

I BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH

Ephesians 4:1-6.

April 13 2008 Sunday p.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. The Apostle's Creed contains a statement about its belief in the church, "I believe inthe Holy Catholic Church."
 - 1. The word "Catholic" scares many of we Protestants.
 - 2. We will look at the word further in a moment.
- B. The word "church" is translated from two Greek words.
 - 1. The two words mean "out of" and "to call".
 - 2. Thus a church is an assembly of people called out of the world to follow Jesus.
- C. What do you think of when you hear the word, "church".
 - 1. Usually we are thinking of a local congregation or church like FBC, Noble.
 - 2. It also refers to Christians everywhere and at all times, not just those living in our own day.
 - 3. Let's look at three thoughts about the church found in the Apostle's Creed.

I. FIRST, THE CHURCH IS ONE.

- A. This is the point found seven times in Ephesians 4:4-6.
 - ⁴ **There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called--**
 - ⁵ **one Lord, one faith, one baptism;**
 - ⁶ **one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**
- B. What does being one mean?
 - 1. It doesn't mean being in one big denomination.
 - 2. It doesn't mean we all believe the same thing (i.e. eschatology, ethical issues like abortion or capital punishment, etc).
 - 3. It means the church (God's true church) includes all true believers in Christ regardless of what labels they wear (Baptist, Methodist, Premillennial or Postmillennial, Democrat or Republican, etc).

II. SECOND, THE CHURCH IS HOLY.

- A. The word "holy" means "set apart for God".
 - 1. Anything that belongs to God is holy—the Holy Bible, for example.
 - 2. Anything, therefore, associated with God is holy because God is Holy.
- B. This is what the apostle Peter says in I Peter 2:9.
 - ⁹ **But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.**

III. THIRD, THE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC.

- A. What does the word "catholic" means as it is used in the Apostle's Creed?
 - 1. If the word refers to the Roman Catholic Church it is always capitalized.
 - 2. If the word isn't capitalized it simply means "universal". This is the meaning used in the Apostle's Creed.
 - 3. Some later versions of the Apostle's Creed leave the word "catholic" out altogether and just say—"I believe in the holy church".

- B. What does it mean to belong to the “universal church”?
1. It means we are a part of something big, much bigger than us—Christians everywhere and at all times.
 2. It also means we need each other.
 - a. We need to fellowship with each other.
 - b. We need to encourage each other.
 - c. We need to cooperate with each other to get more done (i.e. Cooperative Program).
 3. It also means the church needs us.

CONCLUSION

- A. Philip Yancey book, “Where is God When It Hurts”, p.5.
Author and speaker Philip Yancey writes:
One day a man said to me, “You wrote a book called *Where Is God When It Hurts*, right?”
“Yes.”
“Well, I don’t have much time to read. Can you just answer that question for me in a sentence or two?”
I thought for a second and said, “I guess I’d have to answer that with another question: ‘Where is the church when it hurts?’”
- B. Philip Yancey believes in the church. The Apostle’s Creed believes in the church. We must believe in the church too. Believe what? Its “One”, “Holy” and “Catholic” or Universal.