

The Mystical Union

The Book Of Ephesians

Ezekiel 36:24-28 Eph 3:14-19 John 14:16-26

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One of the most fascinating, yet mysterious, teachings of the Bible is the *Mystical Union*. The term *Mystical Union* describes *God living within you*. The Bible speaks about all three Persons of the Holy Trinity *living and dwelling* within you in a special and unique way¹. One of those places that teach this doctrine is the book of Ephesians.

I pray that out of His glorious riches [God the **Father**] may strengthen you with power through His **Spirit in your inner being**, so that **Christ** may dwell in your heart through faith. Ephesians 3:16-17

This is a Trinitarian prayer – all three Persons of the Godhead are mentioned --- it's a prayer for the *Mystical Union*. The term *Mystical Union* describes *God living within you*. In this passage, Paul prays that God the **Father** will send the **Holy Spirit** to *dwell in your inner being* and that **Christ the Savior** would *dwell in your heart* through faith. The doctrine of the *Mystical Union* teaches that **God lives within you personally**; that He knows you and that He is at work in and through you.

The *Mystical Union* is **not** simply the influence of God in your life; **nor** is it another way to describe the spiritual gifts that have been given to you. The *Mystical Union* is something else; it is something **special**, something **real**, something **unique**, and its *only given to believers in Jesus Christ*. There is nothing like it in all the world.

The *Mystical Union* is a gift of salvation that was given to you in Holy Baptism. Just as your sins were washed away, so too God made His home within you. Just as you were declared “*Not Guilty*” of your sins and given new life in Christ, so to

¹ The Bible speaks about each Person of the Holy Trinity living within you, for example in John 14:23 (Father/Son) and 1 Corinthians 6:19 (Holy Spirit). One fascinating thing about this Ephesians 3:16-17 passage is the Trinitarian nature of the prayer; that the Holy Trinity takes a personal interest in you and your Christian faith (*Know and grasp Christ's love*) and life (*love and care for others*); so that you ultimately are filled with the Lord and the holy things of His Kingdom!

God came into your life and lives within you in a special and unique way. This is so unique and so mysterious that the only term that the Christian Church can use to describe it is the “*Mystical*” Union.

In Ephesians, St. Paul focuses on the result of God living within you; the fruit of the *Mystical Union* is seen in concrete ways.

Because God lives within you, you have the power, wisdom, and knowledge to **grasp and know** the *love of Christ*.

I pray that you may . . . **GRASP** how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ; and to **KNOW** the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge . . . Ephesians 3:17-19

The verbs “**grasp and know**” have the idea that *you yourself* are to know and believe the *Love of Christ*. The emphasis is on the need to understand the things of God **personally**. To highlight that, Paul says that you are know how *wide and long and high and deep* is the *Love of Christ*. In the context of Ephesians, we have learned a lot about the *Love of Christ*.

- + God's love for you began before the creation of the world when God chose you **by name, in grace, in Christ**, to be is very own.
- + Then, at a certain point in history, God sent His Son to be your Savior. Jesus does the work of salvation for you 2000 years ago. His life, death, and resurrection has redeemed to you and given you the forgiveness of sins.
- + The book of Ephesians emphasizes that redemption is by **grace alone, not by works**. It's purely God's love and mercy that saves you and gives you eternal life.
- + During your lifetime, the Lord worked the events of your life and brought you to the waters of **Holy Baptism**. In Baptism God revealed that you were one of the Elect, He **created faith** in Jesus the Savior, and He sent the **Holy Spirit** to you. The Holy Spirit has been at work in your life ever since, keeping you **strong, healthy, and growing** in faith.
- + The *Love of Christ* is at work within you so that you “**Know God better**” throughout your lifetime.
- + The *Love of Christ* is seen as God's “**power, working, mighty, strength**” at work in your life to keep your faith strong, healthy, and growing.

- + The *Love of Christ* brings peace: **peace with God** means that you also have unrestricted **access to God**!
- + The *Love of Christ* for you extends even after you die, as He has promised to give you the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting.

**Christ's love for you is
wide and long and high and deep!**

This is what you are to **grasp!** This is what you are to **know!** God the Father sends His Spirit and His Son to live within you so that you can **grasp and know** *how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ* for you!

The *Mystical Union* drives you to learn more and more about the God who is working this marvelous and wonderful plan in your life!

In addition, St. Paul highlights that the *Mystical Union* strengthens you to **love other people**; that once you **grasp and know** *how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ* for you, then you will be motivated to **love and care** for other people.

I pray that you, **being rooted and built up in love**, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:17-19

You are *rooted and built up in love* when you treat others as God has treated you; when you **love and care** for other people; when you are gracious and kind to others; when you serve and help others.

In Ephesians, Paul highlights the unity of the Holy Christian Church; and how we are brothers and sisters together in God's Family.

Christ living within you means that you live a Christ-like life; The Holy Spirit living within you means that you live a Spirit-driven life.

The *Mystical Union* strengthens you to **love and care for other people**; that once you **grasp and know** the love of Christ, you will be motivated to **love**

and care for other people – especially those who are brothers and sisters in Christ!

Finally St. Paul teaches that the mystical union will lead you to be *filled to the measure of all the fullness of God*.

I pray that you, being rooted and built up in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:17-19

Just as you're filled with God as He lives within you; so too you are filled with the **good things** of God. You seek after the **holy things** of God. That means that:

- ⇒ **You study His Word**
- ⇒ **You cling to His promises**
- ⇒ **You hallow His Name**
- ⇒ **You seek His Will**
- ⇒ **You delight in His Kingdom**
- ⇒ **You recognize His goodness**
- ⇒ **You thank Him for His blessings**
- ⇒ **You pray for His Spirit**
- ⇒ **You depend on His power**
- ⇒ **You imitate His love**
- ⇒ **You confess His salvation**

Just as you are filled with God as He lives within you; so too you are filled with the **good things** of God! You seek after the **holy things** of God!

One of the blessings of God's grace in our lives is the **Mystical Union**! God Himself lives and dwells within you! The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit make their home in you!

Because of the **Mystical Union**, you are filled with the **good and holy things** of God; may you **love and care** for other people; and may you yourself **know and grasp** *how wide and high and long and deep is the love of Christ* for you! Amen!

