

SERMON NOTES

Week 3 July 20, 2025

"Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin."

1 Corinthians 12:17; Matthew 9:35; Proverbs 31:8-9;
Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8; John 15:13



I. The Making of a Theologian

- A. The death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's brother Walter, when he was 12, contributed to his growing interest in _____ questions.
- B. The Abyssinian church in Harlem had a major _____ on Bonhoeffer's theology.
- C. The Church puts _____ on Jesus today.

II. The Reichskirche

- A. The state needs the church to be its _____.
- B. A recurring theme throughout the Bible is that we are called to speak out against _____.
- C. When the church stops having empathy and compassion for people, it's stops looking like _____.

III. The Cost of Discipleship

- A. Participating in the plot to kill Hitler becomes a very big _____ dilemma for Bonhoeffer.
- B. Bonhoeffer believed that true grace comes with a _____.
- C. Bonhoeffer demonstrates for us how one person's courage can inspire _____.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *July 21-26, 2025*

INTRODUCTION

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian during the rise of Nazi Germany. He was a key founding member of the Confessing Church, which spoke out against the Nazi regime. His writings on Christianity's role in the secular world have become widely influential. Bonhoeffer was imprisoned for 1 ½ years for his involvement in a plot to kill Hitler and he was eventually hung on April 9, 1945. What lessons can we learn from his life?

Monday: 1 Corinthians 1:27, Matthew 9:35-38

Bonhoeffer's theology was impacted by his time spent with the Abyssinian church in Harlem. It was here that he encountered a faith expression rooted in social justice and lived experience. This was contrasting with the more intellectual and often detached theology prevalent in Germany at the time. The Church puts flesh on Jesus and is called to do what he did in his earthly ministry. What does it mean for you personally to be a member of the Body of Christ?

Tuesday: Ephesians 4:29-5:2

Clearly the German Church was no longer practicing Christianity; they had become a mouthpiece for the Nazis. During the message, Pastor Eric said "when the church stops having empathy and compassion for people it stops looking like Jesus." Treating one another in un-Christian ways ("bitterness, losing your temper, anger, shouting, and slander, along with every other evil") damages and often destroys relationships. But qualities like compassion, kindness, and a forgiving heart strengthen our relationships. What stands out to you about this passage?

Wednesday: Proverbs 31:8-9, Isaiah 1:17, Micah 6:8

Bonhoeffer risked everything when he spoke out in a sermon against the Nazi leaders and their policies. Bonhoeffer spoke up when many remained silent. A recurring theme in the Bible is that we are called to speak out against injustice. Where do you see injustice in your community? What are you doing to close the justice gap in this area?

Thursday: Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:38-40

Bonhoeffer was an avowed pacifist. So participating in the plot to kill Hitler was a major ethical dilemma for him. Based on the 10 commandments and the teachings of Jesus, can you justify being part of a plot to kill Hitler? Would you have become part of this plot as well if given the chance?

Friday: Matthew 16:24-26

In Bonhoeffer's book *The Cost of Discipleship* he says "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. 'Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline. Communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.'" What does it mean to you to 'take up the cross and follow Jesus'?

MOVING FORWARD

Today, Bonhoeffer is still remembered because he displayed moral courage in the face of overwhelming evil. He spoke up when others remained silent. He changed hearts when others were indifferent. He defended the innocent when others looked away. He was even willing to die when others chose self-preservation.

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) theological, B) impact, C) flesh. IIA) conscience, IIB) injustice, C) Jesus. IIIA) ethical, B) cost, C) change.