

“The Embodiment of the Gospel”

What We Believe About the Church

Sermon Notes

- **We believe the gospel is now embodied in the new community called the church¹**

**How does the church embody the gospel? 3 ways...*

1. The _____ church embodies the gospel to _____ (note #2-5)

2. The _____ church embodies the gospel to the _____ (Note #6-7)

3. The _____ of the church embody the gospel to _____ (Note #8-10)

Next Week: Acts 4:1-22 - “We Cannot But Speak of What We Have Seen and Heard”

¹ The language of this statement is drawn from *Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America*. Free Church Publications: Minneapolis, MN. 2011.

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of August 30th - September 2nd

Study Questions on Article 7 of the EFCA Statement of Faith²

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

1. Who makes up the "true church"?³ What does it mean to be "justified through faith alone in Christ alone"⁴? Do you think the Reformers had it right when they stated that justification is the doctrine by which the church stands or falls?

2. Regarding the true church, what is the ministry of the Holy Spirit? What is the ministry of Christ? As Head, why is it more accurate to refer to this as a Christocracy rather than a democracy?

² Questions are written by Greg Strand, Director of Biblical Theology and Credentialing for the EFCA:

<https://go.efca.org/resources/document/efca-statement-faith-resources-and-teaching-notes>

³ Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:4-6; 5:25; Hebrews 12:28

⁴ Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 44:22; John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 3:20-28; 4:3; Romans 5:1, 21; 8:1, 30, 33-34; 10:4, 9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:16

3. Why is it important for the “true church” to be “manifest in local churches”? Is there such a thing as a churchless Christian?

4. Because we are a believers’ church movement, “membership should be composed only of believers”. Upon a first reading, why do you think it reads “membership *should* be composed”? Upon further reflection, why is it appropriate to use “should”? Does the “true church” find an exact parallel in the “local church”? Does the “local church” consist of both wheat and tares? What ought we to do about this?

5. What are the two ordinances the Lord Jesus mandated? Please note these are ***mandated*** by the Lord Jesus!⁵ What does ordinance mean? How is it they “visibly and tangibly express the gospel?”

6. Though the ordinances are clearly “not the means of salvation,” could they be a means of spiritual growth or sanctification? If so, how? What is the important connection between “genuine faith” and the fact that the “ordinances confirm and nourish the believer”?

7. Often the ordinances have been relegated to the place of unimportance or indifference in the life of the local church. What do the terms “mandated” and “celebrated” have to say to this trend?

⁵ Matthew 28:18-20; 26:26-29