

The Apostle's Creed: The Holy Catholic Church



I believe in ... the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of the saints...

Overview of the message:

Up to this point we had looked at 13 statements in the creed about God, now moving onto 5 statements about how this belief in God affects us.

Both the two statements for today are about the church.

1) The Holy Catholic Church (Matthew 16:13-18) refers to the universal, global church, including people from different times. This is Jesus's church, not ours. It is the body of Christ. There is only one church, though unity may not always be visible. What unites us is greater than what divides us, so the church will endure. Every obstacle, including division and apathy, will serve to help God's plan to build his church.

2) The communion of saints (Matthew 18:15-17) refers to the local church, the fellowship, relationships and sharing of Christians in a specific place and time. Saints are not special holy people but all believers who have been justified by faith. This is beautiful but messy. It is a family – brothers and sisters, not primarily an organisation or even friends. It includes helping people face their sins, so there needs to be a depth of relationship within the community. Church is not optional; it is prescribed by Jesus to make us holy for him.

Jesus loves his church – Chris challenged us to have the same love.

Prophecy

Tim Green shared a vision of people in our church, inside clear glass test tubes. Though we could see each other the test tubes showed that we were restricted in our fellowship, and need to break out of them if we are to have the depth of relationship God intends. We need to smash the tubes (barriers) which can be messy or painful, reaching out to others who we don't know or who are different from ourselves.

Questions

1. What are the obstacles to getting to know one another more deeply?
2. How can we break out of the 'test tubes'?
3. Pray together for deeper fellowship and unity within Gateway, that includes everyone. Pray for deeper unity between different churches and with Christians we know from other churches.