

## A Powerless Church

### The Story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*In 1933, 90% of all German people were Christian. 20 million Catholic, 40 million protestant.*

*During the Nazi rise to power, the German protestants became divided into the “German Christians” and the “Confessing Church.” The German Christians embraced Nazi ideology, and the Confessing Church declared the church’s allegiance was to God and scripture, no earthly Fuhrer.*

*The sad reality: Germany’s 60 million Christians didn’t have the moral awareness or courage to stand against the holocaust, and it was only a minority that put God over country.*

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a leader of the confessing church, attributed the problem to a lack of discipleship which he called ‘cheap grace.’*

## Two Inseparable Spiritual Realities, Salvation and Discipleship

QUESTION: How do salvation and discipleship work together?

NOTICE: In this passage, the call to follow Jesus (discipleship) is paired with not losing your soul (salvation).

THE PROBLEM: Salvation is a gift. It is accomplished by Jesus completely apart from anything that you or I can ever do. We cannot add to our salvation. We cannot accomplish our salvation. It is a gift to be received by faith, it is not of ourselves, so that no one can boast. **If this is true, then why does Jesus say that you must pick up your cross, deny yourself, and follow him? Doesn’t this add some element of our effort into salvation?**

Ephesians 2:8-10

Salvation: For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Discipleship: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

A WHOLE BIBLE PROBLEM:

Romans 8:13, John 15:5-6, 1 John 3:8, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Hebrews 10:26, Galatians 5:19-21

THE ANSWER: Salvation and discipleship are two different yet inseparable spiritual realities that cannot live apart from each other.

Some pastoral thoughts

1. Salvation comes first.
2. Discipleship isn't perfection. It's being on a journey marked by repeated failure and dependence on the incredible grace, mercy, and tenderness of Jesus.
3. Discipleship looks different for different people.
4. Discipleship is a function we do. Salvation gives us our identity.

So what?

*Salvation and discipleship are two unique yet inseparable spiritual realities meant to go together. Create a plan for how you are going to follow Jesus in 2022. Pray about it. Invite someone else to follow Jesus with you. Pray together, talk about it together.*

Philippians 4:12-15

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup>Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. <sup>16</sup>Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Bonhoeffer's end

**Questions for Personal Study**

1. Is it costly to be saved? Is it costly to follow Jesus? How do these answers work together?
2. Are you following Jesus? How?
3. What does Jesus mean when he says a person can forfeit his soul?
4. Is it harder for you to accept grace, or is it harder for you to accept the path of discipleship?