

Sermon Study Guide – September 7, 2025

Greetings!

I've had the privilege of being with you all behind the scenes for a couple of weeks to attend meetings, get to know the staff, and just see what life looks like at Grace of Christ, and I'm so thankful to Pastor Curt McFarland for such a helpful time together. It was wonderful to see how the church has loved his family well!

This week we're beginning a series that will take us through until Advent about the church. For many or most of us, church is mostly encountered as an institution, a building, an event, even a group of people. This Autumn we're going to explore the Bible's vision for the church as it helps us consider what mission God has for us in our place and time and how we can best steward the amazing things Grace of Christ has. We're starting out with Communion Sunday considering how Paul considered the church the great "mystery" of the faith.

Rev. Dr. Gregory Wagenfuhr

The Church is a Mystery

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (ESV)

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? **17** Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Ephesians 1:9-10 (ESV)

With all wisdom and insight **9** he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Outline

Introduction: Church is a Mystery?

Foundation 1: The One Great Sacrament/Mystery

Foundation 2: God's great plan: reconciling/uniting all things

Foundation 3: God's people united by his body and blood are the foretaste

Implication (So what?): The local church is the example, the vanguard of God's great plan, manifest in the Lord's Supper

Application (Now What?): Church isn't about what God can do for you (only), it's about what God is doing through you (all) together! It's a big question... how does the church show the world God's kingdom together? This is the invitation to a season of working together!

Study Questions

Foundations: What?

1. The sacraments are a source of endless division and confusion in church history. From the sermon, what should have been the result of the sacraments?
2. Have you ever considered the big picture of God's plan, what God is doing beyond our personal relationship or salvation? How do you think your faith engages with God's big plan?
3. How can bread and juice be the foretaste of God uniting all things? Seems like two very different conversations. Hint... how does the body of Christ and the lifeblood of Christ change everyone who joins with them?

Implications: So What?

4. Have you ever thought of Grace of Christ (or any other local church) as a vanguard of God's mission? How could you be part of that mission?

Applications: Now What?

5. What are ways in which you can prepare yourself (heart, mind, strength, relationships) to work together to show the world God's plan to reconcile all things to him?

Prayer

Prayer is simply talking to God. As you ponder the future, feel free to talk to God and others in the body of Christ about your hopes and fears, about the people you have conflict with, those who might feel excluded, those you might help, and those that might help you. Are you reconciled to God? What questions do you have? God is always ready to forgive and never afraid of human questions.