

Catechetical Sermon, December 10th, 2023

Belgic Confession, Article 28, “The Communion of Saints”

Scripture Lesson: Ephesians 4:1-16

Lesson Aim	To understand what the communion of saints is and what are the obligations and benefits of belonging to the true visible church.
Steps to Learning	Read Belgic Confession, Article 28 and Ephesians 4:1-16 . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>How do we define the “communion of saints?” The communion of saints refers to the union all Christians share together with the Jesus Christ. Christians are in union with Christ by faith and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christians are also united to each other by the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 4:3, 15-16).</p> <p>What are the duties all Christians have? There are five: <u>First</u>, all are duty bound to join and unite themselves with the church. <u>Second</u>, each Christian must maintain the unity of the church. <u>Third</u>, Christians must submit themselves to the doctrine and discipline of the church. <u>Fourth</u>, Christians are to bow their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ. <u>Fifth</u>, Christians are, as mutual members of the same body, to serve to the edification of the brethren (and sisters) according to the talents God has given them.</p> <p>What are other obligations that Christians have to the true visible church? Paul, according to Ephesians 4:2 calls Christians to humility, gentleness and patience (with each other). In verse 3 Paul also says that we must bear with one another in love eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.</p> <p>What are some of the benefits of belonging to the true visible church? First, within this church, God saves us through the preaching of the Word of God. Connected to this, we are sanctified (grow in our faith) by the Word and Sacraments. Second, by the Word and Spirit Christ preserves us body and soul. Third, in the church we are assured of our salvation by the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. Fourth, we find comfort and support through the relationships we develop with other members.</p>
Bible Reading	1 Kings chapters 17-22 [The Elijah stories and the end of Ahab] (covering the great Bible stories)