

The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ

The Reformed Ordo Salutis

- Election, Gospel Call, Effectual Call/Regeneration, Conversion (faith/repentance), Justification & Adoption, Sanctification, Perseverance, Assurance, Glorification

Union with Christ

- “We do not experience God’s amazing salvation—planned by the Father in eternity past and accomplished by Jesus in the first century—until the Holy Spirit applies that salvation to our lives. We do not know God until the Spirit breaks into our life stories. We know God’s forgiveness and receive the gift of eternal life only when the Spirit touches our lives with God’s grace. This application of salvation, this breaking into our life story, this bringing of forgiveness and eternal life occurs only when we are joined to Christ in faith union.” —Robert Peterson, *Salvation Applied by the Spirit*

Union with Christ foreshadowed in the Old Testament

- The Covenant
- Covenant Representation
 - High Priest; David vs. Goliath; Isaiah’s Servant of God; Daniel’s Son of Man
- New Covenant
 - Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27

Union with Christ in the Gospel of John

- John 6:35, 53-56
- John 15:1-5
- John 17:20-23

Union with Christ in Paul

- “One of the most significant elements of Paul’s Christology is his teaching about being ‘in Christ.’ Union with Christ or participation with Christ is surely one of the fundamental themes of his theology.” —Thomas Schreiner
- Greetings
 - 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; 1 Thes. 1:1
- Christ in the believer
 - Rom. 8:10; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27
- Ephesians 1:3-14

The nature of union with Christ

- A federal (covenantal) union
 - Rom. 5:18-21
- A carnal (flesh) union
 - Phil. 2:7; Gal. 4:4; 2 Cor. 5:21
- A faith union
 - Rom. 10:14; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 1:29
- An extensive (comprehensive) union
 - Rom. 6:5; Col. 3:3
- A spiritual union
 - 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:11

The person of the Holy Spirit

- Personal
 - The Spirit is like Jesus (“another Helper,” John 14:16).
 - The Spirit can be known (John 14:17).
 - The Spirit does what only persons can do.
 - Teach, bear witness, convict the world, guide into truth, speak, declare, hear, glorify Jesus (John)
 - Think, bear witness, will, feel, help, save, fellowship (Paul)
- Divine
 - The Spirit has divine attributes (truth, holiness, etc.).
 - The Spirit indwells believers.
 - The Spirit does divine works (gives life, saves, etc.).
 - The Spirit is linked to the Father and the Son (2 Cor. 13:14).

The work of the Holy Spirit

- In creation, in Scripture, in the world, in the apostles, in Jesus

The work of the Holy Spirit in union with Christ

- “The most important work of the Holy Spirit in the realm of salvation is union with Christ. Each person of the Trinity plays a role in this union. The Father planned to join us to his Son before creation.... The Holy Spirit joins us to the Son’s persons and saving accomplishments. By grace through Spirit-generated faith we become participants of Jesus’s story, chiefly his death and resurrection.” (Peterson)
- The Spirit is the bond of union with Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13).
- People who lack the Spirit do not belong to Christ (Rom. 8:9).
- The Spirit brings about aspects of salvation that occur in union.
 - Regeneration (John 3:3-5)
 - Justification (1 Cor. 6:11)
 - Adoption (Rom. 8:15)
 - Sanctification (2 Thes. 2:13)
 - Preservation (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13-14)
 - Glorification (2 Cor. 3:18)

The result of union with Christ

- The cost
 - Matt. 16:24; 2 Cor. 4:8-12
 - “The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”
—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*
- The fruit: dignity, confidence in prayer, protection in temptation