

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday February 4, 2007

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born on this day in 1906. He often said: “When God calls us, He calls us to come and die.” Imprisoned by the Nazis, he prayed: “Whether I live or die, I am with You, and You, my God, are with me. Lord, I wait for Your salvation and for Your Kingdom.” They hanged him in 1945, one month before the liberation. But he is with his Lord, alive forevermore! Let us pray.

Our Sovereign God and Gracious Father:

We ask You, for You know the truth: Are we truly grateful for yet another precious morning of prayer and praise and the preaching of Your good news in Christ Jesus? Lord, give us Your honest answer and help us to take it to heart. Are we truly ready to go out into the streets of this city, this afternoon, humming the sweet tune of Your grace and peace in Christ Jesus? Lord, give us Your honest answer and help us to take it to heart.

Lord, while our Christian brothers and sisters elsewhere risk life and limb to meet together, we meet here at no such cost. But in spite of the ease of our experience, grant us joy that they know, for we hear that they do joy through hard oppression. Convict us who whine at mere inconvenience and nitpick over every little thing’s not going our way.

Help us to pray our brother Dietrich’s words and mean them: Whether we live or die, we’re with You, for You, our God, are with us in Christ. Help us to wait patiently for Your salvation and for Your Kingdom come, when the fullness of Your perfect will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. May this be our fervent prayer for our maturation in the time we have left in this world. Give us the willingness to be conformed more and more into the stature of the Suffering Servant, our Savior. May we turn from all trivial distractions to what really matters. May we stop compartmentalizing our lives, count the cost of the only discipleship to which we’re actually called, and grow, by Your grace, into closer intimacy with Jesus. May we follow our Master wherever he leads. Help us to know when and how best we might serve those whom You bring our way each day. Help us to rise to all the opportunities You provide for sharing our faith in Christ with people who really do need to hear of Jesus’ love and to believe in him.

Father, it’s in his name that we pray the prayer he taught his disciples to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.