The Way

John 14:1-6 I am the way, the truth and the life.

Not I have a way or I know a way, but I AM the way.

What is the way? Jesus.

Acts 9:2 Paul persecuted those in the Way.

Acts 18:25-26 Apollos had been instructed in the way, but Priscilla and Aquilla explained the way more adequately. Ask yourself, what did he instruct them in and what did he explain?

Acts 19:9 Some Jews publicly maligned the way.

Acts 19:23 A great disturbance about The Way. Why? Because the sale of idols was way down in that city.

Acts 22:4 I persecuted the followers of this way.

Acts 24:14,22 Paul “a follower of the Way, Felix was well acquainted with the Way.

Christianity is a life—a way—not a religion.

Old Testament:

Judges 2:22 I will use [God’s enemies] them to test Israel and see whether they will kept the way of the Lord and walk in it as their ancestors have

Deuteronomy 5:33 Walk in the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

Proverbs 10:29 The way of the Lord is a refuge for the righteous, but it is the ruin of those who do evil.

Joshua 1:7 Be strong and very brave. Make sure you obey the whole law. Make sure you do not turn away from it to the right or to the left….

Jeremiah 6:16 The ancient paths, the good way.

God is asking each of us to take stock of our way of life and compare it to the way that he has laid out for us. We need to look for the good way.

Mark 12:14 (Luke 20:21) You teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. One the one hand, we are told to obey the governing authority, on the other we are told to obey God, not man. Which is God’s way in this case?

Matthew 7:13-14 The way is narrow and few find it.

So, how do we find it? How do we find this way and keep on it?

By looking at Jesus

By knowing the scripture

By listening to the Holy Spirit

By knowing your history

Isaiah 30:20-22 Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of afflicition, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, “This is the way, walk in it.”

We need to listen to God’s voice—to the Holy Spirit.

We need to navigate the path between legalism and lukewarmness….

We need to navigate the path between freedom in Christ and everyone doing what they see fit. If you tell people what to do, they never grow up. If you give them no direction, they get lost.

Churches can so easily lose the way. So can individuals.

John 1:17 Jesus came, full of grace and truth.

If we stray to the left, we will have lots of love and grace and lots of forgiveness. We will be very accepting, but there will be no conviction, no truth, and the church will not grow. Where do we find “the way” in this? Look at Jesus who said to the woman caught in adultery: Neither do I condemn you, but no go and sin no more.

If we stray to the right, we will have a guilt-oriented form of Christianity in which outward acts of righteousness substitute for true love for God.

If we stray to the left, we will accept wordliness and false doctrine in our churches and we will cease to be Christian.

Jesus is the way here. On the one hand, Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. On the other hand, he told the Pharisees that they were a brood of vipers and whitewashed tombs (Matthew 23:23-36) . We need to help the weak, but we need to admonish the idle (1 Thess 5:14).

We need to do all these things and do them in a proper balance. That is the Way of Jesus Christ.

We need to learn from our history. In the past we did not give people enough freedom, so now we do not give people enough direction.

In the past we gave too much attention to “statistics” and numbers of conversions. Now we are afraid to talk about growth, as if it is something bad, when we see a lot about this in Acts.

At one time, we have a very hierarchical structure in which local leaders had very little say in the major decisions of the church. Now is some places the churches are so autonomous that we cannot work together to train leaders and to plant churches.

In the past, we expected people to prove they had repented before we would baptize them, but now some of us are saying that if they say they repented, we should not question them and baptize them.

How do we find those ancient paths? How do we keep to the way?

The challenge: Every one of you here is part of the never-ending journey to help us as a fellowship of disciple keep our churches on the Way of righteousness.