

New City Catechism Class

Week Forty-Eight

Q45: What is the church?

A45: God chooses and preserves for himself a community elected for eternal life and united by faith, who love, follow, learn from, and worship God together. God sends out this community to proclaim the gospel and prefigure Christ's kingdom by the quality of their life together and their love for one another.

2 Thessalonians 2:13: But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. (ESV)

- Why is this question so relevant for our current evangelical culture?
- Why does there seem to be such a widespread lack of understanding of what the church is?

Nature of the Church

- What is a reason given for a general lack of understanding in our culture about what the church is?
- Why can the church be defined using more than one definition?
- Who are the *saints* addressed in Paul's letters? What is a *saint*?
- Why can Paul refer to Sosthenes as a *brother* (1 Corinthians 1:1)?
- The invisible church is the _____ community of saints that is _____ only to God.
- The visible church is the community of _____ saints _____ to each other.
- Why is it important to know the difference between the visible and invisible church?
- How does Paul affirm that a local church **is** the church and not just **a part** of the church?
- Who makes up the universal church?
- The universal church is the community of all true believers _____ and for all _____.
- A local church is a community of Christians who _____ gather with one another in Christ's name to _____ affirm and shepherd one another's _____ in Jesus Christ and his kingdom through gospel _____ and gospel _____.
- Why would it be odd for someone to claim to be a member of the universal church but refuse to be a member of a local church?

Definition of a Local Church

- What types of Scripture commands are given that indicate that the church is designed to be a *community* of Christians?
- What are some examples given for what it means to gather “in Christ’s name”?
- What is the term *officially* meant to communicate in this definition? What are some of the examples given?
- What are some of the specific duties that a church would perform that affirm the idea of *order*?
- What are some of the ways in which believers affirm each other’s membership in Christ? Why would it be proper to call these affirmations *official*?
- What is given as an obvious example of what it would mean to officially shepherd one another?
- What are some of the ways in which leaders and fellow members shepherd one another’s membership in Christ?
- “People are _____ through gospel preaching, and the _____ get _____ through gospel preaching.”
- When does the video say that are we preaching or proclaiming the gospel?
- Why is gospel preaching more than evangelistic preaching?
- What are the gospel ordinances?