

Bonhoeffer "Life Together" quote

(Pg 28 in Kindle ed. of book)

Through and in Jesus Christ

Christianity means

community

through Jesus Christ
and in Jesus Christ.

No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it be a brief, single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.

What does this mean?

It means, first,

that a Christian needs others
because of Jesus Christ.

It means, second,

that a Christian comes to
others only through Jesus
Christ.

It means, third,

that in Jesus Christ we have been
chosen from eternity,
accepted in time,
and united for eternity.

First,
the Christian is the man
who no longer seeks
his salvation,
his deliverance,
his justification
in himself,
but in Jesus Christ alone.

He knows that God's Word in Jesus
Christ pronounces him guilty,
even when he does not
feel his guilt,

and God's Word in Jesus Christ
pronounces him
not guilty and righteous,
even when he does not feel
that he is righteous at all.

The Christian no longer lives of himself,
by his own claims
and his own justification,
but by
God's claims
and God's justification.

He lives wholly by
God's Word pronounced upon him,
whether that Word declares him
guilty
or
innocent.

The death and the life of the Christian
is not determined by his own resources;
rather he finds both only in the Word
that comes to him from the outside, in

God's Word to him. The Reformers expressed it this way: Our righteousness is an 'alien righteousness' a righteousness that comes from outside of us (extra nos). They were saying that the Christian is dependent on the Word of God spoken to him. He is pointed outward, to the Word that comes to him. The Christian lives wholly by the truth of God's Word in Jesus Christ. If somebody asks him, Where is your salvation, your righteousness? he can never point to himself. He points to the Word of God in Jesus Christ, which assures him salvation and righteousness. He is as alert as possible to this Word. Because he daily hungers and thirsts for righteousness, he daily desires the redeeming Word. And it can come only from the outside. In himself he is destitute and dead. Help must come from the outside, and it has come and comes daily and anew in the Word of Jesus Christ, bringing redemption, righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

But God has put this Word into the mouth of men in order that it may be communicated to other men. When one person is struck by the Word, he speaks it to others. God has willed that we should seek him and find his living Word in the witness of a brother, in the mouth of a man. Therefore, a Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain

and discouraged, for by himself he cannot help himself without belying the truth. He needs his brother man as a bearer and proclaimer of the divine word of salvation. He needs his brother solely because of Jesus Christ. The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother; his own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure.

And that also clarifies the goal of all Christian community: they meet one another as bringers of the message of salvation. As such, God permits them to meet together and gives them community. Their fellowship is founded solely upon Jesus Christ and this 'alien righteousness'. All we can say, therefore, is: the community of Christians springs solely from the biblical and Reformation message of the justification of man through grace alone; this alone is the basis of the longing of Christians for one another.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich (2012-06-20). Life Together (Kindle Locations 116-121).

Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd.

Kindle Edition.