

Q&A #5 | Union With Christ
April 21, 2011

QUESTION: Can you explain what our union with Christ is? What means to be crucified, buried and resurrected with Jesus? Why is this so important?

ANSWER:

1) CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT OUR UNION WITH CHRIST IS?

a. Passages That Show Us That We Have Some Type of Union with Jesus

Christians are “In Christ”

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are **in Christ Jesus...Romans 8:1**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing **in Christ. Ephesians 1:3**

Christians are “With Christ”

If you have any encouragement from **being united with Christ**, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. **Philippians 2:1-2**

For you died, and your **life is now hidden with Christ** in God. **Colossians 3:3**

Christ is “In Christians”

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory. **Colossians 1:27**

If **Christ is in you**, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. **Romans 8:10**

b. What Our Union With Jesus IS NOT

- i. Not a “mystical union” as a pantheist would think. God remains distinct from His creation. Our union with Jesus doesn’t mean we are a part of who God is and it doesn’t mean Jesus takes over our life and we get absorbed by Him.
- ii. It is not a mere sympathetic union in that we share a common love and sympathy. Our union is more than mere friendship or commonality in interest.
- iii. Not a physical union obtained through ritual like baptism or communion. Those things assume we already have union with Christ.

c. Two General Ways in Which We Are United to Christ

i. **Representative/Federal Union** – Jesus is Our Representative

1. The Bible says Jesus was sent by God to be the Second Adam. What Jesus did, we did. His righteous life has become ours. His death to sin is our death to sin. His resurrection to life is given to us. Because Jesus is our representative head, our New Adam, we stand forgiven and righteous in the court of God. Not because of what we have done, but because of what Jesus, our Head, has done for us.
2. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. **Romans 5:18-19**
3. Jesus came to earth to become our new Head. Those who believe in Him are united to Him and He becomes their federal head. His righteousness in life is now ours in God’s eyes and His death to sin and judgment was ours too.

4. This is how we can say Jesus died for us and that He paid out debt because God elected Jesus to become our representative head.
5. Is this unfair? No, because God is good, He has the authority to do this and this is how we are able to be saved in Jesus.

ii. **Vital Union** – Jesus is Our Source of Spiritual Life

1. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. ⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. **John 15:4-7**
2. From this passage we see that our union with Jesus is not just seen in His work *for us*, but also in His work *in us*.
3. From this passage Jesus uses the illustration of a vine and its branches. The branches only have life and fruit because they are connected to the nourishing vine. Just as the vine gives life and fruitfulness to the branches, so Jesus gives life and fruitfulness to believers.
4. Our vital union with Jesus is seen in Him working in us to make us fruitful, to grow like Him, to be refreshed, to be steadfast in faith, so on and so forth.
5. Our vital union with Jesus is the source from which we grow and are fruitful

2) WHAT MEANS TO BE CRUCIFIED, BURIED AND RESURRECTED WITH JESUS?

- a. This means that, Jesus, as our Federal Head, worked our salvation for us. He was crucified and died so, in Him, our old selves have been crucified

and we have died to sin. Jesus took care of our sin on the cross. His subsequent resurrection brings us new life. Because Jesus, my Head, rose from the dead, I also have risen with Him spiritually and also have confidence that I will be physically raised after my death.

- b. This means I now live in the completed work of Jesus and look confidently forward to the hope of eternal life where I will be made perfect on account of what Jesus did for me.

3) WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

- a. **Our whole salvation is based in our union with Jesus.** Jesus life of righteousness, death on the cross to sin and judgment and His new resurrected life mean absolutely nothing to us if we are united to Him.
- b. **As Our Representative** - Our union with Jesus means no condemnation and no hell – There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. **Romans 8:1.**
 - i. But we deserve Hell! Jesus drank it at the cross, so did we. Hell is paid for. “He who knew no sin became sin so we may become the righteousness of God.” **2 Corinthians 5:21**
 - ii. But we didn’t live how we should! Jesus lived the perfect, sinless and righteous life, our union with Him means we did too. “The righteous requirements of the Law are fully met in us.” **Romans 8:3**
- c. **As Our Vital Source** - Our Union With Jesus Means We Will Be Fruitful
 - i. We get our strength from Jesus to grow
 - ii. He hasn’t left us alone, but lives within us!
 - iii. Because Jesus is the perfectly nourishing vine, we will not be able to help but be fruitful because of our union with Him.