



The Church - The Communion of Saints

Key idea:

The Church is the communion of the saints, all of those in every age who have been united to Christ in faith and draw their life from Him and who are therefore spiritually united with one another now and in eternity.

Key text:

John 10:16

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Hebrews 12:22–24

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Catechism Question 70:

What is the Church?

The Church is the Body, Bride, and Temple of Christ, the community of all true believers for all time.

Key points:

1. The Church is the communion of the saints, all of those in every age who have been united to Christ in faith and draw their life from Him.
2. All believers in the earth, in both local churches and the universal Church, are spiritually united with one another because of the union with Christ.
3. The saints of all ages, including those still alive on earth and those who have died are now in heaven with Christ, are in union with one another through their union with Christ by the Holy Spirit.
4. The communion of all believers with Christ & one another will continue into eternity.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. What does it mean when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:17 "he who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit"? Is this union merely metaphorical, or is Paul speaking of an actual spiritual reality? Why does it make a difference?
3. What does it mean when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:16 "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?" How do we "participate" in the body and blood of Christ in communion (the Lord's Table)? Does this mean the bread and wine are actually physically changed into body and blood, or does Paul mean something else?
4. What does it mean when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:17 "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf"? Does this mean that there is both a vertical (me and God) and a horizontal (me and other believers) dimension to communion? How does communion serve to make us one body?
5. What is the relationship between my union with Christ and my communion with the saints? Is it possible for me to experience one without also experiencing the other?
6. The communion of saints includes my unity with other believers in my local church and also my unity with believers in other local churches. Which one of these is more difficult for me? What potential problems exist in me walking in unity with others in my local church? With believers in other local churches?
7. In Hebrews 12:22-24, the Scripture gives a picture of us joining a heavenly worship service. How could being aware of this each week as we gather change my involvement in worship?
8. What is the relationship between Old Covenant believers and New Covenant believers? Do we share the same Gospel? Are we part of the same people of God, or are we part of two distinct people with two different Gospels?
9. Who will I call or see to encourage this week? Who can I encourage to gather with the Church for worship this coming Sunday?