



The Call of Christ At The Crossroads of History



Colossians 1- Hidden Mystery

²⁵ Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might [aj]fully carry out the *preaching of the word of God*, ²⁶ *that is*, the **mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations**, but has now been manifested to His [ak]saints, ²⁷ to whom God willed to make known what is the **riches of the glory of this mystery** among the Gentiles, **which is Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory.** (*NOT going to heaven when you die*)



Humility

THE *BEAUTY*
OF *HOLINESS*

ANDREW MURRAY

The life God bestows is imparted not once for all, **but each moment continuously, by the unceasing operation of his mighty power.**

Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is from the very nature of things, the **first duty** and the highest virtue of the creature.



Humility

THE *BEAUTY*
OF *HOLINESS*

ANDREW MURRAY

And so pride,
or the loss
of this
humility, is
the root of
every sin and
evil!



Hebrews 3 – Close the GAP

¹² Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart [c] that falls away from the living God. ¹³ **But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.**



Deceitfulness of Sin Revealed

~~Not a character flaw on your part that you can overcome on your own. Not something you can fix through do better/try harder.~~

- Not the petty, greedy, catty, snarky, selfish, lying, lustful, bitter, vengeful, angry, fearful heartless attitudes and actions – those are just symptoms
- Rather, the problem is our failure to absolutely depend on Him everyday for everything – because we are so **easily deceived** into reacting in the Flesh instead of resting/trusting in the Spirit



Never See Sin Coming

- Until its too late, because Sin will always be bigger, smarter, and badder than you
- It will track you down, suck you in, then suck you dry and spit you out, leaving you with nothing but desiccated, lifeless, powerless, impotent fake faith that will rob you of the destiny and glory you have In HIM and leave you with something tasteless and hollow and empty.
- His will versus your will – your best or His best? Whatever is not of faith is sin. Rm 14

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



**THE CHURCH IS NOT A RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITY OF WORSHIPPERS OF CHRIST
BUT IS CHRIST HIMSELF WHO HAS TAKEN
FORM AMONG PEOPLE.**

- DIETRICH BONHOEFFER -



Understanding the Times

- In the aftermath of the Reformation in Germany, the state and the church were strongly linked for hundreds of years
- When Hitler came to power, he exploited that historical link to lure believers into supporting his plan for conquest
- He took over the church, reframed Christianity as Aryan, deleted the OT from the Bible because it was about Jews, and eventually declared that the state was the head of the Church, not Jesus



Enter Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- Brilliant young theologian who earned a PhD in Theology in Germany, and then studied in the US, and then had stints as a pastor/lecturer in England and NYC.
- All the while, during the 30s Hitler was cunningly and passionately deceiving Germany into accepting a false Gospel
- Ultimately, Nazis started arresting leaders and closing seminaries that resisted his heresies, and Bonhoeffer had to act



The Confessing Church

- He and other committed pastors formed a movement called the “Confessing Church,” dedicated to preaching the true Gospel, because a lot of German Christians were being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin – trusting in a man instead of Jesus
- Started underground seminaries and rural congregations to train and raise up new pastors to preach the truth
- Harassed/pursued as Nazis kept closing their seminaries and arresting their pastors



Date With Destiny

- As war became imminent, Bonhoeffer was offered a post at Union Seminary in NYC, which he accepted, but after two weeks, he decided to go home
- His colleagues begged him to stay, but as he explained in letter to them:
- “I have come to the conclusion that I made a mistake in coming to America. I must live through this difficult period in our national history with the people of Germany.



Continued ...

I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people ... Christians in Germany will have to face the terrible alternative of either **willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilization may survive** or **willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying civilization**. I know which of these alternatives I must choose but **I cannot make that choice from security**”



The Cost of Discipleship

- Bonhoeffer returned to Germany in 1941, where he was banned from public speaking or printing or publishing
- Remember, these actions by the state were passively accepted by the most of believers in Germany who had been hardened
- He continued to encourage people privately and eventually become something of a chaplain to German officers who tried to assassinate Hitler



“For Me, the Beginning of Life”

- The plot failed, and Bonhoeffer was arrested in 1943, and spent 1 ½ years in prison and concentration camps
- He continued to write and minister to other prisoners – Letters From Prison
- April 5, 1945, he was just finishing his regular Sunday service when soldiers removed him from his cell and took him to the prison courtyard, where he was hanged
- "This is the end—for me the beginning of life.



And Your Point Is?

- That one of the most thoroughly Christian nations on earth – literally the birthplace of the Protestant Reformation – fell hook, line and sinker for the deceitfulness of sin and willingly compromised their faith!!!
- And they acquiesced and sat in silence while their leaders ignored and distorted God's Word and looked the other way while those leaders made a mockery of the life and nature and love of Jesus which is supposed to be the hallmark of discipleship



If It Could Happen There ...

- Today much of the American Church is divided AND deceived
- A lot of progressive churches have bought the lie that socialism is the answer
- A lot of conservative churches have bought into the lie that there is one anointed leader out there that can fix our country
- Both sides are committed to political solutions to help them get their way, no matter how their adherents behave
- But GOD HAS HIS OWN KINGDOM!!!



To This, Bonhoeffer Says:

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 over 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.



The Cost of Discipleship

When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow Him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in **Jesus Christ**, the death of the old man at his call.”



Standing at the Crossroads

- Today I believe the Body of Christ in America is standing at the crossroads of History, and Christ is Calling us to come and Die.
- Give up our hope in anything or anyone that isn't JESUS CHRIST, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS
- And Encourage each other, day by day, as long as it is called today, lest any of us becomes hardened by the deceitfulness or sin.

**THE CHURCH IS NOT A RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITY OF WORSHIPPERS OF CHRIST
BUT IS CHRIST HIMSELF WHO HAS TAKEN
FORM AMONG PEOPLE.**

- DIETRICH BONHOEFFER -