

ESTABLISH

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD – SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Union with Christ: Quotables

“Union with Christ is in Scripture the most general way of characterizing Jesus’ work of salvation. Jesus saves us *by* uniting us to himself.” **John Frame**

“There is no joy in this world like Union with Christ. The more we can feel it, the happier we are.” **Charles Spurgeon**

“Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.”

John Murray

Union with Christ: Quotables

“The best thing in the universe is to be united to Christ. To be in Christ. To enjoy union with Christ. When this is fully understood, nothing is greater experientially and nothing is greater theologically. If you grasp this fully, you’ll have no higher experiences than the enjoyment of this. And nothing reaches higher, nothing is more comprehensive in theology than our union with Christ.” **John Piper**

Union with Christ: Quotables

“Union with Christ is the cause of all other graces that we are made partakers of; they are all communicated unto us by virtue of our union with Christ. Hence is our adoption, our justification, our sanctification, our fruitfulness, our perseverance, our resurrection, our glory.” **John Owen**

Union with Christ: What is it?

Wayne Grudem: “Union with Christ is a phrase used to summarize several different relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation. These relationships include the fact that:

- 1) We are in Christ
- 2) Christ is in us
- 3) We are like Christ
- 4) We are with Christ”

Union with Christ: What is it?

What does “in” mean in these cases?

- **NOT spatial**
- **Relational, Spiritual**
 - Connection with Christ
(vine and branches, head and body)
- **Mystical** – “Union with Christ is mystical because it is a mystery. That fact it is a mystery underlines the preciousness of it and the intimacy of the relation it entails.” John Murray

Union with Christ: What is it?

John Piper: “Union with Christ is the reality of all the ways that the bible pictures our human connectedness to Christ in which he is indispensable for every good that we enjoy.”

→ Eph 1:3

Union with Christ: What is it?

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ, who
has blessed us in Christ with
every spiritual blessing in the
heavenly places...

Questions????

Introductory Discussion:

- How might the idea, concept, and reality of union with Christ change the way we think of ourselves and your lives?
- Especially during these strange and disorienting times of isolation/social distancing? How does it affect the way you think of difficulties that you may be experiencing at this time?
- How might it influence us as we try to bring hope to those around us during the COVID-19 crisis?

Union with Christ: OT Witness

(Gen 2:24) Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

(Eph 5:29-32) For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Union with Christ: OT Witness

(Ps 80:8-11, 14-15) You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River. Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.

(John 15:5) I am the vine; you are the branches.

Questions????

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ

(John 15:1-11) “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - John

(John 15:1-11) gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - John

(John 17:20-21) “I... pray also for those who will believe in me through [the word], that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

(1 John 2:24–25) Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - Paul

(Romans 6:4–12) We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - Paul

(Romans 6:4–12) him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So **you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

(Romans 8:1) There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - Paul

(1 Corinthians 1:27–31) But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - Paul

(1 Corinthians 15:22) As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

“The problem with the human race, is not most deeply that everybody does various kinds of sins. Behind all of our guilt, behind all of our depravity, behind all of our personal sinning, there is a mysterious connection or union with Adam, our father, who sinned and we being in him, in some mysterious way, also sinned and died and are condemned. What Christ has done for all who are in him, is far greater than what Adam did for all who are in him. It’s all about the superiority of the work of Christ for those who are in him over against what happened to all who are in Adam.” -John Piper

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - Paul

(2 Corinthians 5:21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that **in him** we might become the righteousness of God.

(Ephesians 2:4–6) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places **in Christ Jesus**

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - Paul

(Eph 1:3-14) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us in Christ** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as **he chose us in him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us **in the Beloved**. **In him we have redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - Paul

(Eph 1:3-14) wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things **in him**, things in heaven and things on earth. **In him we have obtained an inheritance**, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope **in Christ** might be to the praise of his glory. **In him** you also, **when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed** with the promised Holy Spirit...

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We in Christ - Paul

(2 Timothy 1:8–9) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...

Questions????

Union with Christ: NT Witness

Christ in Us – John

(John 15:5) I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me **and I in him**, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

(1 John 3:24) Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, **and God in him**. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

(1 John 4:4) Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

Christ in Us – Paul

(Gal 2:20) I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

(Eph 3:14, 16-17) For this reason I bow my knees before the Father that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**—that you, being rooted and grounded in love.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

Christ in Us – Paul

(Colossians 1:27) To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We like Christ – John

(1 John 2:6) whoever says he abides in him ought to walk **in the same way in which he walked.**

(1 John 3:2) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that **when he appears we shall be like him,** because we shall see him as he is.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We like Christ – Paul

(Phil 3:8-11) For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We like Christ – Paul

(2 Corinthians 3:18) And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We like Christ – Paul

(2 Corinthians 4:8–11) We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We with Christ – Gospels

(Matthew 28:20) Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

(John 17:21) May they all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We with Christ – Epistles

(1 John 2:24) Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.

(1 John 4:15–16) Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Union with Christ: NT Witness

We with Christ – Epistles

(Rom 8:9, 11) You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Questions????

Union with Christ: Implications

Putting Off the Old Self – Col 3:1-17



Union with Christ: Implications

Aiming at God's Glory – 1 Cor 6:15-20

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?.. For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” He who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him... Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. **So glorify God in your body.**

Union with Christ: Implications

Assurance of divine blessing –

“Since Christ has been so imparted to you with all his benefits that all his things are made yours, that you are made a member of him, indeed one with him, his righteousness overwhelms your sins; his salvation wipes out your condemnation; with his worthiness he intercedes that your unworthiness may not come before God’s sight. Surely this is so: We ought not to separate Christ from ourselves or ourselves from him. Rather, we ought to hold fast bravely with both hands to that fellowship by which he has bound himself to us.” John Calvin

Union with Christ: Implications

Desire to see Unbelievers Saved –

Romans 9:1–3

I am speaking the truth **in Christ**—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For **I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.**

Union with Christ: Implications

Dying and Grieving Well –1 Thess 4:14–16

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Union with Christ: Implications

Dying and Grieving Well –

“Could anything illustrate the indissolubility of union with Christ more plainly than the fact that this union is not severed even in death?” John Murray

Union with Christ: Implications

Spiritual Strength – Phil 4:13, 19

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (For) my God will supply every need... according to his riches in glory **in Christ Jesus**.

Patient Endurance – Revelation 1:9

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are **in Jesus**, was on the island called Patmos

Union with Christ: Implications

Humility – 1 Cor 1:30-31

Because of God you are in Christ

Jesus... so that, as it is written, Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

Comfort and Joy – John 15:11

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Union with Christ: Implications

Christian Maturity – Eph 4:15–16

Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, **into Christ**, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Union with Christ: Implications

Fellowship with other believers –

1 John 1:3

That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Union with Christ: Implications

Communion/Abiding with/Devotion to Christ – John 15:7

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

“Communion with Christ requires our coming to Him. Meditating upon His person and His work requires the diligent use of the means of grace, and specially the prayerful reading of His Word. Many fail to *abide* because they habitually fast instead of feed.” Hudson Taylor

Union with Christ: Implications

Hope for future resurrection –

Colossians 3:1–4

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Questions????

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THE DOCTRINE OF GOD – SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY