

EQUIP



15 Feb

Union with Christ

Session 1: What is union and why does it matter?

Hidden in plain sight

**"FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY
COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS."**

"To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful **in Christ** Jesus:" (Eph 1:1)

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people **in Christ** Jesus at Philippi." (Phil 1:1)

"Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are **in Christ**." (1 Pet 5:14)

"To cite a few examples, believers individually and the church corporately are said to be possessors of eternal life in Christ (Rom. 6:23); justified in Christ (8:1); glorified in Christ (Rom. 8:30; 2 Cor. 3:18); sanctified in Christ (1 Cor. 1:2); called in Christ (v.9); made alive in Christ (15:22; Eph. 2:5); created anew in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17); adopted as children of God in Christ (Gal. 3:26); elected in Christ (Eph. 1:4); and raised with Christ (Col. 3:1)."

1

"Union with Christ may be the most important doctrine you've never heard of." 2

Significance of the union

Gen 2:18–24

Eph 5:28–30

Rev 21:1–3

Value of the union

Phil 3:7–9

"Nothing is more central or basic than union and communion with Christ. Union with Christ is really the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation not only in its application but also in its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ." 3



1 Marcus Peter Johnson, *One with Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 19.

2

Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in Our Holiness: Filling the Gap between Gospel Passion and the Pursuit of Godliness*, 2014, 94.

3

John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 161.

Nature of the union

Building Eph 2:19–22, 1Pet 2:4–5

Body Eph 4:15–16

Marriage Eph 5:22–23

Vine John 15:1–8

Godhead John 14:23, 17:20–23

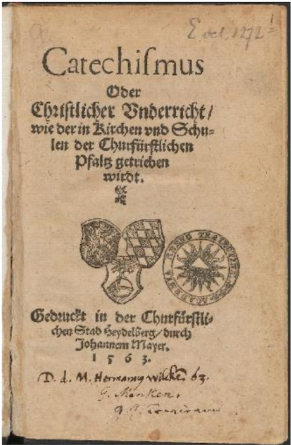
“Intimate, vital, and spiritual union between Christ and His people.” 4

Union and yourself

The soul never thinks without an image—*Aristotle*

“What is your only comfort in life and in death?”

“That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.” 5



Session 2: Union and justification

Defining justification

“For So you have heard, and it is always preached, that this one article preserves the church of Christ; when it is lost, Christ and the church are lost ... this article is the sun, the day, the light of the church and of all believers.” 6



Rom 3:10

Rom 3:23–25

4 Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London: Banner of Truth, 1959), 449.

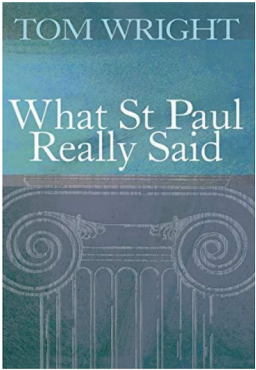
5 John Thomas, *Creeks and Confessions of the Reformed Faith*, Kindle edition., n.d., Locations 13-17.

6 Martin Luther, cited in Johnson, *One with Christ*, 88.



“Problems” with justification

“Righteousness is not an object, a substance or a gas which can be passed across the courtroom.” 7



Justification needs union

Rom 5:12, 18–21



“A state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received and that consequently this country is at war with Germany.”

Just as if I’d never sinned

Rom 6:3–6

“By virtue of our union with Jesus Christ, we are incorporated into the (sin-bearing, guilt-negating, wrath-absorbing, death-defeating, curse-annulling) crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus Christ, through which our sins are forgiven and we are freed from the sentence of guilt, condemnation, and death which stood against us.” 8



Gal 2:20

“My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul!”9

Just as if I’d always obeyed

Psalm 24:3–4

1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9



7 Tom Wright, *What St Paul Really Said* (Oxford: Lion Books, 1997), 98.
8 Johnson, *One with Christ*, 103.
9 Horatio G. Spafford.

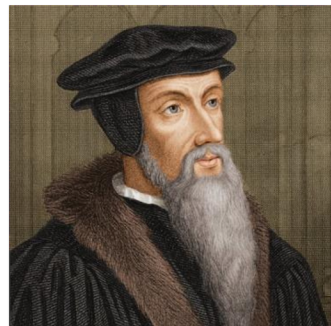


Justification not a “problem!”

“First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us.” ¹⁰

Justification is beautiful

“Here this rich and godly Bridegroom Christ marries this poor, wicked harlot, redeems her from all her evil and adorns her with all His good. It is now impossible that her sins should destroy her, since they are laid upon Christ and swallowed up in Him, and she has that righteousness in Christ her husband of which she may boast as of her own, and which she can confidently set against all her sins in the face of death and hell, and say, “If I have sinned, yet my Christ, in Whom I believe, has not sinned, and all His is mine, and all mine is His.”” ¹¹



Chloe is a Christian in her mid-twenties. She has always liked to be the best at everything. From an early age, her parents pushed her to succeed and she was frequently top of the class. She went to university and achieved the First she hoped for. She landed a good job, but she has not progressed up the company as she wanted, nor is she getting noticed. She feels a failure as she has not hit the life goals she hoped. She is regular at church but struggles to feel it does much for her. As such, she feels aimless and anxious with her lack of progress.

Susie is a Christian in her mid-forties. She has two children who are at school, and she is a stay-at-home mum. She is struggling with her sense of worth. Without paid employment, she wonders whether she has much to offer the world. Sometimes she finds herself fantasising about what life might have been like if she did not have children. She can spend time scrolling YouTube shorts, which leaves her feeling like she's wasting time.

Charlie is a Christian in his late sixties. He was raised in a Christian family, and has gone to church most of his adult life. However, for the last few years he has become anxious about dying and whether judgement might follow. He thinks back to the videos he watched as a teenager about the return of Jesus and fear paralyses him. Sometimes he wonders whether he is a Christian and whether God is really for him or not.

¹⁰

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2006), 3.1.1.

¹¹

Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Lehman, 55 vols., American Edition. (Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), Kindle location 4561–4566.

