



DISCIPLE

Week 01: The Call to Follow Christ

Dwelling in the Word

1. Prayerfully read through Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-16; and Luke 9:23-24, 57-62 then ask: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? 2) What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you? 3) How could you respond to what God says in these passages?

Beginning the Conversation

1. When you think of your faith, do you identify yourself primarily as a “Christian”? Or as a “Christ follower”? Or as a “Disciple of Jesus”? Or something other? Do you think these various ways of identifying your faith are different or pretty much the same? Howso? Discuss.
2. How much did you know about Dietrich Bonhoeffer before the sermon? Spend some time as a group discussing your (first) impressions about Bonhoeffer.

Digging Deeper

1. Bonhoeffer is well known for the idea of costly discipleship. His own conversion wasn't from being a non-believer to a follower of Christ, but was from being a church goer to a follower (= disciple) of Jesus Christ. This was when he took the call of Christ with utmost seriousness (like the stories of the first disciples in Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-16). How do you understand Jesus' call on your life?
2. The individual's stories in Luke 9:57-62 all seemed to qualify or limit discipleship in some way (“I will follow, but let me first...”). Do you feel you have qualified your faith in some ways? Explain.
3. Jesus' response in Luke 9:61-62 may have an allusion to Elijah's call of Elisha in 1Kings 19:19-21, which underscores the importance of responding to his call. Read the passage from Kings. What do you think?
4. Read Luke 9:23-24; 14:27 and Matt 10:38; 16:24. What do you think Jesus means when he says, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me”? The Apostle Paul also talks about “dying with Christ” (see Rom 6:8; Col 2:20, 3:3; 2Tim 2:11). What does this mean for the Christian life?
5. While Bonhoeffer understands the call to be a disciple of Jesus as costing you your life, Christ promises so much in return (he describes it as “a path full of mercy beyond measure”). How do you understand the paradoxical call to give up your life, so that you may truly live?

Living it Out

1. “When Christ calls a person, he bids them come and die” (*The Cost of Discipleship*, 99). Do you feel you have responded to Christ's call on your life? Or do you feel convicted to recommit yourself to following Christ? Make sure to share your decision with someone.
2. Bonhoeffer's catchy phrase, “*Only believers obey, and only the obedient believe*” (*Discipleship*, 63), highlights that a life of discipleship to Jesus Christ should be characterized by faithful obedience (Rom 1:5; 16:26; James 2:14-26). In our Church Covenant (see reverse), we highlight some practices that we as disciples can lean into together. Spend some time reading it over and commit yourself to working on at least one of them in the weeks ahead. Remember to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you with whatever you decide.



*Christ followers on mission with God
and growing in our love for God, one another, and neighbours.*

Membership Covenant

We have been led by the Spirit of God to confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. We believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as the one-and-only true God, who has called us into relationship with himself through Jesus and into relationship with one another as Greenfield Community Church.

Now, before God, we freely covenant together to join God on mission, following Jesus in a life of discipleship as we put our hope in the Spirit's transforming work in us and in our neighbourhoods.

I will strive to:

Grow in my love for God by

- seeking God's kingdom above all else and living all of my life humbly as an act of worship
- engaging regularly in prayer and other spiritual practices
- knowing my place in God's Story as rooted in the reading and study of Scripture
- practicing responsible stewardship of the time, talent, and treasure God has entrusted to me

Grow in my love for one another by

- committing to live life together while embracing our unity and diversity in Christ
- using my spiritual gifts to build up this body of believers
- serving and caring for one another with hospitality and meeting practical needs
- maintaining grace-filled, healthy relationships with mutual accountability and a commitment to reconciliation

Grow in my love for my neighbours by

- living out the gospel of the kingdom of God in deed and word
- engaging with those in my neighbourhood and my networks
- acting with integrity, respect, hospitality, and compassion in all my relationships
- seeking justice, peace and well-being for all, especially the poor and marginalized, both locally and globally

And we promise this all for the glory of God and for the sake of his kingdom in our neighbourhoods, city, nation, and world.

We commit to reviewing and renewing this Covenant as a congregation annually.



What is a “Disciple”?

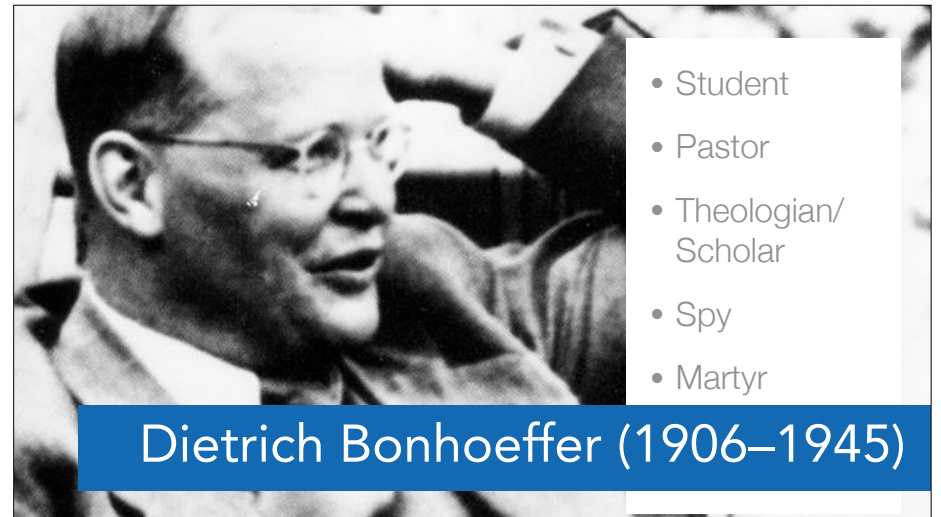
“Disciple” (*mathetes*, μαθητης); from the root *mathe-* μαθη-, which is associated with knowledge, teaching, instruction, learning.

- Hebrew *lmd* (למד), *both* teaching, learning & its results.
- The Rabbis used for the teacher-apprentice relationship, with the focus of learning and living the Scriptures.

What is a “Disciple”?

In the NT, it is used to refer to one who engages in learning through instruction from another, pupil, apprentice.

- Jesus, as a Rabbi, called individuals to “follow him”, i.e., to apprentice under him, with the purpose of learning from and living like him.
- “The disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher” (Luke 6:40).



- Student
- Pastor
- Theologian/
Scholar
- Spy
- Martyr

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Bonhoeffer was a DISCIPLE with a faith and life centred on Jesus Christ.

- An uncompromising commitment;
- Lived out in and as the church;
- For the good of the world.



THE CALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST

Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-16; Luke 9:23-24, 57-62
Tyler Williams | January 19, 2025

The Call to Follow Christ

“**Christ followers** on mission with God and growing in our love for God, one another, and neighbours.”

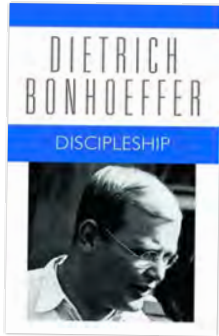
“We strive to be a church that: **Follows Jesus**, submitting to the Spirit and growing in relationship with the Father through acts of worship and service.”

The Call to Follow Christ

1. Becoming a disciple starts with **responding** to Jesus’ call of grace.

- The personal call comes from the living Christ and is centred on following him – “Come, follow me...” (Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-14).
- The initiative is Christ’s, and our part is to respond.

The Call to Follow Christ



“So the call to discipleship is a commitment *solely to the person of Jesus Christ*, a breaking through all legalisms by the grace of him who calls. It is a gracious call, a gracious command.... Christ calls, the disciple follows....

The Call to Follow Christ

... Christianity without the living Jesus Christ remains necessarily a Christianity without discipleship; and a Christianity without discipleship is always a Christianity without Jesus Christ” (*Discipleship*, 59).

The Call to Follow Christ

Not, “I will follow, **but let me first...**” (Luke 9:57-62)
— Nothing can stand between the one called and Jesus.

- Jesus’ call supersedes personal security (1st guy);
- Torah and family responsibility (2nd guy); and
- Even family affection and relationships (3rd guy).

The Obedience to Follow Christ

2. Being a disciple means **obedience**, “simple obedience.”

- Jesus’ concrete call on one’s life requires a response of simple obedience.
- While it will be different for each follower, a turning towards Jesus with repentance (*metanoia* μετανοια) is required.

The Obedience to Follow Christ

The life of faith is characterized by faithful obedience (Rom 1:5; 16:26; James 2:14-26).

- Faith and obedience are inseparable: while obedience follows faith, faith is only shown through obedience.
- “Only believers obey, and only the obedient believe” (*Discipleship*, 63).

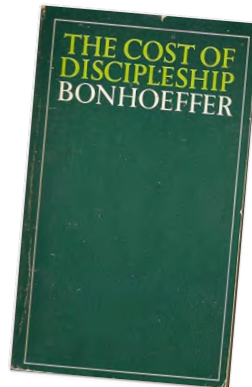
The Cost to Follow Christ

3. Being a disciple **costs you** your life (and means counting the cost).

- “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it” (Luke 9:23-24; 14:27; Matt 10:38; 16:24).

The Cost to Follow Christ

“When Christ calls a person, he bids them come and die” (*The Cost of Discipleship*, 99).



The Cost to Follow Christ

“Whenever Christ calls us, his call leads us to death. Whether we, like the first disciples, must leave house and vocation to follow him, or whether, with Luther, we leave the monastery for a secular vocation, in both cases the same death awaits us, death in Jesus Christ, the death of our old self caused by the call of Jesus (*Discipleship*, 87-88).

An Invitation to Follow...

“In following Jesus, people are released from the hard yoke of their own laws to be under the gentle yoke of Jesus Christ.... Jesus demands nothing from us without giving us the strength to comply. Jesus’ command never wishes to destroy life, but rather to preserve, strengthen, and heal life” (*Discipleship*, 39).

An Invitation to Follow...

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt 11:28-30).

An Invitation to Follow...

“Where will the call to discipleship lead those who follow it? What decisions and painful separations will it entail? We must take this question to him who alone knows the answer. Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow him, knows where the path will lead. But we know that it will be a path full of mercy beyond measure. **Discipleship is joy**” (*Discipleship*, 40).