

# The Church Is Apostolic

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 11 February 2024

Preacher: Rev. Thomas Davis

[ 0 : 00 ] So we are going to turn back together to Ephesians chapter 2. I'd like to read again, verses 19 to 21. So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

And as you may know by now, we are doing a kind of short mini series over two Sundays, a four-part study called Divided, Diluted, Disconnected, and Developed.

And it's all about the church. And we've chosen these four words, as we've been saying in each service, because they contrast with the great description of the church that you find in the Nicene Creed.

The Nicene Creed was a summary of Orthodox truth written in the third century. And at the beginning of the fourth century, so 325 and then 381, it was expanded a little bit.

[ 1 : 02 ] And in it, it states, we believe in one holy, Catholic, and apostolic church. And these four words are known as the attributes of the church among theologians.

And these four attributes are revealed in Scripture. They run right through the whole of Scripture, but you can see them especially in 1 Corinthians 1. We preached in this last Sunday morning, and we've come back to the start of each of these four services.

Because it tells us that the church is one, because although Paul is writing to those in Corinth, he is writing to those who are part of the church of God. It's only one God, only one church.

Paul uses the language of sanctification and of saints. That's all speaking of holiness. He uses this word together, together with all those who in every place call in the name of our Lord Jesus.

That's referring to the Catholic church, the universal church that extends across all places, all people groups, all time. And the teaching that that church is built on was delivered by the apostles of which Paul was one.

[ 2 : 14 ] The church is one holy, Catholic, and apostolic. But today, it doesn't look like that. And the church doesn't seem like that.

And all too often, the church can seem as though it is divided, diluted, disconnected, and developed. And our aim in this series is for us to think through these topics and to recognize that these are really important things to get back to and that we don't want the church to be divided. We don't want it to be diluted. We don't want it to be disconnected. And as I hope we'll see tonight, we don't want it to be developed. And that's our topic for this evening. We're looking at the fourth attribute.

We're highlighting the fact that the church is apostolic. And we're going to ask two very simple questions. What do we mean by apostolic? And what do we mean by developed?

So first of all, that word there, apostolic, what's it referring to? Well, when we say that the church is apostolic, we're saying that the apostles had a crucial and unique role in the formation of the Christian church.

[ 3 : 23 ] The apostles, who were they? Well, they were primarily the 12 disciples, Judas being replaced by Matthias. You can read about that in chapter one of Acts. And then along with them, one or two others were added, in particular Paul, who wrote this letter, and James, who was one of Jesus's half brothers.

They were also apostles. And there's possibly some others who were apostles as well. I say possibly because it's not always clear who else is an apostle, because the word apostle basically means sent, or somebody who's been sent.

And sometimes the language of apostleship is used in a similar sense to how we would use the term missionary, the idea of somebody who's been sent. But alongside that general use, the New Testament also makes it clear that there's a specific office of apostle that somebody is called to. And these apostles had a unique and crucial role in the Christian church. And as Paul describes it here, they are the foundation on which the church is built.

It's built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. That's teaching us that in the early years of the Christian church, some people were called to this unique role, whereby they were given God's message, and their job was to communicate that message to others.

[ 4 : 52 ] And that message was then recorded in the books that now make up the New Testament. And that collection of documents, of collection of apostolic documents that we now have together in the New Testament, that is the foundation on which the church is built.

So in other words, when we say that the church is apostolic, we're simply saying that it's grounded on the New Testament. And that New Testament, written through the ministry of the apostles, now stands alongside the Old Testament as God's inspired revelation.

The ministry of the apostles was to complete the Bible that we now have today. That language of foundation that we have here is really helpful for us understanding how it all works, because when you think about a foundation, once a foundation is set, it's no longer remade.

We renovated our building here, but we didn't renovate the foundation. The foundation was laid, it's set, and that's it. And in the same way, once this foundation was set in the early church, once the New Testament documents were written, it no longer needs to be remade.

It no longer needs to be reset, no longer needs to be redone. That's why we don't have apostles and prophets in this sense anymore. They had a unique role at a particular time.

[ 6 : 21 ] And of course, it makes sense because one of the qualifications to be an apostle was that you had to see the risen Jesus. That's what happened to the disciples, that's what happened to Paul, on the road to Damascus.

That was part of what qualified them to be apostles. We don't experience that in the same way, and we don't need to experience that in the same way because we have got their written eyewitness testimony in the pages of scripture, which is why we don't have apostles today.

So once a foundation is set, it doesn't get remade, but also once a foundation is set, it must not be departed from. So you set a foundation in a house, you build on top of that foundation.

If you build outside the foundation, if you build half on the foundation, half off the foundation, then some or all of your building is going to be unstable.

It will not stay standing in the long term. And in exactly the same way, the apostolic teaching of the New Testament, it sets the boundaries and sets the shape of the Christian church.

[ 7 : 28 ] It's such a crucial role. So basically, all of this is saying is that to be apostolic, it just means to be scriptural, to be shaped by the Bible.

And all of this is, as we think about all of this, it's really important to remember that all of this is just taking us back to what Jesus himself said was going to happen.

Some people will, you'll sometimes hear of people who will try to drive a wedge between Jesus and the apostles. So you'll have some people, and this has happened lots of times in the Christian church over the years, they'll be like, well, I like what I read in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

I don't like Paul. I don't like what he says. Oh, I don't like what I have in James. I don't like this. And they kind of try to drive a wedge, and they're like, well, I've just Jesus. And I just look at what Jesus says, and I don't bother with the rest of it.

And you kind of try to drive a wedge between them. But to do that makes absolutely no sense whatsoever, because it was Jesus himself who said, this is going to happen.

[ 8 : 29 ] Jesus is the one who said that there are going to be others, there are going to be these apostles, through whom I will communicate more to you. And that's contained, you find that in John 16.

Jesus said to his disciples, I've got many things still to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak in his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak and he'll declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he'll take what is mine and declare it to you. Now, these words have been spoken to the apostles, to the disciples. And Jesus is telling them, I haven't told you everything yet, and you cannot bear it now.

This was before Jesus had gone to the cross, and they were struggling to understand everything that was going on. But he says, look, the Holy Spirit is going to come, and he is going to guide you. And he will tell you what I want him to say, and you will then be able to declare that to others. And it's so interesting that if you look at Ephesians 3, what Jesus describes here about his ministry through the apostles, that's exactly how Paul understood his role.

[ 9 : 45 ] You see that in Ephesians 3, 1 to 5, and part of the section that we read, Paul uses the language of stewardship. And so that's immediately making us think of the fact that he's been given something that he then has to take care of and pass on.

He also speaks in terms of mystery being made known. Now, mystery is a word that can catch us out, because when we think of mystery, often we think of the idea that it's like, you know, this kind of vague, cryptic, unknowable thing.

That's not how the Bible uses the term mystery. The term mystery in the Bible means something that was previously hidden that is now revealed. So something that at one point was not known and that now is known.

That's exactly what Jesus described. He says, I've got more to tell you, but not yet. That's the biblical idea of mystery, something that is at the moment hidden, but it's going to be revealed. And Paul is like, that's what's happened to us.

It's been revealed to us. What we didn't know before, we now know. And all of this is under the direction of the Spirit, which of course is exactly what Jesus says.

[ 11 : 00 ] He said, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you. And there you go. That's exactly how they understood the role. So it's all fitting together well.

So you mustn't drive this wedge between Jesus and the apostles. Jesus is the one saying, look, this is how it's going to work. And you read in the Bible, it's like, there it is. That's exactly what has happened.

All of this is part of what we call redemptive history. Oh, I've made that too big. I'm never going to fit history in here now. There we go. Redemptive history. That's just basically the term that we use to describe the fact that God's plan of salvation is worked out bit by bit over the periods of history. And so the Old Testament foreshadows it. Jesus fulfills it. The apostles explain it. And so you have this step from Jesus is coming. And then there's the next step in terms of the fuller revelation given to the apostles until scripture is complete.

And that revelation of God's saving plan is accomplished as part of redemptive history working out God's plan across the ages.

[ 12 : 07 ] And so all of it's helping us to see that the apostles are like the prophets in the Bible. The apostles are like the prophets in the Old Testament. They have this crucial role in God's, in the unfolding of God's plan.

And we say today that the church is apostolic because we recognize the authority of the apostolic writings in the New Testament. It's the foundation on which the church stands.

Now, all of this is teaching us something really important. It's reminding us of the fact that teaching has such a crucial part in the life of the church.

And this is something that we must never, ever forget. Sometimes, you know, there's lots of aspects of what the church should involve. It's brilliant to come together, to pray, to praise.

It's brilliant to serve. It's brilliant to have great experiences. All of these things are good. But we must never forget that one of the most important things that can happen in church is teaching.

[ 13 : 19 ] As Christians, well, as we look at the early church, we see that this is what they were focused on. You've got this great verse here in Acts 2 that the church was devoted to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship and the breaking of bread.

And that pattern has continued ever since. So they met to learn from the apostles face to face. The early church would sit in a room with Paul, and hear him preach. That must have been amazing. We don't sit in a room with Paul and listen to him talk. We get into our room and we read what he wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

And the same with the other apostles, the Gospels recorded all the way through to Revelation. And it's all reminding us that to be a disciple, we, that's the Bible's favorite word, I think, to describe a follower of Jesus.

That word literally means learner. To be a disciple is to be a learner. Always learning more about what Jesus has done.

[ 14 : 27 ] And it's interesting when Paul describes the work of ministers in Ephesians 4, he gives them a really interesting name. Because he describes the different offices you have. You have the apostles and the prophets.

They were there in the early church. You have some with a particular gift and calling to evangelism. And then you have ministers who Paul describes as shepherds and teachers.

Or some translations will say pastor teacher. Pastor just means shepherd. Reminding us that that's really my job description. To be a pastor teacher.

To care for a flock. And to teach you as God helps me to do that. And it's reminding us that as Christians, we're just always on this journey of learning.

And that's why it's so important never to worry if you feel like you don't know very much. Because the whole journey of being a Christian is a journey of learning.

[ 15 : 25 ] And it really is one of these things where the more you discover, the more you realize there's just so much more to learn. We want to be learning about who God is.

Just coming and standing before the sheer majesty and beauty of God. We want to be learning more about everything that Jesus has done.

Seeing how much he has accomplished. Everything that God needed him to do. And how his power reaches into every single part of our lives. To bring hope and healing and transformation.

We want to learn more about the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. To give us, shaping us. Not kind of wafting way up there, but he's right in there in our hearts as believers. Shaping us and molding us and changing us.

And anybody in here, whether you've been a professing Christian for years, or whether you don't feel able to profess faith. If you have a desire to know more about God, if you've got a desire to learn, there's only one place that that's come from.

[ 16 : 30 ] It's come from the Holy Spirit drawing you towards Jesus. And we want to learn more about how to keep following Jesus in all the complexities and challenges, joys and sorrows of life.

We want to learn loads. Where do we go to learn? We go to the apostolic writings of the New Testament. We go to God's word to be taught by him.

The other thing that this word learner reminds us of is something so crucial that is so easily forgotten today, or so easily misunderstood today. It's reminding us that if you, you know, if you are a Christian, or if you are going to become a Christian, or when you become a Christian, it is reminding you that following Jesus never, ever involves leaving your brain behind.

Now so often people think that, they think that, you know, oh Christianity, it's about like ignoring the facts, and it's about, you know, just a blind faith, and it's just about kind of locking yourself in this weird hole of kind of ignorance where you just pretend that the real world is not there.

That's the most ridiculous nonsense I have ever heard. Christianity following Jesus, learning from him, is so, so intellectually satisfying.

[ 17 : 51 ] You're constantly stimulated. The Gospel is relentlessly fascinating. You need to engage your brain, because Jesus has got so much to teach you, there is so much that we can learn from him.

To be apostolic is to be scriptural, to be learning from everything that God has revealed to us through the ministry of the apostles. So that's what it means to be apostolic.

What does it mean to be developed? What do we mean by that word? In our series we've contrasted one holy Catholic and apostolic, the four attributes of the church, with the words divided, diluted, disconnected, and developed.

Now the first three of these maybe seem obvious in terms of being problems. You think well yes, divided is not good, diluted not good, disconnected not good, but maybe you're all thinking what's wrong with being developed?

What do we even mean by that? Well what I want to try and explain is that the concept of development has actually been a source of controversy in the church, particularly in the last 200 years.

[ 19 : 02 ] And it basically refers to the idea to understanding how Christian doctrine develops over history. So we talk about learning, growing in knowledge, it's all to do with how we understand Christian doctrine in terms of its development over history.

Everybody agrees that over the last 2000 years over time key theological terms have emerged. So great example is the word trinity.

That word captures one of the most important Christian truths that there is, the fact that God is three and God is one. You will not find that word in the Bible.

The word trinity didn't begin to get used until about the end of the second century, 150, 170 years after Jesus' death and resurrection.

And although so although it's a core Christian truth, the term itself developed later. Now in terms of how that development works, different people have different views, there's basically two different views.

[ 20 : 14 ] Some argue that emerging new terms like the word trinity are simply serving to help us better understand what's in the Bible.

So the word trinity is not introducing a new concept, it's just a new word describing a concept that has already and always been contained in the Bible.

So there are some people who say, well, yes, we develop our language, but it's all just to understand what's there in the Bible. Other people though think differently. Other people have argued that theological concepts themselves develop, emerge, maybe even change over the course of history.

And in particular, some have argued that as the church goes on, we can actually modify and adjust and enhance the truths that are contained in Scripture.

Now, I hope you're instantly seeing why this is not a good thing. It results in the fact that some churches will then hold to doctrines that aren't actually in the Bible at all.

[ 21 : 26 ] So people will say things, this is absolutely key to Christianity, and yet it's nowhere in the Bible. And then other churches will do the opposite, where they'll take part to the New Testament and they'll be like, well, we don't need to listen to that part.

It doesn't apply anymore. And in this, it's in this second sense, the idea of being able to kind of develop beyond Scripture, to go outside the foundation or to ignore parts of the foundation, that's what we mean by the term, that's what I mean in this term in regard to the term development, the idea that the church is not restricted to apostolic teaching, the idea that the church develops beyond the limits set by the New Testament.

And like division, like dilution, like disconnection, it is not a good thing. But it's a very, very real issue, because it so quickly strikes a chord with the mindset of the world around us, which is always thinking, well, you know, our generation kind of knows best.

And we're better judges than the people who've come before us. And so often we can look back at history and thinking, well, they were maybe a wee bit primitive, they didn't quite know what we know, they were a wee bit backward, and we're barker to follow our own opinions.

And it's a challenge that the church faces all the time. Here's an interesting quote in relation to development. Let me read it to you. The idea of development of doctrine, is this is capturing what I was just saying about how, you know, it appeals to the mindset of the world around us.

[ 23 : 04 ] The idea of development of doctrine is skillfully accommodated to modes of thinking, largely prevalent in the present day, where there's a tendency to resolve everything, both material and in the moral world, into development.

And to give great prominence to the subjective, or to what is found within man himself, as the source and test of what is true.

Now, really interesting quote, that sums it up perfectly. It's this idea that, you know, this idea of development, it appeals to the way people around us think, because everybody is constantly thinking in terms of development, whether that's in the scientific, material world, whether it's in terms of morals, things are changing all the time, and the thing that absolutely decides what's through, or not, is what's in here, what you think yourself.

When do you think that quote was written? Last week? The 1850s.

It's amazing how the same challenges we face today, are the challenges that are faced by the church, a long, long time ago. And of course, this way of thinking didn't begin 200 years ago, it began in the Garden of Eden, when God gave instructions to Adam and Eve, and they were like, actually, we think we know better.

[ 24 : 36 ] I want to talk about this idea of development, because it carries lots of dangers for us, and it's just good to be aware of these, and to think about them. I'm going to highlight three. The first is the danger of false additions.

The danger of false additions. I'll just write that, so I'll make sure that I'm clear. False additions. I say to make sure I'm clear, like you can read my writing. Anyway, the danger of false additions. That's been a problem from the very beginning of the New Testament church. People wanted to add to the apostolic gospel, and the great example of this in the New Testament is what happened in Galatia, where people were insisting that, yes, you believed in Jesus, but you also have to be circumcised, if you're going to be saved.

Paul responds to that by writing to the Galatians, and look what he says. He says, I'm astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ, and are turning to a different gospel.

Not that there is another one, but there are some other things that are happening that are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. Isn't that so fascinating? To add to the gospel is to create a different gospel that is actually no gospel at all.

[ 25 : 56 ] There was a similar problem in the church in Colossae. There was all sorts of requirements in terms of food and drink and observing festivals, particular Sabbaths. There was insistence on asceticism, worshiping angels, having fancy visions, all sorts of other things that people were starting to insist on, all stuff that was just being added to the gospel.

And that's something that's happened again and again in the history of the church. People adding stuff, you need this, you need that. And the next thing, all of it is a massive problem because it's all saying that Jesus isn't quite enough.

It's undermining the perfection of what he's done. It's so easy to think that a wee addition to the gospel is like pouring gravy on your Sunday lunch. You know, it's going to make it a wee bit better. The truth is, it's like pouring petrol on your Sunday lunch. It ruins everything. We must not, must not ever add anything to the gospel.

And if you are here and you're maybe not yet a Christian, Jesus says, come to me. Come to me.

[ 27 : 08 ] Believe in me and you'll be saved. Do not add anything to that. Because that is all he asks.

There's the danger of false additions. There's also the danger of false authority. Again, this is a really important thing for us to think about. This can happen, you know, when you make additions like what we've just described, people add stuff that's not in the Bible, that can happen.

But what I want to think about is another problem that can arise when we can take things that are actually okay in themselves, things that are perfectly acceptable, but we elevate them into an authoritative claim.

And this is where we have to distinguish between the things that are fundamental truths of the gospel and the things that actually don't matter. So, for example, to be a Christian, you have to believe in the resurrection of Jesus.

That is non-negotiable. But what you wear to church does not matter. It's completely up to you. How long a sermon lasts?

[ 28 : 16 ] Totally flexible. The number of songs we sing in a service, that's completely variable. There's hundreds and hundreds of other areas of things that are just, there's no set rules or requirements regarding them.

They're not touched by the Bible or maybe some things that aren't completely clear in the Bible. And yet sometimes we can take them and we treat them as though they're as important as the Trinity, as the resurrection, as things like justification by faith.

It's such a dangerous development if we start treating these non-crucial matters as though they have apostolic authority. And yet it can happen so easily.

And often it happens because we elevate somebody's preferences. That might be our own. So we might have a preference for something, we might have a preference for some particular aspect of church life.

And we might think, my church has got to be like that because it's what I like. So sometimes it's our own preferences. Sometimes it might be the preference of people who are already in church and that can be a challenge where you think, well, we don't want to change anything because we don't want to upset anybody.

[ 29 : 38 ] And so we must just, we must, we must just stick to what these people like. Sometimes people do the opposite and all they think about is what people on the outside want.

And we think, well, we have to make our church appealing to people. We have to make sure that we don't offend anybody. We have to make sure that it just scratches all the itches of the people around us and the society that we live in.

Whichever one of these we choose, we're making the same mistake. We're placing a human opinion above God's. We are teaching, as Jesus said, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

And whenever we do that, we are effectively saying to Jesus that he's not in charge. Which is actually the same as saying to him that he's not actually Lord. Our authority is scripture.

That's what we keep coming back to. And then lastly, there's the danger of false autonomy. A false autonomy where we, that desire, autonomy to kind of do our own thing, to be the decision maker ourselves.

[ 30 : 48 ] And that can show itself when we can sometimes look down on scripture and pick and choose the bits that we want to listen to and the bits that we want to ignore.

And when we do that, we are claiming an autonomy that we have no right to claim. And again, it's a very, very dangerous development. When we look at the Bible, we listen to some bits, we ignore others.

And yet this is so common. And yet this is so common. And the reason that we know it is so common is because you see this right across what we can maybe call the church spectrum.

So you see this in the most liberal of churches. The churches that are easy, easy churches where anything goes, churches where they're quite happy to change on everything, they'll pick and choose what they want to believe.

You'll see it in the most liberal of churches, but you also see it in the strictest of churches. The churches that are so rigid. And there's a danger of it in every church in between either ends of that extreme.

[ 32 : 09 ] The most liberal progressive churches will neglect aspects of apostolic teaching and sometimes churches neglect the exclusivity of the gospel.

And they will even say that Christianity is just one of many equally valid religions. Sometimes they'll loosen the moral boundaries of what that scripture says.

And they'll just say, well, look, it doesn't really matter what we do, don't do. We're not going to have particular moral boundaries about family, about sex, about how we are entertained or anything like that.

And sometimes, you know, they'll maybe not really particularly want to listen to the fact that the apostolic scripture places a constant emphasis on the fact that they're, that God expects there to be good order in church.

That's all in the Bible, yet it's neglected. Yet the strictest of congregations are sometimes in danger of neglecting God's command to reach out to everyone and compel them to come in.

[ 33 : 12 ] They're in danger of ignoring the fact that the New Testament repeatedly warned us against judging others. And it speaks about, and there may be in danger of, you know, there's a very famous verse in Peter where he says, always be ready to give a reason for the hope that's in you.

That's a really famous verse. Every church, we need to be ready to give a reason for the hope that's in us. And yet so often, we ignore the very next phrase which says, but make sure you do it with gentleness and respect.

If we're going to be apostolic, every time we engage with unbelievers, every time we engage with opponents of the gospel, we should show relentless gentleness and respect as we interact with them.

And so all of us, wherever we are, we're all, I've done it myself so many times, you just, you listen to one, but you ignore the other. And I hope I'm not sounding like I'm picking on others because I've done this myself. We're all at risk of it. But it's a dangerous development because when we pick and choose which parts of the Bible we want to listen to, we are standing on half a foundation.

And we are missing the fullness of what the gospel teaches. We are losing a firm basis on which to stand. And worst of all, if we pick and choose, it means that we actually think that there was times when Jesus was wrong. All of these are huge dangers that we need to be aware of and that we are at risk of. And that's because there is a constant pressure on the church to develop, whether that's in terms of what we proclaim, whether that's in terms of how we worship, whether it's in terms of the moral framework that we live by, whether it's in terms of how we engage with the people around us.

[ 35 : 00 ] And that's because until the day that Jesus returns, the church is constantly surrounded by a world that says, be like us. Be like us.

That's what happened to the church in the Old Testament, Israel, God's people, the type, the shadow of the church in the new surrounded by nations that kept saying be like us.

And that's eventually what they did. It happened to the church in the New Testament, constant pressure. Be like us. It still happens today. A world around us that we can so easily slot in with. Paul sums it up so well in Ephesians 4 where he speaks about the fact that we can so easily be tossed to and fro by all the waves of everything else, every other belief and deception that lies around us. And maybe that's the big test for development.

Maybe that's the big test to diagnose whether development has happened in a church. If you look at the way people behave in the world around you, and if you look at how people behave in the church, and if you say, there's not really any difference, then we've developed, we've developed away from the apostolic foundation that was laid. We do not want to be developed.

[ 36 : 30 ] We want to be apostolic. Now, by that, when I say I don't want to be developed, I'm not saying we have to be these kind of like old fashioned Luddites that are totally irrelevant. To be apostolic is to be relevant because the apostolic gospel has got the answer that everybody is in the church, that everybody is craving. But we have to remain faithful to that message if we're going to have anything that we can give to the people around us. And it's all reminding us that an apostolic church will always stand out. An apostolic church will always be wonderfully counter cultural. An apostolic church shines as a light in a dark world. Because we are different. And it's all summed up in what Paul says in Ephesians 4, which we read at the very start, that we are to be those who speak the truth in love. The reason that this word apostolic is so important is because we believe wholeheartedly that what is contained in the New Testament is the truth. The message of Jesus revealed in these pages is the truth. And we take that so seriously and we never ever want to depart it. Developing beyond the truth is a terrible idea.

And that truth is a message that we share in love. Love that is so clear to the people around us. Love that builds us up as we serve side by side together. In fact, that doesn't just sum up the importance of being apostolic. It sums up the importance of everything that we've tried to say in this series. If the church is holy, the church is Catholic, the church is apostolic, all of that keeps bringing us back to the fact that we are those who speak the truth in love.

We want to strive to be united, to share that undiluted truth of the gospel, to build one another up, connected together more and more, to function as that beautiful body that Paul describes and to always, always, always keep looking to Jesus, the one who has brought us together. The one holy Catholic and apostolic church is such an amazing thing to be part of.

It's such an amazing thing to be part of. And if you are maybe not yet a believer or if you may be not yet professed faith, there is room for you in that church too. Amen.