

## YOUTH INSTRUCTION CLASS

### LESSON 16: THE HOLY SPIRIT

### INVISIBLE AND VISIBLE CHURCH

#### Opening

- What is the *Holy Christian Church*?
- Why is this Church also called a *Communion of Saints*?
- What do all members of the Holy Christian Church have in their hearts?
- What do we mean when we say this Church is *invisible*?

#### Preserving the Holy Christian Church

- How does the Holy Spirit create and preserve faith in Jesus in a person's heart?  
(Hint: See also Luther's explanation to the Third Article.)

Romans 10:17

Titus 3:5

Matthew 26:28

- NOTE: God offers and communicates to men the spiritual blessings purchased by Christ, namely, the forgiveness of sins . . . through the external means of grace ordained by Him. These means of grace are the Word of the gospel, in every form which it is brought to man, and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and of the Lord's Supper.
- How then is the Holy Christian Church brought into existence and preserved?

#### Finding the Holy Christian Church

If we cannot tell exactly who is a believer and who isn't ...  
Can we we know where there *must* be believers present? ... YES!

Isaiah 55:10-11

Since the Holy Spirit uses the gospel in word and sacrament to create and preserve faith, we know that wherever the gospel is being used, there will be at least some believers. It is the case that not all who use the means of grace are true believers (there can be *hypocrites*).

When the word **church** is used in the Bible, it does not usually refer to visible church organizations. It almost always refers to the **invisible** Church as a whole, or to a part of the invisible Church that is living at a certain place.

## The *Visible* Church

- The Holy Christian Church is ALL WHO BELIEVE as God sees them; churches are made up of people who SAY THEY BELIEVE as men see them (*Catechism*, Sydow, p. 149).
- In order to be saved, we must belong to the Holy Christian Church (namely, we must have faith in Jesus in our hearts). However, believers also belong to *visible* church organizations. There are good reasons for this:

Luke 11:28

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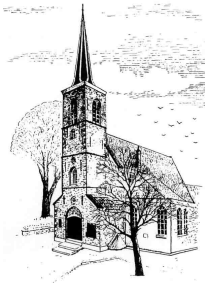
2 Timothy 1:8

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Hebrews 10:25

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The Church, according to its inner nature and essence, is the total number of all those whom God recognizes as His dear children by faith in Christ Jesus.



- NOTE: We should publicly confess Christ, His words, and His messengers. We do this in part by membership in a church organization that is true to Christ, His words, and His messengers. When we cannot find such an organization then we are compelled to confess our faith all alone. Our Lord does not want us to be “secret” Christians like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (Jn 19:38-39).

## Organizing the Visible Church

### CONGREGATION

A group of believers

### SYNOD

A Group of Congregations

**Redeemer Lutheran Church** is a **congregation**.  
It is part of the **Church of the Lutheran Confession** which is a **synod**.

- A synod is a group (fellowship) of churches that all believe and teach the same thing. The Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) has about 75 congregations in the United States with about 9,000 members altogether.
- Here in Michigan, besides our church, there are CLC churches in Marquette, Iron River, Cadillac, Grand Rapids, Coloma, Saginaw, and Detroit.
- The CLC is also connected with synods in other countries. There is the Church of the Lutheran Confession in India (CLCI), the Nigerian Church of the Lutheran Confession (NCLC), the Etago Church of the Lutheran Confession (ECLC) in Kenya, and others.



## Belonging To a Church

How do we determine which visible church organizations we should join?

1 John 4:1 (872)

John 8:31 (842)

What kind of church members should we be?

Hebrews 10:25 (194)

Titus 3:8

Matthew 28:19 (832)

1 Thessalonians 5:25

1 Corinthians 9:14

## False Teaching Churches

- Why are there so many denominations, synods, and church organizations in the world today?
- Do you think God would want us to participate with churches that do *not* teach according to His word? Why or why not?
- What does the Lord want us to do about false teaching churches?

Romans 16:17 (873)

- Study the section in your catechism on *Church Fellowship* (Questions 197-204, pp. 150-156). What you have completed the study, go on to the review questions below for this lesson.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between the *invisible Church* (Holy Christian Church) and the *visible church*?
2. What is a *synod*? What are the blessings of being part of a synod?

3. To which synod does Redeemer Lutheran Church belong?
4. Does every church with the name "Lutheran" teach the same thing?
5. There are so many churches in world. How can we determine which church to join?
6. What kinds of things does God *want* us to do with those who teach the word of God correctly? Does He want us to do these kinds of things with those who do *not* teach the word of God correctly?
7. What is God's purpose in telling us to avoid false teachers?
8. Suppose a friend invites you to his church for Vacation Bible School. You know your friend's church does not teach correctly about Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Should you go to the Bible School?
9. Suppose you are visiting a Baptist church for a wedding. Everybody starts singing a hymn. Do you think it would be a good idea for you to join in the singing?
10. Can people be saved who belong to false teaching churches?  
  
NOTE: "The true teaching and the Church are often so utterly suppressed and disappear, as if there were no Church, which has happened under the papacy . . . The Church will nevertheless remain until the end of the world." If the Means of Grace are still present to some extent, the Holy Spirit is still gathering believers for the Lord, in spite of the presence of false teaching. Of course, some heterodox churches are much closer to the truth than others.
11. What is *unionism*? Why is it against God's will?

## Assignment

- Study Questions 188-205 (pp. 146-156) in the catechism.