

# THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP



# THE VISIBLE COMMUNITY

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- 🕒 The Church is called to make its ministry of Word and Sacrament visible in the world-to make sure that space exists for these ministries.
- 🕒 How can we do that in our contemporary context?





## THE VISIBLE COMMUNITY

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- 🕒 The Church also needs to claim space in the world for the daily life of Her members, a life that speaks clearly to the faith that they hold.
- 🕒 Obviously some forms of Christianity seek to do this by leveraging the secular power structures, e.g. legislation. Is there a way to do this that is more congruent with the witness of the New Testament?



# THE VISIBLE COMMUNITY



- ⌚ A huge hallmark of how the Church is called to be a visible community is that we are to always relate with one another “in the Lord.”
- ⌚ Our differences and hierarchies are not erased. But the way we navigate the space between man and woman, employer and employee, parent and child, citizen and alien, etc, must always be guided by a sense of our being one in Christ.
- ⌚ What does this look like in our behavior toward one another?

# THE SAINTS

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The term “Saint” in the New Testament has a very clear and simple meaning: it is a member of the Church, one who visibly believes in Christ.

Why does the Bible use this term to describe Christ’s disciples as opposed to “the righteous,” “the forgiven,” or any other such category?



# THE SAINTS



Bonhoeffer sets up an image of the Saints living in the world (the body politic) as vessels of holiness within the context of the visible Church.



And the Saints are made holy not by their own merits but by the saving work of Christ.



How does this theology play out practically, especially in terms of when and how the Church involves itself in worldly politics?



## VICES TO BE AVOIDED

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- 🕒 Bonhoeffer notes whoredom and covetousness as the principal vices from which the Saints must separate themselves.
- 🕒 But we are certainly not meant to be sexless beings, nor are we called to have no dealings with the material world.
- 🕒 What does a holy path here look like?

# THE SAINTS



- 🕒 Bonhoeffer notes that the Church can preach forgiveness only in the context of also preaching sin and repentance.
- 🕒 In other words there must be a sense of ecclesiastical discipline.
- 🕒 How does that look in this day and age?



# FAITH AND GOOD WORKS

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- 🕒 The performance of good works and the resistance of evil works is an essential part of admission to the Kingdom of God.
- 🕒 But we cannot be conscious of the good works?
- 🕒 How do we build and nurture a community of faith that helps its members live with this sort of detached virtue?



# THE IMAGE OF CHRIST



Our ultimate calling is to be images of Christ,  
i.e. imitators of God.



How can this be done with the necessary and  
paradoxical combination of a sense of infinite  
co-creative power and yet great humility?