

“Followers of the Way”

Introduction: What is it to be a Christian? What is it to believe the Gospel?

- Salvation is often seen merely in terms of the forgiveness of sins, being made right with God

Only Two Ways - Matthew 7:13-14

- There is an entrance, then there is the way; it is a **specific way**
- One is the way which **many** find and follow; the other is one which **few** find and follow
- The assumption is that the way to eternal life is not merely an entrance or destination, but what happens on the way
- As believers, we are walking in this way together, there is companionship

The Way as Metaphor

- Metaphor = a word symbol to illuminate, or bring abstract into concrete, by using a name that both is and is not what it names
- The way as a **rich biblical metaphor** – way, road, street, path - a way in which we walk
- It is not merely about **destination**, but about what we do while we are “in the way” to that destination
- The way is **active**, not passive; not being bystanders or observers, but engaging ourselves in the way we live
- It is to be in:
 - o The Way of **Peace** (Luke 1:79) ...”to guide our feet into the way of peace.”
 - o The Way of **Righteousness** (Proverbs 12:28) ...”In the way of righteousness is life.”
 - o The **Right Way** (Ezra 8:21) ...”to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions”
 - o The Way of **Light** (Isaiah 42:16) ...”I will bring the blind by a way they did not know...I will make darkness light before them.”
- This in contrast to the way that **seems right** (Proverbs 14:12) ...”a way that seems right...its end is death.”
- **Psalm 1** – the way of the wicked and the way of the righteous

Followers of the Way – The Book of Acts

- a more common designation than “Christian” (Acts 11:26 26:28) – (6x) 9:2 19:9 19:23 22:4 24:14 24:22

The Jesus Way – John 16:4

- Jesus doesn't **point to a way** (abstracted), but that **He is** the way; this makes it very **personal**, not just rules
- It is not merely a **slogan or principle**, it is a metaphor for an **entire way of life**
- Following Jesus is **radically different** from all other ways
- Jesus is an **alternative** to the dominant ways of the world, not a **supplement** to them
- Not those who **follow unchallenged** the “way” of **our parents** - the “way” **I am** - the “way” of **our culture**
- Following the Jesus Way is therefore **counter-cultural**, a different way of doing things – in **all of life**
- The way we **talk**, the way we use our **influence**, the way we **treat one another**, the way we **raise our children**, the way we **read**, the way we **work**, the way we **worship**, the way we **vote**, the way we **spend money**, the way we **invest our money**, the way we **garden**, the way we **feel**, the way we **eat and drink**, the way we **make love**, the way we **keep our home**, the way we **sacrifice**, the way we **do art** (in whatever form), the way we are **entertained**, the way we **enjoy the creation**, the way we **educate**, the way we **dress**, the way we **drive**, the way we **communicate the Gospel**, the way we **argue**, the way we **love**
- All of this is brought under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, our **leader**, our **Shepherd**, our **Lord**
- The become a **disciple** (Gk. mathatay) student-follower – not a teacher of “religious truth”, but to follow His example
- **Baptism** is a public declaration to become a follower of the way of Jesus
- I am not proposing a “one size fits all...this is the way we all do it” (which is abstract and impersonal), but rather a recognition that in all things we need to be asking ourselves “is this the Jesus way?”
- Being a follower of the Way is not primarily what we do for a **few hours** on Sunday, but **all of life** (in which we spend most of our time)
- What we are **doing here** is equipping, transforming our mind by Scripture, encouraging one another to walk the Way of Jesus
- The predominant challenge to us is that between **personal and impersonal** – we long for the personal, even in the midst of a society that creates as a by-product impersonal – efficiency, quick answers, principles, fast-food, consumer, “using” of the creation and people as commodity
- 3-fold temptation of the Lord Jesus (creation/commodity, dazzle people by greatness, power without sacrifice)

Summary: being a Christian isn't merely about knowledge and understanding (which is cognitive, abstract, and impersonal), but about the way, an entire way of life – a **way of love** for God and neighbor (which is personal)

- The disconnect between **what we know** and **how we live?** – **impersonal information vs. sacrificial relationship**
- Those who are reaping blessing – those who are reaping curse – **only two ways**
- **Are you as concerned about the way of the journey as the destination?**