

Issue at Hand

Dewey Engelsma

Hebrews 2:11, “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Young person, have you ever been very ashamed of yourself for something you did? Maybe you got caught, and that was shameful; or maybe it was something that no one ever found out about, but when you reflected on it and thought about the evil you had done, you felt filthy and ugly. Maybe it was some cruel, hurtful word you said to someone else on the playground. Maybe you stole something from someone at work, and now when you look at this forbidden thing in your room, it reproaches and even seems to mock you. Maybe it was a lot of different things, a lifetime of sins, that makes you want to hide your face in shame. Perhaps there is an older person reading this, and their heart burns within them because of the sins they have committed. The pride they constantly have to fight, but so often didn't. The lust they didn't fight a few years ago, or the reputations and names they have destroyed by slander and gossip. The addiction that they hid from everyone, except from that One.

Have you ever buried your head in your pillow at night and cried, and knew you should pray, say something!, but you just couldn't? “I am going to try to say something to the one who knows everything that I've done”?

Maybe it is a sin that you are facing, an old enemy come to visit yet again. None of your classmates know what you are tempted to do, and you shudder to think if they should find out. You have given in to this temptation before and are afraid that you will fall again. The thing that scares you the most is that you almost *want* to be faced with the temptation again—the sin has a hold on you.

You feel alone. Who could you ever go to for help with this?

You feel alone, but you aren't. You are united to Jesus Christ, and he is closer to you than anyone else ever could be.

This is the glorious, soul-warming, good-work inspiring, and God-glorifying truth of union with Christ. Reformed theologians have used the word “mystical” to describe this union, but they did not mean magical or unreal. They meant that it was not physical, and that you could spend your entire life studying the truth, and still not plumb its amazing depths.

The elect child of God is united to Jesus Christ by faith, now, and for eternity. The most beautiful, pure, lovely, glorious, amazing, merciful, righteous, and awe-inspiring person ever to live, is your brother. And he is not ashamed of it.

You are ashamed of your sin, and that is good. Sin is shameful. But God is not ashamed of you, because he doesn't view you as you are in yourself—he views you in Christ. The one who in love has united himself to you, taken your sin upon himself, and clothed you in his perfect robes of righteousness is yours, and you are his.

You are clean, pure, and holy.

United to Christ.

Originally Published in:
Vol. 78 No. 6 June 2019