

Life Group Notes

Sunday 7th May 2023

Speaker: Andy McCullough

Title: The Apostles' Creed: Church

Passage: -

I believe in the Holy Spirit, in the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins

Holy catholic Church – the worldwide/global church (not Roman Catholic church). Means that we are part of a big family, all over the world! Catholic means 'each and every one'.

- Paul builds picture of church as a body in Eph 1:22-23. Jesus so identifies with the church as the body of Christ – his own body that he questions Paul on the road to Damascus 'why are you persecuting **me**?'
- Church around world – 40% are African, 20% Asian, 20% North Atlantic, 20% other. More Christians in China than USA!
- Let's learn from one another. We enrich ourselves by learning from one another around the world.

Communion of saints – speaks of local church. 'Koininia' – connotations of interdependent community. Technical term for the community of Christians who have decided to share their lives because of Jesus. Fellowship of local church.

- Acts 2:42-47 – Picture of the early church devoting themselves to the community of believers.
- '*Christ redeemed us to join us to a new community. The church is an integral part of the gospel!*' Stott
- Being part of a Christian community is part of the irreducible minimum of being a Christian. Disciples are made in community! Living stones need to be built together not lying on their own.
- Communion of saints is a fundamental part of the gospel. We need each other to learn from and be changed by.

Forgiveness of sins – part of the work of the Holy Spirit. Forgiveness of sins = 'release' from sins. The Greek word means liberation, deliverance, freedom.

- Sin is both small things that come out from us and stain us, AND a big power that is at work in the world that controls and creates tyranny, from which we need setting free.
- The death of Jesus washes us free from the pollution of sin. The resurrection of Christ delivers us from the power of sin.
- 'Forgiveness of sins' means both forgiveness of sin by God and the need to forgive one another. Lord's prayer – Matt 6:12-15. Freed people, free people.
- Parable of unmerciful servant Matt 18:21-35 - Warning to God's people.

Suggested Questions:

1. What have you learnt about God and/or his church through your interaction with brothers and sisters from other nations?
2. Share names (where appropriate) of those that you know serving God in other nations. Pray for brothers & sisters around the globe. Pray for our 'beyonders'
3. How are you being built in together with others from RFC? How can you help build others in to this local church family?
4. What can you point to in your own life that has changed because you are involved in Church community?
5. Why is it so hard to forgive other people that have wronged us?
6. How have you grown in your willingness to forgive others?
7. Is there any sin in your own life that you know you need to accept forgiveness for? Is there anyone that you are struggling to forgive? Pray together/for one another.