Does it mean to become <u>part</u> of Him, to be <u>absorbed</u> into Him, to become <u>one</u> with Him to such an extent that we no longer have any <u>thoughts</u> of our own, or any <u>feelings</u> of our own, or any <u>desires</u> of our own or any <u>will</u> of our own?

Does "union with Christ" mean being swallowed up into His being, His nature, His essence, to such an extent that we can say that we are becoming divine?

Of course, all of these are <u>mystical</u> ideas, and Paul presents <u>none</u> of them in connection with his teaching concerning union with Christ.

In Paul's teaching, union with Christ simply means "our saving relationship to Christ my faith". This union with Christ is brought about by the Holy Spirit, who unites us through faith to Jesus Christ and to the benefits of His atoning work. When Paul uses the expression "in Christ", he means that one is in saving relationship to Christ.

This union is stressed in Romans 6: 3-5 "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live in new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection".

A very important issue which divides expositors of this portion is whether this refers to water baptism or Spirit baptism. Since this passage is dealing with the justified person's continuance in sinning Romans 6:1 " What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?, and since this baptism is connected with death to sin Romans 6: 2-4 "By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life", the question must be asked " If this is referring to <u>water</u>