

LIVING FAITH CHAPEL

Communion of Saints: Why?

Introduction

- Recap of definitions
- Why do we need to commune with other saints?
 - Church particular - Church's role in this world
 - Church universal – role of church in cosmic plan

The Church Particular

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!

- Psalm 133:1

- ***Message of Salvation to One Another***

It is by the grace of God that a congregation is permitted to gather visibly in this world to share God's Word and sacrament. Not all Christians receive this blessing. The imprisoned, the sick, the scattered lonely, the proclaimers of the Gospel in heathen lands stands alone. They know that visible fellowship is a blessing.... The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- We are a scattered people (Zech 10:9; Deut 28:25; John 11:52)

The Kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies. And he who will not suffer this does not want to be of the Kingdom of Christ; he wants to be among friends, to sit among roses and lilies, not with the bad people but the devout people.

- Martin Luther

- Therefore, we long for the physical presence of other believers (See, e.g. – 2 Tim 1:4; 1 Thess 3:10; 2 John 12)
- Believers act as the physical sign of the gracious presence of God
- The **goal** of all Christian community: to meet one another as the bringers of the message of salvation.

- **Message of Salvation to the World**

The church is no civic center, no social club or encounter group, no Sunday morning meeting place. It is a new society, created for the salvation of a lost world, pointing to the kingdom to come.

- Charles Colson

Apart from the church, salvation is impossible.

- Martin Luther

- Christ established the church on the confession of faith (Matt 16:13-19)
- Christ called his people to bring the message to the world (Matt 28:16-20)
- Message was brought through churches – Acts church, Paul’s churches

The Church Universal – Common glorification

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

- Phil 3:20 – 21

All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His ... glory.

- Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. 26.1

- Definition – what it is to “see” Christ as he is – beatific vision (1 John 3:2; Col 3:4)
 - Glorification differs from other events in the history of salvation in 2 ways:
 - Lies in the future
 - Will happen to all the saints all at once – glorification in the plural (1 Thess 1:10; Rom 8:18; Eph 3:21; Phil 3:21)

What a tremendously exciting prospect this is! Here we are, at such different stages of Christian experience: some who have been Christians for many years, others converted recently; some highly gifted, others weak in both graces and gifts. Moreover, how many thousands and millions of God’s children have passed out of this world before us? But on that day we shall all together share in the glorification of Jesus, and our glorification with him. It is as though God has said to himself: ‘I have given my children so much as individuals and as little groups; but now, in his last decisive act, in the public proclamation and appearance of my Son – I will give all of them my final special blessing all at once!’

- Sinclair Ferguson