

FROM sermon TO witness

How I see Jesus= Son of God

Child of God

Like Father, like Son

Like Parent, like Child

Want to know who God is?

Look at the rabbi from Nazareth

Want to know God's character and personality?

Then you looking into the eyes of the True Face of God

Battered and bleeding and dying on the cross

There is the Image and Likeness and Exact Representation of God

How I see Jesus= Son of Man

Child of Humanity

Humanity 2.0

A radically new way of being Human

The Prototype, the Pattern, the Picture of

How God intends for us to be human

It's not about escaping humanity and this bodily existence

It is about practicing the Jesus Way of being human

New humanity, new creation

How I see Jesus impacts how I interpret today's Gospel text

Jesus asks questions

When Pilate brutally murdered those people

Was God behind that?

When the patterned sin woven into the Tower of Siloam structure

Collapsed and crushed people

Was God behind that?

Jesus says- NO!

And Jesus says- Unless you change, you will die like they did

In other words, it's not God that is behind these brutal deaths
It's people—it's human beings—that are behind the destruction

My witness= undo the connection between God and these massacres

My witness= help others to unlearn the habit of blaming our evil on God
Instead= receive forgiveness and accept responsibility

Lent Madness

My witness= I'm describing how Jesus is my model/prototype

Means= I learn from the witness of those who practiced the Jesus pattern
of being human—including those people and voices from the past

Doesn't mean= I idolize those who followed Jesus in past

Means= I learn from the witness of those who followed Jesus and passed
the baton to me

When we gather here
It's with the whole church
The church on earth
And the hosts of heaven

Athanasius of Alexandria

The champion of the Trinity
Taught that there is one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
The dance of one Joy
The flow of one overflowing, over pouring, outgoing, flooding Love
Relationship, community, and oneness

Athanasius had a nemesis named Arius
Arius= Jesus became God's Son when he was baptized and the Holy Spirit
came upon him

Athanasius= Jesus was the Son from eternity, one substance with the Father

Jesus= both fully God and fully human

My witness is heavily influenced by Athanasius

Jesus shows us both who God is and who Humanity is meant to be

Models how we are to live

The Prototype, the Pattern

Arius and Athanasius battled back and forth—it got ugly

Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria (Egypt, Libya)= 17 years, exiled 5 times

The Arius people chased him out

Athanasius sent thugs to allow him back in

What I have to say

I appreciate Athanasius for showing me

When God is Trinity

And Jesus is the Face of God

Then I see that the beginning, the end, and the means are united

It's all about Love

Athanasius was stubborn

Athanasius contra mundum

Athanasius against the world

And I'm going to witness that I think Athanasius and Arius

Really lost sight of the Jesus prototype, the Jesus pattern for being human

The model I see and experience

Love God, love self, love neighbor, love family, love friends, love stranger

And—and love your enemy

The one who is most hostile to you is the one who requires the most love

The Empire= crucifies people

The Rule of God= endures the cross, practices a passionate, suffering love

God does not promise us a quick fix (violence), but endless love

Lent Madness= Dietrich Bonhoeffer

From 1981-1983, I lived in Jamaica

By day= I was a fish farmer

By night= I read Bonhoeffer books

He was born in Germany in 1906 to a highly educated family

His dad was a shrink, his mom was brilliant

And they were mostly too intellectual to go to church

So naturally, Dietrich got his PhD by the age of 21

To be both a preacher and a teacher, go figure

He went to Union Seminary in NYC

Whenever I went to visit MB at college- or to drop her off- or to pick her up

I parked in the parking lot next to this seminary

Dietrich was an outstanding, classically trained pianist

But on Sunday mornings, he crossed Morningside Park

From Manhattan into Harlem

He attended the Abyssinian Baptist Church

His faith was impacted by the black church

He worshiped with those who had a long history

of being damned and despised by the host culture

Then Hitler rose to power—the Nazi party in Germany

American friends—stay in America, teach at the seminary

You have a PhD- be safe- be comfortable

Back home—the Nazi flag draped over the altar and hung in the sanctuary

The Nazis were preaching purity and a return to greatness

By hating and proposing the elimination of the “contamination”

What was the “pollution” the Nazis wanted to eradicate? The Jewish people

Jews= less than 1% of the German population

Nazis= they are the cause of all of our problems

Nazis= they are powerful—and we must be strong & get rid of them

The Nazis formed a new gathering called the “German Christians”
Nazis appointed the bishops for the Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed
Bonhoeffer went home—he returned to his country--at this specific moment
Taught at Berlin University by day
Taught confirmation to teenage boys in the slums of Berlin by night
Courageously opposed the Nazi regime
One of the founders of the Confessing Church
Signed the Barmen Declaration
We pledge our total allegiance to Christ, not to the Leader, not to the Party

Called to become the principal at an underground seminary
Taught the Sermon on the Mount, wrote a book called “Discipleship”
The book was about pledging allegiance to Christ
And following the Sermon on the Mount as the Constitution
He opposed what he called “cheap grace”
Which meant preaching the “forgiveness” part
without the “following the Sermon on the Mount” part

of course, he opposed being anti-Jewish
he sided with the damned and the despised of his home country
Became a double agent with the Abwer (military intelligence)
There was a coup being planned to topple Hitler
Dietrich—with his American and British contacts—would use these
relationships to bring about peace after the coup

The Gestapo had a rivalry with the Abwer; they arrested Dietrich
The bomb that the coup conspiracy set off to kill Hitler
The impact was absorbed by his desk and he survived
Over the course of time, it was discovered that Dietrich had a connection to
the conspirators—and he was executed
Discipleship + Life Together + Letters and Papers from Prison
Shaped and formed me—my witness has been impacted
Standing up for the despised/damned—being freed from “slavery to fear of
death”—witness—preemptive love—living, a win—dying, a win—not loving
the damned, a loss