

## Who Is Christ For Us Today?

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Who is Christ for us today? That is the question that theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer really struggled with. This question is a difficult one to answer for it may not have a set response. It could also just be something at the back of our minds that we ask at all times and in every place that we go. In Bonhoeffer's time, it was difficult to find Christ anywhere because of the evil things that Adolph Hitler was doing, especially when Hitler was using the church for his own purposes. The following essay will cover who Christ was in Bonhoeffer's time during World War Two and also my observation on who Christ is for us today.

In Bonhoeffer's time, it was very difficult to find Christ because of Hitler's taking over the church. This was accomplished by having a Reich Bishop who would decide the "correct" beliefs in Nazi Germany. So, Christ may have been viewed differently because of all those awful things that were happening: the church being taken over, the Jews being taken away and killed, and the war going on. Some people may have thought that Christ had left because of all those awful things that were happening and that he was not stopping or helping to stop them from happening. Bonhoeffer would say that Christ is somebody to listen to for advice on certain subjects, such as getting into Heaven.

I believe that Christ for us today is sort of a role model; to be like him is a good way to get into Heaven. But along with that, he is also something we can never be, only something we can aspire to be like. He also gives us the guidelines for Christian living: the Beatitudes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:3-12 NRSV)

Bonhoeffer saw these beatitudes, not as hoping that you did all those to get into heaven, but that you would do them and get into heaven. Along with the beatitudes, Jesus also gave many different parables about what heaven is like and how to get into heaven. He is also a healer for the people in the hospital who need help. He might not heal them directly, but if they have enough faith, he can heal them.

Though in these times where everybody has work to do and not enough time for church, it is, even now, difficult to find Christ. Some people who are very ill might say that Christ did not hear their prayers and help them. But he might have heard their prayers and helped them in a way that they do not know yet. For example, a person has the flu for a long time and prays every day. After being sick for two weeks they feel as if Christ has not heard their prayers so they give up when; in fact, they were slowly getting better that whole time that they were praying. So even though Christ is not physically next to us, he can still heal us from our sicknesses. Christ is also a

savior for us. He is the physical form of God on earth who forgives us of our sins. Bonhoeffer would agree with what I believe, that Christ is for us today because of how little really changed, theologically, between then and now.

Christ really hasn't changed much for us over the years. Only our view of him and his works has changed. That is especially true with each new translation of the bible that we get. Each gospel is translated a little differently not only in translation of the whole Bible, but just how each writer interpreted what he experienced. That is really all that matters in how one would interpret Christ, what gospel they look in and what translation they use. Who Christ is for us today remains a question that needs to be asked in every time and place.

#### Works Cited

New Revised Standard Version. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1989.