

0:00:00 And welcome back. This is the fourth video for the fourth session of the Exploring Theology course, and our focus in this session is, why is the church important?

0:00:12 And with all the other stuff that we've been doing over these three previous videos for the fourth session, we've now brought that all to focus on this question of, why is the church important?

0:00:24 And we're I'm aware that Barth, my cat, has yet to make an appearance. If he doesn't, rest assured, I will bring him in to say hi when we get to the end of this video.

0:00:34 So there you go. Anyway, let's turn to this because there's a key figure that I want to introduce you to, and who will guide our thinking as we go over the next few minutes.

0:00:47 So here we go. So why is the church important? You recognize the sound of the bells. And now, okay, so now you're gonna come and say hello?

0:00:54 You actually got to say hello. There we go.

0:01:06 Yeah, yeah, my boy. Okay, you're gonna say hello. Okay, that's enough. Yeah, why is the church important? You're actually gonna figure in this final video, or your namesake's gonna figure in this final video.

0:01:19 But first I've got to introduce everybody to somebody else, okay? Why is the church important?

0:01:31 Fit. So, the the person that I want to introduce you to, you may have heard of this person before, is Ignatius of Antioch.

0:01:40 So Ignatius of Antioch, you can see he was, well, to be honest, we don't exactly know when he was born, and we don't exactly know when he died.

0:01:49 But it was around the year, he was born around the year 35, so that's roughly within five years, thereabouts, of Jesus' death and resurrection, and he died.

0:01:58 around the year 110. He was a martyr, he was killed, he was a bishop of Antioch, and he was, yes, he was executed on his way to Rome.

0:02:16 So he's one of the early church fathers, sometimes referred to as one of the apostolic fathers. so, yeah, I want to draw your attention.

0:02:26 So he's one of the early church thinkers, he's one of the really significant first thinkers of the church and also being a bishop, being a pastor, and a teacher of the faith, and so on.

0:02:37 So he said the following, and on, I think it was in one of his letters, because he wrote this, as he was being transported it to wear.

0:02:46 on, on his way to Rome, he was executed on his way to Rome now you're off he was in, in one of his letters, I think it was to the church, churches in Smyrna, he wrote the following wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.

0:03:06 Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. remember, this is this is really the phrase that I want to, to, to use to help us concentrate our minds when it comes to addressing this question of why is the church important.

0:03:26 we've looked at it, you can look at the church from all sorts of angles, sociologically, anthropologically, so on and so forth, but the question is why is it important, and why is it important theologically.

0:03:39 Here Ignatius of Antioch is giving us our route into this, he's saying wherever Jesus Christ is, wherever Jesus the Messiah is, there is the Catholic Church.

0:03:51 Now, something that you may just, it's worthwhile just noting, just clarifying in case I alluded to this in the first video when we were talking about the Nicene Creed, talking about the one holy apostolic, one holy catholic and apostolic church uses the word Catholic, and we've

0:04:08 got the word Catholic here. Now, the word Catholic, obviously you'll know about the Roman Catholic Church, and you might hear this word Catholic and think, oh, Catholic, Roman Catholic Church.

0:04:22 It has the word Catholic itself, as it were, in this context, predates all of that. What it's talking about is the universal Catholic, Catholicos.

0:04:31 Catholic means universal. So whenever you're seeing it in this kind of context and in the context of things like the Nicene Creed and so on and so forth, you're seeing this word Catholic as it were substituted in your mind, or, at least understand this signification of this

0:04:50 meaning of universal. So wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the universal church. There is the Catholic church. So this this statement in one of his letters on his way to Rome and during that journey, he was then put to death.

0:05:09 This statement by Ignatius of Athens, Antioch, is our route in for thinking about why is the church important. The church is important because that's where Jesus Christ is.

0:05:24 Now, all sorts of questions, but the one I want to go with for now, so if you have your notebooks to hand.

0:05:34 with this statement, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. The question I want you to think about, and we'll take about ten minutes to think about this, and because it's, it's a really significant question.

0:05:58 Okay? It's this. How is Jesus Christ present? How is Jesus Christ, Jesus, the Messiah, how is Jesus present? You know, thinking about wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church, so the question then is, How is Jesus Christ present?

0:06:28 You can go in any number of directions with this question. It's not a question like, oh there's a right answer, there's a wrong answer, anything like that.

0:06:36 Just explore it, just see where you go with this question. Take ten minutes. If you need more time, just pause the video.

0:06:42 But I'll pop back up in about ten minutes time and just take it forward a little bit in a in one way that one could approach this.

0:06:49 Okay? There we go. About ten minutes. Okay.

0:16:40 I wonder how you've got on with this question. How is Jesus Christ present? Uhm. Yeah, when we come together, then we'll have the opportunity to discuss this in in some detail.

0:16:55 all with this in mind of wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. This is why we're focusing on this question.

0:17:07 How is Jesus Christ present? So, three ways that we can think about this. There are other ways, but three ways, three notable ways and we'll see how this maps on to some of what you've been thinking about.

0:17:23 so firstly we can think about Jesus Christ is present sacramentally. And I'm just gonna run through the three different ways and then unpack them all a little bit in more detail.

0:17:36 Jesus Christ is present sacramentally, Jesus Christ is present through the Word, and Jesus Christ is present through the Holy Spirit.

0:17:51 Three ways, and I'm taking this from Alistair McGrath's book, Introduction, so, Jesus Christ is present sacramentally, through the Word, through the Spirit.

0:18:07 Three ways of being present, that in response to this uh statement by Ignatius of Antioch. So let's look at Jesus Christ is present sacramentally, and at this point, you might say, hang on, what's sacrament?

0:18:29 And that's a very good question. you know, we can use these words, and we go, what does that actually mean?

0:18:37 And so, there's a lot that could be said but there's a, a, a, a definition, as it were, or a statement about, the sacraments, or what a sacrament is, which goes back to Augustine of Hippo, and so this is back in the fourth to the early part of the fifth century, and so his, he, he wrote

0:19:02 this, a sacrament, well, this is attributed to this, this sort of phrasing is attributed to Augustine of Hippo.

0:19:10 A sacrament is an outward and visible sign. of an inward and invisible grace. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace.

0:19:25 Now, note that you've got a couple of things going on here. Something that is invisible is made visible. So you have the invisible grace and it becomes a visible sign.

0:19:44 And alongside that you have something that is inward, as it were, hidden, becomes outward. It becomes visible.

0:19:58 It's no longer an interior thing, it's an exterior thing. So a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and visible grace.

0:20:09 Now, one way to think of this in relation to thinking about Jesus Christ is present sacramentally. What do we actually mean by that with this understanding that a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and visible grace?

0:20:25 One way to think about this, and this is drawing on some of the thinking of the last century, the 20th century is that Jesus Christ is the sacrament of God Jesus Christ is the sacrament of God.

0:20:47 Now, when we say this, the idea that's going on is is that God is invisible but Jesus Christ makes God visible.

0:20:59 Jesus is the outward sign of the inward spiritual grace of God, as it were.

0:21:12 So if you want to know what God is like, you look to Jesus. So Jesus Christ is the sacrament of God of all that there is.

0:21:23 What is going to be this go back to the definition, this understanding of a sign, yeah, a sacrament is an outward and visible sign.

0:21:33 Jesus Christ is the sacrament, Jesus Christ is the sign of and of God. If we want to know what God is like, we look to Jesus Christ.

0:21:41 And the the, the inward becomes outward, the invisible becomes visible. However I think I said at the beginning of the first video that I'm recording this session on today, the feast day of the Ascension.

0:21:59 So this is the bit that comes at the end of the end of well, I, I think I said earlier about Luke, the Gospel according to Luke, the same person who wrote the Gospel according to Luke also wrote the, also wrote the Acts of the Apostles.

0:22:13 And just at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, you also have it at the end of the Gospel according to Luke we have the Ascension when he had said this.

0:22:24 So this is the, he's gathered with all the the disciples, and outside Jerusalem, and he's saying, wha where are we?

0:22:35 So this is in chapter 1, verses, verses verse 9 of the Acts of the Apostles. When Jesus had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

0:22:45 A cloud being the symbol in the Scriptures for the presence of God. and so the understanding is that, well, from that moment onwards Jesus is not visible.

0:22:59 so, a statement to say that Jesus Christ is the Sacrament of God, when Jesus is, was walking around Galilee, and then traveling down to Jerusalem, and so and so forth, and after his resurrection.

0:23:13 And, and, and he's encountering those we talked earlier about the, the two walking down from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day of Jesus's resurrection, but they, they'd heard stories, but, you know, and, and this stranger draws alongside them, and then they, in the breaking of

0:23:31 the bread, they suddenly come to realize that this is, this is Jesus that that he is then visible.

0:23:37 And he, he goes back, they go back to Jerusalem, and he says, you got any, you got anything to eat, type of thing?

0:23:45 And, and they give him some broiled fish, and so on and so forth. I mean, the gospel accounts go to great lengths to make it clear that Jesus is physically, bodily raised from the dead.

0:23:55 the so, the point is that he is visible for that period, but then come today, the day, in the church calendar, when we remember the ascension of Jesus, from that moment on, Jesus is no longer visible in, in that kind of way that he was visible during, from the moment of his birth

0:24:16 to his ascension. so, taking that understanding of Jesus Christ as the sacrament of God, the church, and so on So this is drawing on a writer called Henri de Lubac a French Catholic writer.

0:24:30 The church is the sacrament of Christ. So Jesus Christ is the sacrament of God, and then the church is the sacrament of Christ.

0:24:41 She represents him. She really makes him present. So, one way that the church is present. Is sacramentally, as in, the church presents Christ.

0:24:56 The church makes Christ present. She represents him in this understanding. And in, in, in churches where this is the sort of the, the, the, the primary kind of understanding of the way that Jesus Christ is present, and the way that the church which makes Christ present in the world

0:25:16 the, the understanding that comes alongside that is that if you were to look at the the church and its activities and so on, that the, what we variously call the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, the Mass, the bread and the wine, the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, this is the focal point

0:25:33 . This is the sacrament which then. empowers the, the church, the body of Christ is one of the images the metaphors that Paul uses in his letters, empowers it to be the sacrament that makes Christ present in the world.

0:25:57 So the church is so Jesus Christ is the sacrament of God and the church is then the sacrament of Christ.

0:26:06 She represents him. She really makes him present in the words of Henri de Lubac. Now it might be that you hear this and you're thinking, hmm, okay, I'm trying to get my head around this a little bit.

0:26:16 Not so sure. but if there may be this poem I'm going to put on the screen might be familiar.

0:26:23 Now some of you will have heard of St. Therese, St. Therese, Rosa of Avila. so she was a 16th century nun and she used to write for those in the convent.

0:26:36 I think she wrote a book called The Way of Perfection. She wrote The Interior Castle. These are spiritual classics from, from, from, from, from the time.

0:26:46 And there's a, there's a, there's a poem that she wrote which is, which is well known. And and so it, underpinning this is this understanding.

0:26:53 So it's this one, Christ has no body but yours. she's addressing the nuns. She's writing for the nuns in the convent, the, the, the church.

0:27:01 Christ has no body but yours. No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.

0:27:08 Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.

0:27:16 Yours are the hands, yours are the feet. Yours are the eyes, your, you are his body. Christ has no body now but yours.

0:27:24 No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

0:27:36 And so, we've got here, This, this, this strong focus on you are Christ. The church, you are the church. You are the body of Christ.

0:27:47 You represent Christ. You make Christ present in the world by what you do. And by your acts of compassion and your acts of service and love.

0:28:00 Christ has no body on earth but yours. This is the underpinning here. Jesus Christ is the sacrament of God. And the church is the sacrament of Christ.

0:28:10 She represents him. She really makes him present. These are the words of Henri de Lubek. And that understanding, going back hundreds of years earlier, because de Lubek was writing in the 20th century.

0:28:19 St. Teresa of Avila was back in the 16th century, as you can see. And she's talking there to the nuns that's saying, no.

0:28:26 Oh, the same understanding, but all those hundreds of years earlier, that Christ has nobody but yours. Christ has nobody now on earth but yours.

0:28:36 So this is the a sacramental understanding. And within churches that are shaped by, have a very keen understanding of this, the Eucharist, the Mass, the Lord's Supper, is very, very important for churches along those lines.

0:28:50 So this is. The the, the, the first one that we've been looking at. The, the, the Jesus Christ is present, and it could be that when you were writing down in your notebooks and everything, you, you made a note about Jesus being present sacramentally.

0:29:04 But you also, very possibly, wrote that Jesus Christ is present through the word. You may not have used the word, the word, you may have used the word, the Scriptures.

0:29:12 but the word is, What we're going to look at now, this way of Jesus Christ being present through the word.

0:29:21 So, Christ is present in the proclamation of the word. The understanding that comes with this is that Christ is present in the proclamation of the word.

0:29:32 Well, what do we mean by by this? Well, when the word of God is proclaimed, both in the-reading of the scriptures and the preaching of the word, Jesus Christ, is made present.

0:29:43 Umm, the word of God this understanding here of in the 20th century was very much advanced by this cheerful chap.

0:29:56 And this is Barth. It's your namesake. Your namesake's on the screen. So this is Karl Barth. and this is a wonderful- It's to be.

0:30:02 jolly picture of him. And so he had this understanding, the, the, the, the, the church the word of God is Jesus.

0:30:13 The word of God is Jesus Christ. And the, the church comes into being in response to the proclamation of the word of God.

0:30:24 And the word of God you have- the word of God being Jesus Christ. and, and that is the word of God is Christ revealed.

0:30:33 And the word of God, when it's written, that's the Bible. And the word of God is also when the, the scriptures are preached.

0:30:41 So in the proclamation. So the church is looping all the way back to what wherever- of it.

0:30:51 Jesus Christ is there is the Catholic church. But, it's saying that the word of God, wherever the word of God is proclaimed both in the reading of the scriptures and the preaching of the word that is where the church is.

0:31:06 And the church the Jesus Christ is present in the reading of the scriptures. And in the, in the proclamation- And in the preaching of the word.

0:31:17 So the- the- the- the, the- the on the, that's the understanding that underpins the way Carl Barth. this Swiss theologian from the 20th century that I've talked about before.

0:31:30 so that's that's an understanding there with with with Barth, which depends on- whereas the second- The mental understanding is that Jesus Christ is the sacrament, and- and then the

focus then becomes the- the focus then becomes on the- the Eucharist as one of the key ways that

0:31:50 Jesus is present within the community, within the church, which then makes- which the church is then the sacrament within the- within the world.

0:31:58 making Jesus Christ present within the world. Within churches where- shut down, I'm going just try the focus is more on the Word of God understood this way in the Scriptures, and the preaching will then, in those churches, you can see that the focus is much more on the Scriptures.

0:32:14 It's- it's much more- it's much more about the Bible. you know, we're a Bible-believing church, things like that get said.

0:32:21 And that- that's where the Scriptures are the focus. And- and- and in the activity of the church, as well, you can see that the- you can have services where you don't have the Eucharist.

0:32:31 That- that's not the focus. the focus- as long as the Scriptures have been read, and as long as the- proclaimed, and as long as the- the- the Scriptures have been preached, then the Word of- then Jesus Christ is present.

0:32:42 but the Word of God has been proclaimed. The the- the church would only- only comes into existence because of the proclamation of- of the Word of God.

0:32:52 and so- so- so yes, you can see in those kind of churches that say for example in the Methodist churches and so on, very strong focus on preaching, very strong focus on the Scriptures.

0:33:06 churches which are more down the Reformed end of the thing where there's- again, the Scriptures, it's about the preaching and- and so on, whereas those that are more down the Catholic end- as in Roman Catholic end or the the- also the Orthodox, the Eastern Orthodox end, the Eucharist, the-

0:33:23 the Mass that's the focus more in the activity of the church when it gathers to worship. so- so- so yes, you've got- you've got that, so- so- wherever the Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic church.

0:33:37 Now, the qua- the- the question here, at this point, and then there's the third one that I'm going to come to in the list, okay, so I haven't quite lost track of what I'm going in this, don't worry.

0:33:49 But notice the phrase here that Ignatius of Antioch says, it's wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic church. It's not the other way around, it doesn't say, wherever the Catholic church is, as in wherever the universal church is, and I'm not talking about the Roman- You Catholic church, I'm

0:34:04 just talking about church in general. It's not saying that wherever the church is, there Jesus Christ is, it's the other way around.

0:34:10 Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic church. So then the question becomes, well, do we make Christ present? Because if the focus is on the fact that, well, you know, if you take it the other way around, well, we've celebrated the mass we've read the squ- scriptures, we've preached the

0:34:28 scriptures, therefore Jesus Christ is present. It's as if we make it happen. That's the thing. Or is it the other way around?

0:34:39 Umm, Barth is very- Carl Barth and Ignatius of Antioch are both saying it from the other direction. Where Jesus Christ is, there's the church.

0:34:49 Where the word of God is preached and proclaimed. This is Barth. That's- that brings in to being the church. Umm, and so, uhh, but the theological question that's underpinning this is it's something that we make happen?

0:35:04 Or is it something that happens on another basis? And this brings us to the third understanding because in all of this, and again you can see- the connections here with what we've been talking about in the previous videos about the tradition when I'm saying when you hear the word tradition and traditioning

0:35:22 and the act of traditioning and in the content of traditioning I want you not to be thinking of traditionalisms where we've always done things blah blah blah blah.

0:35:29 I want you to hear the Holy Spirit. I want you to think of the Holy Spirit because it's the Holy Spirit that makes all this possible and keeps things on track as it were.

0:35:38 Umm, so the- So, The third way of understanding when Jesus- when we talk about Jesus Christ is present, we talk about Jesus Christ being present through the Spirit.

0:35:50 Because, in the absence of the Holy Spirit, there is no church. Now, this way of thinking about things, uhh, this very sort of Click a kind of statement that I've just put on the screen there.

0:36:06 Umm, that's going to be associated with churches where, uhh, the focus is much more on the activity and agency of the Holy Spirit.

0:36:15 Umm, what I want to draw your attention to is whether you are more down say it's all about the Eucharist or it's more- or it's all about the- the Scriptures.

0:36:26 Whichever of those would say- The- the Holy Spirit is still utterly essential in all of this. Umm, in the absence of the Holy Spirit, there is no church.

0:36:35 Umm, uhh, we're just doing our thing. Umm, uhh, the danger is that we start to think that we make things happen.

0:36:44 Umm, rather than actually this is in response to this is through the guiding and the leading and the- activity and the agency of the Holy Spirit, of God the Holy Spirit.

0:36:55 Now we might associate this focus of the Holy Spirit on Pentecostal churches, churches which are very much deliberately focused and-and wonderfully focused on the activity of the Holy Spirit.

0:37:09 Umm, the eelin our country the eeldenomination, is one of those churches- matches. Where there's a strong- and new frontiers as well.

0:37:18 Strong focus. And-and within the-the charismatic revival that we've had with this strong focus on the Holy Spirit even the last hundred years or so since the Azusa Street Revival in-in-in the states, and, and-and all the various moments over the last 50 years.

0:37:36 Especially off the Holy Spirit. Umm. Making making the Holy Spirit's presence in our churches cuts across all the denominations.

0:37:49 You've got charismatic revival in-in-in the-in the Roman Catholic Church. You've got it in the Church of England. You've got it in there across all the denominations.

0:37:56 but what I want to draw your attention to here it might be in a direction that you perhaps weren't expecting.

0:38:03 Uh is from an Eastern Orthodox theologian called John Zizioulas, and he passed away just a couple of years ago, and he was a Greek Orthodox bishop, and he let me get this right.

0:38:20 He served as the Metropolitan Pergamon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople from 1986 till- till his death. . in 2023, and he was a tremendous, oh, a wonderful theologian, and there's a sort of an understanding, and he had a very strong focus in his writings on the activity and the agency

0:38:41 , and of the Holy Spirit coming from an Eastern Orthodox perspective, and one of the things that's sort of associated with him is this understanding that the church is instituted by Christ.

0:38:57 The church is, as it were, begun, is set in motion by Christ, and the church is constituted by the Holy Spirit.

0:39:05 it's sustained and guided by the Holy Spirit. without the Holy Spirit, the church becomes either a sociological People phenomenon, or simply a religious institution, but take God, the Holy Spirit, out of the picture, and it's just us, carrying on, doing our thing, whatever it may be.

0:39:30 But because the Holy Spirit is there, and we, at every stage, we just pray, come Holy Spirit, for all the things that we do as the church.

0:39:39 Um And so this is why so, so, so this is an understanding of where we go back to this understanding of the there we go.

0:39:50 Jesus Christ is present through the Spirit. so, it can be churches and where expressions of church where we're, we're, we're, we're, we're, we're, we're very much focusing on beseeching the Holy Spirit.

0:40:04 To, to, to come. but this cuts across denominations as, as well, as I say. So there's John, and the church is instituted by Christ and constituted by the Holy Spirit.

0:40:18 And so, this is all the way around of just bringing this focus of why is the church important?

0:40:26 Going back to uh Ignatius of Antioch. Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church, and the Holy Spirit is, is, is, is, is integral to all of, of this.

0:40:42 Jesus Christ is present, sacramentally. Um Jesus Christ is present, through the word, and Jesus Christ is present, through the Spirit.

0:40:51 Why is the church important? Because this, because Jesus Christ, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the church. And present, sacramentally.

0:41:01 yeah, this is one thing I just want to draw your attention to. How, how, what, what way might we given the way that we've been thinking about things, how might we draw these ways together?

0:41:14 And one of the things I want to just As we bring this to close. One of the, one of the ways that we might think about, the, the, the, the, like a common thread that runs through these, is that it's very difficult to speak of any of these, be it, to speak of Jesus Christ being

0:41:32 present sacramentally, to think of Jesus Christ being present through the word, to think of Jesus Christ being present through the spirit, in, without recourse to without telling the story of scripture think about the sacramental approach.

0:41:46 with its strong focus on the Mass on the Eucharist, on the Lord Suppermm, the night Jesus was betrayed, he took bread and broke it.

0:41:56 It, it, it, we can't speak of this understanding of Jesus Christ being present sacramentally without speaking of Shhhhhhhh the Last Supper, without speaking of this, these events of betrayal by his, his, his closest followers.

0:42:16 And, and, and betrayal, and, and denial, and, and it just pitches us immediately in to the events of passion passion tied up a passion week of holy week rather, and uh.

0:42:28 And, and, it's all about story. you can't make sense of that. You can't speak about the sacrament in that sense.

0:42:35 The sacrament of Jesus Christ being the sacrament and the sacrament of the Eucharist of, of, of the Lord's up, of, of, of the Mass without telling the story.

0:42:44 You have to tell the story to make sense of that. It doesn't, it, it's not possible otherwise. And if we're to speak of Jesus Christ being present through the Word, then we're speaking about the Word and we- We're, we're preaching the Scriptures and we're telling the story of, of, of the Scriptures be

0:42:57 it from Genesis through the first five books, the Torah of the of the Tanak of the Old Testament. be it that we're preaching through Isaiah or Jeremiah or we're preaching from the Psalms or we're into the New Testament and we're all in those different, think of those five acts of the thi-

0:43:16 As we do that, as we're preaching the Word, we're constantly telling the story and, and, and likewise, the, the story of God and in the story of God in which we, our stories are woven into.

0:43:31 And if Jesus Christ is present through the Spirit then, then, then, then, then, again, we can't speak of the Spirit without speaking of the story because it's just like, uhh, who is the Spirit?

0:43:42 And, and, and, and, and today is, as I say, is, I'm recording this on Ascension Day. Well, in 10 days time, we remember Pentecost the day when the Spirit is sent upon the disciples in, in the upper room.

0:43:56 And, and then they suddenly go out into Jerusalem and they're able to speak all the languages of the Jews that have come from all over the Mediterranean.

0:44:05 And to gather for the festival in, in Jerusalem. And so the, the Spirit gives them this ability. So, I, I, the only way I've been able to speak of the Spirit in that sense is to tell you the story of what happened.

0:44:19 And, and, and, and, and we also talk about this, what the Spirit does in our lives. And in order to explain that, we, we, we tell the stories of what, what happens in our lives.

0:44:29 To, to, to, to to get that across and to, and to, to, to speak meaningfully of it. So these three ways of talking about Jesus Christ being present in wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Church.

0:44:43 Where Jesus Christ is present, Jesus Christ is present sacramentally through the Word, through the Spirit. All of those ways that, for us to speak meaningfully of, of them is for us.

0:44:53 Thank you to to tell the story of Scripture. And and that we're in Act 4 as, as we go.

0:44:59 So let me just move on through those slides. And so, yes, with all of this in mind, woo! With all of this in mind, I want to just pose, as it were, one more kind of question to you.

0:45:17 and this is a question that I hope that we'll be able to pick up when we meet and discuss together in our groups.

0:45:26 and, and, I hope through this you will have a sense of the capaciousness of the ways that Jesus Christ is present.

0:45:37 wherever Jesus Christ is the- the- the- There is the Holy Spirit, and there are all sorts of other questions.

0:45:44 It's just that are- are lurking on the edges, and we were just saying, well hang on, are we saying, wherever Jesus Christ is present, does that mean that Jesus Christ is present beyond the Church?

0:45:53 If it can- if- if Ignatius of Antioch, if what Ignatius of Antioch is saying is right, then is it wherever Jesus Christ is, that there is the Church?

0:46:01 and- and where is the activity and agency of the Holy Spirit? Is it just within the Church? Or is it beyond the Church?

0:46:08 And so on and so forth. So, all sorts of questions which we could have a wonderful time talking about, and maybe we will have the opportunity to.

0:46:15 But for now, what I want you to focus on is one final question. But it's going like, what's it gonna be?

0:46:28 In your Church? Okay. In your Where you are? How is Jesus Christ present in your Church? I'd like you to take about 10 minutes having a thing about, having a think about this.

0:46:49 You need more time, take more time. This is a big question. But think, sacramentally, through the Word, through the Spirit, you might think there are other ways that Jesus Christ is present, wanting you to narrow it slightly.

0:47:06 How is Jesus Christ present in your Church? Okay, take about 10 minutes.

0:56:54 there we go. I wonder how you got on with that question. How is Jesus Christ present in your church? I'm really looking forward to the conversations we're going to have about this.

0:57:06 And yeah. I hope that you'll take Ignatius of Antioch's maxim with you wherever Jesus Christ is present. Is there also is the Catholic Church, the Universal Church, and these different understandings of how we might think of Jesus Christ being present, how is Jesus Christ present, and

0:57:32 then focusing it for you with this, what we're going to discuss in part when we come together how is Jesus Christ present in your church?

0:57:44 Ah, okay I'm going to draw things to a close in a usual, in the usual way that we do, with a quick summary of the ground that we've covered, and then close with a prayer and draw this session four to a close so, yeah, let's let's get the summary up on the screen, and then

0:58:04 we'll, we'll discuss draw things to a close.

0:58:07 what I meant to say a moment ago, of course, is that as we draw this session to a close, obviously we're looking ahead to session five, and that you can see there's a sort of a natural flow from thinking about how is Jesus Christ present in your church, then to our thinking, which we're going to be looking

0:58:22 at next time, is how do we worship and pray? That's the focus of session five. How do we worship and pray?

0:58:28 let's see. We're going to explore that theologically next time, session five, but for now, let's have a little quick recap of what we've done together.

0:58:40 we started off with a theological, not a definition, but a declaration, the Nicene Creed, some 1600 years ago from the Council of Nicaea, and we looked at that, and we looked at the, the way that story was very important.

0:58:54 to that, and the sort of different five acts, and some of the gaps, some of the things it doesn't talk about, where its focus was on the identity of Jesus, who is Jesus, what's his relationship with God, and so on and so forth.

0:59:08 And then we read some scriptures together, we read a passage from the beginning of Paul's letter to the tricky Christians in Corinth, and talking about the resurrection.

0:59:18 Thank for your attention. And that then we drew on as in part as for our conversation about tradition as a source for theological thinking and living.

0:59:29 And there we were thinking about tradition as being both the content, the message was the phrase that Paul was talking about, what he was traditioning the, the content was, the tradition.

0:59:42 That was being traditioned as it were was the message, the good news of Jesus Christ and the way he then went on to talk about Jesus being uh being put to death and then rising from the dead and his resurrection, all of it in accordance with the scriptures.

1:00:02 so from with that in mind, we all then went to look on to. To questions and a lot of reflections on the question, why is the church important?

1:00:16 And we talked about our own sort of experiences and feelings and what we might think the church is and we were looking at it in terms of it being the institution, the place, building people.

1:00:24 but then I want, then I sort of zeroed things in a little bit and said, well, why is the church important?

1:00:30 Why does it matter? And then we were looking at this Maxim from Bishop Ignatius of Antioch on his journey to Rome during which he was martyred.

1:00:44 And he was saying, wherever Jesus Christ is pres- Jesus- wherever Jesus Christ is present there is the Catholic church.

1:00:52 There is the universal church. And then we were exploring that. Exploring different ways that Jesus Christ is present, sacramentally, through the word, and through the spirit.

1:01:01 And we ended with that question about where how is Jesus Christ present in your church? And that's one of the things we'll be talking about when we come together for our next session together.

1:01:14 And next time we're going to be looking at how and why do we pray. As I say, that's the natural, this session is the natural springboard into that.

1:01:23 That will be our penultimate session. And then our final session, when we gather together, will be how do we live out our everyday faith.

1:01:31 So sort of flows, that's the idea. So, let's draw this all together. Thank you so much for everything just sticking alongside and and listening to me.

1:01:43 And engaging with the conversation and writing down your notes and, and, and then we come together, we'll be able to have the discussion together, which I'm, which I'm really looking forward to.

1:01:54 So, with all that in mind, let's pray together. It's the prayer that we began our session with from the third Sunday after Easter.

1:02:01 And so, if I say it, but please, wherever you are, wherever you're sitting in this moment, is please say this prayer with me and and then this is how we'll, we'll draw session four to a close.

1:02:16 So, let's, let's pause for a moment and then together, let's say. Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord, give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life, and serve you continuous, continually

1:02:52 in righteousness and truth. Through Jesus Christ, we pray this, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

1:03:16 we go everybody, we're done. I'm not going to get Barth, he's over there, he's sleeping on the sofa. He's all happy and chilled.

1:03:22 but yeah. So the only other thing to say is that, as always, there's a PDF with some extra resources for this session.

1:03:29 There'll be an interview between Paula Gooder and Rowan Williams, talking about tradition, and also talking about the church.

1:03:39 the two videos from them on that, and I'm going to dig out some materials to do with the Nicene Creed, because lots of people have been writing and, and, and posting stuff about that, and there'll be some other stuff as well on this theme of why the church is important.

1:03:53 but yeah, for that, we're done, we're good, all, all, all finished, and look forward to seeing you soon, and for now, God bless you all.

1:04:03 And see you soon, everybody. Bye now.