

## **Meditations on the Cross**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

### **A Six Week Study**

Each week, approximately 15 pages are covered by this study. It is suggested that you read the meditation, the title is in *italics*, and then ponder the question or questions which have been posed. If this is used in a group setting, the questions can be discussion starters.

#### **Week One** - Beginning Ash Wednesday

##### *Encountering the Extraordinary*

Thinking of being extraordinary in Christ - how is that evident in your life?

##### *Back to the Cross*

What about this description of the transfiguration speaks to you the most?

##### *The Path of God*

While the story of the devil tempting Jesus is familiar, what new information did this reflection bring to you?

##### *Passiontide*

If Bonhoeffer's experience in prison was not really suffering, what kind of suffering might be considered suffering for Christ?

##### *Discipleship and the Cross*

If suffering and rejection are a "must" for Christians, how has this been true in your own life? How have you experienced "self-denial? If we are to take up the cross of Jesus, we must be people who forgive. Has forgiveness ever been hard in your own life?

#### **Week Two**

##### *Good Friday*

Judgment or grace - which have you experienced the most?

##### *Worldliness*

If people do not know about the crucified Christ, they cannot really live. What does a statement like that mean to you?

##### *God's Love for Human Beings*

How has the peace and love of Christ, caused disunion in your life?

##### *Truthfulness*

"There can be no truth toward Jesus without truth toward human beings." What does that sentence say to you?

##### *Suffering in Solidarity*

How can suffering in solidarity be liberating and redeeming?

### *On Suffering*

Have you ever had to endure suffering disgrace due to your own actions? Was this a public or private suffering? How did it change your life?

### *Limits*

We are limited in our understanding of God. How does that make you feel?

### *Cain*

Cain seeks to be like God when he murders his brother. When have you sought to be like God? What were the results?

## **Week Three**

### *Judas*

Jesus chose Judas as one of the twelve knowing he would betray him. How does that make you feel? We often just think about Judas betraying Jesus. How did the other disciples betray him? How do you betray him?

### *Conversion*

“When we have completely renounced making something of ourselves..” Is this something you have done or are you more in the process of doing so? Explain.

### *Treasures of Suffering*

Has suffering in your life led you to the peace of God? Or do you count on other things, like security, in this world for your peace? Why?

## **Week Four**

### *Disappointments*

How have your disappointments brought you peace, repose and a strong courageous heart?

### *Ecce Homo*

God loves us as we are, not as we hope to be. How do you understand this concept? God calls us to accept others - not just some people, but all people - and not judge them. When you judge, what criteria do you use? According to Bonhoeffer, what is success? Do you agree with him?

## **Week Five**

### *Christians and Pagans*

There are many conversion stories in the Bible. With which one do you identify and why?

### *Hope*

How has Christ addressed you at the very center of your life?

### *The Beginning*

How is the resurrected Lord of Easter Sunday a creation out of nothing?

### *Resurrection*

How does the resurrection of Christ change your life?

### *Easter*

“Overcoming dying occurs within the realm of human possibilities, while overcoming death means resurrection.” What does this sentence mean to you?

### *Resurrection Instead of Immortality*

Good Friday is really the end. The death of God. What does that mean to you? Easter is really saying “God lives.” How would you explain this to someone who doesn’t understand Easter?

## **Week Six**

### *Fate*

How does your hope in Jesus overcome “fate?”

### *Incarnation - Cross - Resurrection*

Incarnation - Cross - Resurrection. What are the pitfalls of only believing in one of these rather than all three? How are they all related?

### *Tension*

Do you feel a tension between Easter and the Ascension? Why or why not?

### *The Visible Community of Faith*

When we abide in the call of Jesus, we *are* the salt, we *are* the light and therefore, our faith cannot be hidden. You are the visible community of faith. How can this be lived out in humility?

### *God in the Midst of Life*

We are quick to say that God is with us, yet do we take time to see God in us and around us. Where have you seen God in the last few weeks? How has seeing God impacted your life? Is there ever a time when you wish God was not always present?