

The Importance of Circles

Foundations

Ephesians 4:1-6

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

As we continue to move our way through the Apostles' Creed, we come to, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." This statement does not describe the difference between Catholics and Protestants in the world today, but rather a belief in the church universal. ***What does it mean to you to proclaim your belief in the church universal? How does this idea point to the church as a community of people and not a place?***

In trying to discern what a holy community looks like for us, it's important to look at community through a sociological lens first. The two distinct forms of communities created by humans are **bounded-set** and **center-set**. A bounded-set society is formed through categories and boundaries, such as denominations in the church or political views. A center-set community, on the other hand, is formed around a strong, reliable center. ***How have you experienced both of these types of communities in your life? How is Jesus Christ the strong center of our community of faith?***

With the gospel of Jesus Christ as our center, we are assured that He will constantly pursue us and never give up on us. When churches operate as center-set communities, the strong center allows us to remind each other of our identity in Christ and how we are loved, pursued, and rescued by Him. ***How is it through circles rather than sermons or speeches that only true transformation can happen? How can we impact one another through honest discussion of our convictions and beliefs?***

Heavenly Father, remind us of how readily You pursue us. We are willing to be your sheep and we yearn to follow You. May we lean on our circles of community and speak truth to one another in love. May we shine like stars in the midst of the world around us, with You as the center of our lives. Guide us to be the community You have called us to be. Amen.