

Ephesians 2:11-22; I Corinthians 12:13-27; Lord's Day 21

THE CHURCH CATHOLIC

1. The meaning.

1. There are two mis-representations of the church's catholicity.

1. The church of Rome take to itself alone the name 'catholic.'

2. Some liberal Protestants declare that in the universal church is every group that calls itself church.

- The Church extends over all the world from the beginning to the end of time, embracing the whole human race.

1. It transcends natural differences without obliterating them: race, sex, social, and ethnic.

2. The catholicity of the Church is determined by Christ.

- The manifestation of catholicity.

1. In the Old Dispensation the Church was confined to the nation of Israel and did not display its catholicity.

2. In the New Dispensation the Church's universality became highly visible.

3. A powerful example of the church's universality is the uniting of Christian Jew & Christian Gentile (Eph. 2:11,12).

- Implied calling.

1. A universal church, not a national one.

2. The catholicity of the Church requires that we avoid sectarianism.

1. One form of that is equating our denomination with the Church of Christ.

2. Another form is racial bigotry.

- The calling to forbear one another and to forgive one another arises from the Church's catholicity (Col. 3: 10,11).

1. As God uses differences, so we must appreciate the differences in each other (Col. 3:12-15).
 2. Recognize what we have in common with each other is so much greater than our differences.
- Recognize the limitations of the manifestation of the Church's catholicity on this side of Christ's return.
1. Geographic separations and the presence of sin makes impossible the perfect manifestation.
 2. But the catholicity is something we believe, not something we first see.