission of God, and hold to the true doctrine of the faith.

Finally, the church is apostolic. Simply put, this means the church rests on the foundation set by the Apostles. Jesus called these men to follow Him, and they received their information about Jesus as eyewitnesses who both saw the acts of Jesus and then heard His words. Furthermore, Jesus promised the protection of their message so that they would faithfully pass it on. We now have their words in the documents of the New Testament. To be apostolic means we stand in the faith once for all delivered to the saints by these men. There may be new contexts, but we will not find new truth, and we will not make the message better.

So yes, we believe in the church, the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. And we gladly stand as a local expression of the global and eternal church, to the glory of Christ.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Psalm 23	Psalm 24	Psalm 25	Psalm 26	Psalm 27	Psalm 28	Psalm 29

Reading from this past week's sermon: Ephesians 2:11-22

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Romans 8:18-25

Family Worship

Song - *Take you at Your Word*

<https://youtu.be/HDpPjtkowpl?si=TvNuRxHTWuq7u8qH>

Gospel Project

Unit: The Southern Kingdom

Story: God Promised a New Covenant

Big Picture Question: What is God like?

Answer: God is holy, good, and loving.

Scripture: Jeremiah 17, 31

New City Catechism

Question 47: Does the Lord's Supper add anything to Christ's atoning work?

Answer: No, Christ died once for all.

Verse: 1 Peter 3:18

Ephesians 2:11-22

- Do you find it difficult to express trust in the church? If so, why?
- Why is it important or us to think of the church as local, global, and eternal? Why do all three dimensions of the church matter for our understanding?
- What does it mean for the church to be one? Holy? Catholic? Apostolic? Why is each mark of the church important?
- What are the best ways for us to demonstrate our faith in Christ's church?

Prayer

*Pray for your church, and that God would give you a deep love for the church.

*Pray for our Grief Share ministry and for those who are experiencing deep grief as we enter the Holiday season.