

Following Jesus with Dietrich Bonhoeffer

What does it mean to follow Jesus when the choice is not between good and evil but between 2 evils?
Should the office of leader rather than the personality of an individual leader demand our respect?

1906 – born in Breslau, Germany along with twin Sabine.

1927 – Defends dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio*

1928-29 – Assistant pastor to German Protestant community in Barcelona, Spain

1929-30 – Assistant pastor in Berlin.

1931 – fellow in Union Seminary in New York; becomes ordained.

1932 – 33 *Creation and Fall* is published as a collection of lectures. Focuses on Genesis 1-3.

January 30, 1933 – Hitler becomes Reich Chancellor and the German Christian movement strengthens.

April 1, 1933 - boycott of Jewish businesses, Bonhoeffer writes “The Church and the Jewish Question.”

Summer 1933 – Bonhoeffer delivers series of lectures in Berlin, later published as *Christ the Center*.

Fall 1933-35 – Bonhoeffer pastors and lectures in London; makes ecumenical ties.

1934 – Confessing Church at Barmen.

1935 – opens seminary at Finkenwalde

1937 – seminary closed by Gestapo; writes *Discipleship*.

1938 - writes *Life Together* about communal life in the seminary.

1939 – goes to NYC; returns and joins political resistance

1940 – writes about the Psalms in *Prayerbook of the Bible*.

January 1943 – becomes engaged to Maria von Wedemeyer

April 5, 1943 – arrested and taken to Tegel, the Wehrmacht Interrogation Prison

October, 1944 – transferred to Prinz Albrecht Strasse prison in basement of Reich Security Head Office.

April 9, 1945 – hanged at Flossenbuerg Concentration Camp (liberated on April 23)

Who Am I?

Who am I? They often tell me
I stepped from my cell's confinement
Calmly, cheerfully, firmly,
Like a Squire from his country house.

Who am I? They often tell me
I used to speak to my warders
Freely and friendly and clearly,
As though it were mine to command.

Who am I? They also tell me
I bore the days of misfortune
Equably, smilingly, proudly,
like one accustomed to win.

Am I then really that which other men tell of?
Or am I only what I myself know of myself?
Restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage,
Struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing
my throat,

Yearning for colors, for flowers, for the voices of birds,
Thirsting for words of kindness, for neighborliness,
Tossing in expectations of great events,
Powerlessly trembling for friends at an infinite distance,
Weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making,
Faint, and ready to say farewell to it all.

Who am I? This or the Other?
Am I one person today and tomorrow another?
Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others,
And before myself a contemptible woebegone weakling?
Or is something within me still like a beaten army
Fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved?

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.
Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am thine!