

## We Believe: Article 7 – The Church Sunday: 10/22/2023 – Pastor Lenard Tavernelli

*“We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.”*

### Overview:

This week Pastor Lenard taught us about the Church from Article 7 from the Statement of Faith. We learned that the church is one of the most important yet forgotten doctrines for the church today. The church is a major part of God's plan, we are the people of his Kingdom, part of his family, and a temple in Christ. We learned that before the church we were separated from God and that is the why the Gospel is the good news. Jesus came and paid for our sin, he replaced us on the cross. Jesus' act justifies us and draws us close to him, we become part of his family. In a world that is greatly divided Jesus' act on the cross also unites his people in a way that breaks down all of those divisions so that we can be a people that glorifies him.

Jesus instituted our two ordinances that visibly and tangibly express the Gospel. These ordinances confirm and nourish the church. Baptism is an outward sign of our identification with Jesus; we declare that we are his, part of his church. Likewise, communion is an act we do together, we remind ourselves what Jesus did for his Church.

### Outline:

Ephesians 3:8-11

1. Our Past: Strangers and Aliens apart from Christ. (Ephesians 2:11-12, 2:1-3)
2. Our Present: Justified and Brought Near in Christ. (Ephesians 2:13, 2:4-5, 2:8-9)
3. Our Peace: United in One Body in Christ. (Ephesians 2:14-18, Colossians 3:11, John 13:35, John 17:21, Ephesians 4:3)
4. Our Place: A Kingdom, a Family, and a Temple in Christ (Ephesians 2:19-22)
  - i. Citizens
  - ii. Family
  - iii. The Temple (Psalm 118:22-23)

The Ordances: 1 Peter 2:4-5, 1 Peter 3:21-22, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

### Discussion Questions

1. Did the sermon challenge your views of the church?
2. How has being a part of a church community benefited you?
  - a. How have you been able to benefit others in the church?
  - b. If you are not a member, what holds you back?
3. Many of us, at one time or another, have tried to walk in faith on our own. From the sermon, why is God's plan for a church better than our own?
  - a. The statement refers to the “true church”, what is meant by that?
  - b. What does making the church a priority in your life look like?
4. Pastor Lenard asked the question; do you love, value, and prioritize the church as Jesus does?
  - a. What do you need to entrust to Jesus in regards to the church?
  - b. Do you need to take the step of Baptism or joining in membership?
  - c. Do you need to seek reconciliation?

5. Did anything else stand out to you in the sermon?

**Article 7 with references: The Church**

The Church 7. We believe that the true church (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:4-6; 5:25; Heb. 12:28) comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone (Ps. 103:12; Isa. 44:22; Jn. 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 3:20-28; 4:3; 5:1, 21; 8:1, 30, 33-34; 10:4, 9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 3:9; Tit. 3:7; Heb. 10:14). They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-27), of which He is the Head (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col. 1:18; 2:19). The true church is manifest in local churches (Acts 9:31; 20:28-30; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 1:2; 16:19; 2 Cor. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; Philem. 1-2), whose membership should be composed only of believers (Matt. 18:15-20; Acts 2:41, 47; 14:23; 20:7; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9; 11:20; 12:13; 14:40; 16:1-2; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:9; Tit. 1:5-9; Heb. 10:25). The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12) and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:15-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26), which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer (Jn. 6:55-56; Acts 2:38; 8:39; 16:34; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:29-30; Col. 2:12).

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