

CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION
Lenten Small Group Study Guide
The Cost of Discipleship

IV. THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE LIFE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Romans 6:1-11

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Chapter Twenty-Seven: Preliminary Questions

- If we would hear his call to follow, we must listen where he is to be found, that is, in the Church through the ministry of Word and Sacrament. (p. 226)
- The gift Jesus gave the disciples is even more readily available to us now that he has left the world because we know that he is glorified, and because the Holy Spirit is with us. (p. 227)
- Hear the Word, receive the Sacrament; in it hear himself, and you will hear his call. (p. 228)

QUESTIONS

1. Why does Bonhoeffer believe the disciples did not have an advantage over us today in terms of knowing Jesus? (pp. 226-27)
2. “All we have to do is hear the word and obey the will of Christ....” (p. 228). Is this easier said than done when it comes to discerning God’s will for your life? Why or why not?

Chapter Twenty-Eight: Baptism

- In baptism we become Christ’s own possession. (p. 231)
- The Holy Spirit is Christ himself dwelling in the hearts of the faithful. (p. 233)
- The baptized live by a constant renewal of their faith in the death of Christ. (p. 234)

QUESTIONS

1. How is baptism a “breach”? (p. 231)
2. How does baptismal death mean justification from sin? (p. 232)

3. Why must infant baptism happen in a church? (p. 235)

Chapter Twenty-Nine: The Body of Christ

- The incarnate Son of God existed in two capacities – in his own person, and as the representative of the new humanity (the Second, or Last, Adam). (p. 238)
- Had Jesus been merely a prophet or a teacher, he would not have needed followers, but only pupils and hearers. (p. 238)
- We come to participate in the Body of Christ through the two sacraments of his Body, baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Since his ascension, Christ's place on earth has been taken by his Body, the Church. (p. 241)
- It is the unity of the whole Church which makes each member what he is and the fellowship what it is, just as it is Christ and his Body which make the Church what it is. (p. 243)
- The temple which the Jews were looking for was the Body of Christ, of which the temple of the Old Testament was but the shadow. (p. 246)
- The temple of God is the holy people in Jesus Christ. The Body of Christ is the living temple of God and of the new humanity. (p. 247)

QUESTIONS

1. Why must the disciples bear the burden of the cross? (p. 238)
2. What is the difference between all people being "with Christ" and Christians being "with Christ"? (p. 240)
3. How is the Church a person, as opposed to an institution? (p. 241)

Chapter Thirty: The Visible Community

- The incarnate Son of God needs not only ears or hearts, but living people who will follow him. That is why he called his disciples into a literal, bodily following, and thus made his fellowship with them a visible reality. (p. 248)
- The apostles and prophets are the foundation on which the church is built, while the cornerstone is Jesus Christ. (p. 250)
- The Word of God seeks a Church to take unto itself. (p. 250)
- Preaching is not the only means whereby the Church takes visible form. That is also done by the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, both of which flow from the true humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. (p. 251)
- Church order is divine both in origin and character, though of course it is meant to serve and not to rule. (p. 252)
- It is not always easy to see where a legitimate school of thought ends and heresy begins. That is why a doctrine may be tolerated in one Church and proscribed as heresy in another. (p. 253)
- To allow a baptized brother to take part in the worship of the Church, but to refuse to have anything to do with him in everyday life, is to subject him to abuse and contempt. (p. 256)

- In the world, the Christians are a colony of the true home, they are strangers and aliens in a foreign land, obeying its laws and honoring its government. (p. 269)

QUESTION

1. What does Bonhoeffer say is Paul's reason for exhorting a slave to remain a slave? What do you think? (p. 259-60)
2. Why did Luther "return to the world"? What is the value of a Christian's secular calling? (p. 265)
3. How are Christians to live in the world? (p. 269-70)

Chapter Thirty-One: The Saints

- By putting his own Son, the bearer of our flesh, to death, the Father puts to death all flesh on earth. (p. 274)
- The cross is an act not only of judgment but also of atonement. (p. 275)
- Justification is the means whereby we appropriate the saving act of God in the past, and sanctification the promise of God's activity in the present and future. (p. 278)
- It is not sinners who are required to become holy, or that would mean a return to justification by works and would be blasphemy against Christ. (p. 281)
- When we create our own God and our own world, what we are really doing is to deify our own lust. We are then bound to hate our fellow men as obstacles in the way of our wills. (p. 284)
- The only reason the saints have to die in the flesh is that Christ through the Holy Spirit has begun to live his life in them. (p. 285)
- The preaching of forgiveness must always go hand in hand with the preaching of repentance, the preaching of the gospel with the preaching of the law. (p. 287)
- There is only one question of paramount importance in the Christian life, and that is, **how shall we survive the last judgment?** And because we shall be judged according to our own works, it is vitally important that we should be trained to do good works. That indeed is the whole purpose of our new creation in Christ. (p.295-296)
- Ultimately there is only one good work, the work of God in Christ Jesus. (p. 296)
- All our good works are the works of God, the works for which God has prepared us beforehand. (p. 296)

QUESTION

1. How can the sinner become righteous without impairing the righteousness of God? (p. 273)
2. What is wrong with pursuing sanctification outside the Church? (p. 280)

Chapter Thirty-Two: The Image of Christ

- God created Adam in God's own image in order to have the joy of beholding in Adam the reflection of God's self. (p. 298)

- Adam rejected the grace of God. He wanted instead to unravel the mystery of his being for himself, to make himself what God had already made him. That was the Fall. (p. 299)
- God does not neglect the lost. God's plan is to re-create God's image in man. But there is only one way to achieve this purpose and that is for God, out of sheer mercy, to assume the image and form of fallen man. (p. 299)
- If we would bear the image of his glory, we must first bear the image of his shame. There is no other way to recover the image we lost through the Fall. (p. 301)
- The Christian life is a life of crucifixion. In baptism the form of Christ's death is impressed upon his own. They are dead to the flesh and to sin, they are dead to the world, and the world is dead to them. (p. 302)
- Christ, incarnate, crucified and glorified is formed in every Christian soul, for all are members of his Body, the Church. The Church bears the human form, the form of Christ in his death and resurrection. The Church in the first place is his image, and through the Church all her members have been refashioned in his image too. In the Body of Christ we are become like Christ. (p. 303)
- It is only because he became like us that we can become like him. (p. 304)

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

Bring them to our last large group meeting!