



PEOPLE OF THE WAY

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS



CHRIST'S
CHURCH

PEOPLE OF THE WAY

Before Christians were known as Christians, another term was used to describe the community of Jesus' followers. Disciples of Jesus belonged to "the Way".

Drawing on both the teachings of Jesus and the Old Testament scriptures, people of "the Way" saw themselves as belonging to a community deeply grounded in Judaism yet distinctly different because of Jesus.

In John 14:6, Jesus revealed to his disciples that he is "the way" to the Father. Jesus offered hope and assurance that through him, everyone can find God. There is no other way for people to be saved and have a relationship with God. Jesus is the only way.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, empowering them to live distinct, transformed lives. This divine empowering raised a community of believers that, initially seen as another Jewish sect, quickly proved to be more than that. They became a community of people centered on Jesus and his accomplishments, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Lives were transformed, inspiring hope and salvation for their families, communities, and nations.

Today, if you follow Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you belong to "the Way". A name that connects us to the early believers and our Christian identity. Join us as we journey through the book of Acts, showing how the Spirit turns ordinary believers into people of "the Way" who carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Sincerely,

Christ's Church

PEOPLE OF THE WAY RECEIVE POWER

KEY REFERENCE

When the day of **Pentecost** came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. **All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

-Acts 2:1-4

SIGNIFICANCE

Pentecost was the annual festival, 50 days after Passover, celebrating the first offerings of the harvest. It also corresponded to the time that God gave the Law to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19). As God poured out His Spirit upon the disciples with wind and fire, He was showing that His Presence and power were no longer confined to the physical temple. From now till Jesus returns, God's Presence and power would be transforming the world through his people. What Jesus had begun was continuing.

SERMON NOTES

REFLECT ON ACTS 1-2

- *According to Acts 1:8, how are power and the Holy Spirit connected? What does this signify about the true source of power? What does power look like?*
- *How does Jesus point the disciples to their mission and purpose in Acts 1:8? How will they need to rely on God's Presence and Power to accomplish this purpose?*
- *How does Acts 1-2 point to God's plan for the world through his disciples?*
- *How do you see yourself in this story? This week, how can you embrace your identity and purpose as being "people of the way"?*

PEOPLE OF THE WAY DO LIFE TOGETHER

KEY REFERENCE

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **All the believers were together** and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **Every day they continued to meet together** in the temple courts. They broke bread **in their homes and ate together** with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

-Acts 2:42-47

SIGNIFICANCE

The disciples continued to live as Jesus had modeled and taught them, but now with the Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit. The result was that a new type of community was formed. As it grew, it would become known as "the way," and because of God's Presence and Power, many would be saved.

REFLECT ON ACTS 2:42-47

- *What were the disciples committed to doing? How did they live?*
- *If you had to summarize your life/family life, how would you summarize your habits and rhythms?*
- *How did God use their daily lives to draw people to Himself? How might God want to use your daily life to draw people to Himself?*
- *How do you see yourself in this story? This week, how can you embrace your identity and purpose as being “people of the way”?*

PEOPLE OF THE WAY ARE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

KEY REFERENCE

SERMON NOTES

Now Stephen, **a man full of God's grace and power**, performed great wonders and signs among the people. **Opposition arose**, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. **But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.**

-Acts 6:8-10

SIGNIFICANCE

As more people came to put their belief in Jesus Christ, challenges and opposition arose. Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, got to experience both. He was first chosen to help take care of widows and serve the community in that way. However, it is his commitment to die for his faith in Jesus that also distinguishes him. As Stephen was killed, he followed the life Jesus had modeled. Looking at his accusers, he prayed for their forgiveness. As he was stoned to death, Stephen remained faithful to Jesus.

REFLECT ON ACTS 6-7

- *Why were Stephen and the other men chosen to take care of the food distribution to widows? What qualities did the apostles look for?*
- *In what ways did Stephen look and sound like Jesus?*
- *How is Stephen in contrast with the religious leaders of the Sanhedrin that always resist the Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit?*
- *How do you see yourself in this story? This week, how can you embrace your identity and purpose as being "people of the way"?*

PEOPLE OF THE WAY LIVE ON MISSION

KEY REFERENCE

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all..." **We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.**

-Acts 10:34-36,39

SIGNIFICANCE

As Peter preaches the gospel message to Cornelius and his household, it demonstrates that God's mission and purpose are for the whole world. Cornelius was not Jewish, which greatly limited his ability to worship the God of the Jews. Thankfully, because of Jesus, Cornelius would be able to enter the community of Jesus followers. The barriers that once kept him away from God were now removed. The Holy Spirit wasn't just for the Jewish followers of Jesus, but He is available to all people who believe in Jesus.

SERMON NOTES

REFLECT ON ACTS 10

- *How did both Cornelius and Peter follow God's leading? What was the result?*
- *How does Peter explain the gospel message to Cornelius? How did the Holy Spirit confirm Peter's message? Why were some believers surprised?*
- *How does the concept of being a "witness" connect the entire book of Acts? See Acts 1:8, 1:22, 2:32, 3:15, 5:32, 10:39, 10:41, 13:31, 22:15, 26:16.*
- *How do you see yourself in this story? This week, how can you embrace your identity and purpose as being "people of the way"?*

PEOPLE OF THE WAY GO ALL IN

KEY REFERENCE

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. **At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized.** The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

-Acts 16:29-34

SERMON NOTES

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SIGNIFICANCE

As Paul and Silas traveled around preaching the gospel message of Jesus, some people responded favorably while others didn't. Being thrown in jail by the city magistrates, Paul and Silas continued to worship God. After an earthquake, the jailor was ready to end his life but instead encountered the grace of Jesus and was baptized.

REFLECT ON ACTS 16:11-40

- *How do the different people in this section respond to the message of Jesus? How did Lydia and the jailer respond?*
- *How did the owners of the slave girl and the city magistrates respond?*
- *How did Paul and Silas respond in each situation? How does this illustrate what Paul teaches in Philippians 4:11-13?*
- *How do you see yourself in this story? This week, how can you embrace your identity and purpose as being “people of the way”?*

PEOPLE OF THE WAY GO EVERYWHERE

KEY REFERENCE

You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; **my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.**

-Acts 20:20-24

SIGNIFICANCE

As Paul heads to Jerusalem, he visits the elders from Ephesus to urge them to persevere in leading the Christian community in Ephesus. For three years, Paul had ministered with them and now wants them to follow his example.

REFLECT ON ACTS 20:13-38

- *What is the example that Paul desires for the elders from Ephesus to model? For the larger context of Paul's ministry, read Acts 9-20.*
- *How are the elders from Ephesus supposed to shepherd the church of God?*
- *How does the entire book of Acts fulfill the command in Acts 1:8 to be a witness to the ends of the earth?*
- *How do you see yourself in this story? This week, how can you embrace your identity and purpose as being "people of the way"?*

