

**Quotable:** "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

**Subject:** Union with Christ

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

"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 is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation." John Murray

"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

#### I. **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"

What does "in" mean in these cases? (not spatial)

- Connection with Christ (relational, spiritual)
- Union with Christ (mystical)<sup>1</sup>

- "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."<sup>2</sup> John Piper

#### II. **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? 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?

#### III. **Union with Christ: *OT witness***

- Gen 2:24 // Eph 5:22-32
- Psalm 80:7-11, 14-15 // John 15:1-11

#### IV. **Union with Christ: *NT witness***

##### 1) We in Christ

- John 17:20-21; 1 John 2:24-25
- Rom 6:4-12; 8:1
- 1 Cor 1:27-31; 15:22<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "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

<sup>2</sup> Piper continues... "No saving good, no eternal good, no God-exalting good, no soul satisfying good comes to us except as we are connected to Christ."

<sup>3</sup> "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

- 2 Cor 5:21
- Eph 1:3-14; 2:6
- Phil 3:8-9
- 2 Tim 1:9

## 2) Christ in us

- John 15:5; 17:22-23; 1 John 3:24; 4:4
- Gal 2:20
- Eph 3:14, 16-17
- Col 1:27

## 3) Like Christ

- 1 John 2:6; 3:2
- Phil 3:10
- 2 Cor 3:18; 4:8-11

## 4) With Christ (and in him, with Father and Spirit)

- Matt 28:20
- John 17:21; 1 John 2:24; 4:15-16
- Rom 8:9, 11

## V. Union with Christ: *Implications*<sup>4</sup>

- Putting off the old self, Repentance, Aiming at God's glory (Col 3:1-17; 1 Cor 6:15-20)<sup>5</sup>
- Confidence/Assurance of divine blessing (Eph 1:3) – "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
- A desire to see unbelievers saved (Rom 9:1-4)
- Dying and Grieving Well (1 Thess 4:14-16)<sup>6</sup>
- Spiritual Strength (Phil 4:13, 19)
- Spiritual Fruit (John 15:4-5)
- Patient Endurance (Rev 1:9)
- Humility (1 Cor 1:31)
- Christian maturity (Eph 4:15-16)
- Comfort and Joy (John 15:11)
- Unity and Fellowship with other believers (1 John 1:3)
- Communion/Abiding with Christ/Devotion to Christ (John 15:7) - "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
- Hope for future resurrection (Col 3:1-4)

---

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

<sup>4</sup> This list is by no means exhaustive. These are implications that struck me as I was digging into the doctrine. The Bible invites us to discover many more to be sure.

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-pey1u\\_mXo&list=PLgECOVgWNbSiNyyxXpkGswrW5uy2zr0Vm&index=11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-pey1u_mXo&list=PLgECOVgWNbSiNyyxXpkGswrW5uy2zr0Vm&index=11)

<sup>6</sup> "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