

## Who was Rev. Dietrich Bonhoeffer?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor, theologian, and anti-Nazi dissident, widely known for his outspoken opposition to Adolf Hitler's regime. Born in 1906, he grew up in a prominent German family and studied theology at the University of Berlin, later becoming a lecturer and influential Protestant thinker. Bonhoeffer's theology emphasized the need for Christians to take a stand against evil, and his beliefs led him to become one of the earliest vocal critics of the Nazi regime among German clergy.

In 1933, after Hitler came to power, Bonhoeffer openly condemned Nazi ideologies, particularly the persecution of Jews, and he helped found the Confessing Church, a group of pastors who resisted the Nazification of the German Protestant Church. During this time, he wrote influential works like *The Cost of Discipleship*, which emphasized radical discipleship to Christ and the dangers of "cheap grace"—the idea of taking grace for granted without a committed ethical response.

In 1940, he joined the German resistance and participated in covert operations against Hitler. He was implicated in a plot to assassinate Hitler and was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943. After two years in prison, Bonhoeffer was executed in April 1945, just weeks before the end of World War II. His writings, particularly *Letters and Papers from Prison*, remain highly influential, promoting themes of moral courage, ethical responsibility, and the importance of faith in the face of oppression.

### Bonhoeffer on "Costly Grace"

Costly grace is the hidden treasure in the field, for the sake of which people go and sell with joy everything they have.... Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which has to be asked for, the door at which one has to knock. It is costly because it calls us to discipleship; it is grace, because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly because it costs people their lives; it is grace, because it thereby makes them live. It is costly, because it condemns sin; it is grace, because it justifies the sinner. Above all, grace is costly, because it was costly to God, because it costs God the life of God's Son ... and because nothing can be cheap to us which is costly to God.<sup>1</sup>

### Bonhoeffer "Gems"

"Christ is not the bringer of a new religion, but the bringer of God."<sup>2</sup>

"Who stands fast? Only the man whose final standard is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom, or his virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all this when he is called to obedient and responsible action in faith and in exclusive allegiance to God—the responsible man, who tries to make his whole life an answer to the question and call of God."<sup>3</sup>

"To be conformed to the one who has become human—that is what being human really means ... to be conformed to the crucified—that means to be a human being judged by God ... to be conformed to the risen one—that means to be a new human being before God ... [to be conformed to Christ means] Jesus Christ taking form in Christ's church. The New Testament, in deep and clear indication of the matter itself, calls the church the body of Christ."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Haynes, S. R., & Hale, L. B. (2009). [\*Bonhoeffer for Armchair Theologians\*](#) (1st edition, pp. 93–94). Westminster John Knox Press.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 16

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid p. 114.