

# FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY

DATE: SUNDAY, 29TH OF NOVEMBER 2020 | FRONTLINE: PART 6

## ACTS 19:9

*But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus."*

## ACTS 19:18-20

*"Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily."*

## ACTS 19:23

*"About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way."*

### NOTE TO LEADERS:

This is our last LifeGroup resource for 2020. We'll kick off again in 2021 with our Engage series.

## START TALKING

1. What was your biggest take-away from Sunday's message?
2. What has been your highlight of 2020?

## START THINKING

1. Luke calls the faith of those who follow Jesus "the Way" (Acts 19:9 and Acts 19:23). On Sunday, Peter said that "there is a way of being, living, and demonstrating freedom to the world that God wants to show off through your life." In what way might this influence or change your understanding of being a Christ-follower (a follower of The Way)?
2. In what way has the Frontline series challenged you to become more intentional about sharing the Gospel? What steps can you take to become more effective in telling others about Jesus?
3. Who are you going to invite to one of our Carols services? Make a list of the names that your group is going to invite and pray for that list at the end of the meeting.

## START SHARING

1. Read Acts 19:18-20. The people in Ephesus who believed in Jesus decided to burn all the occultic books that represented their past. It doesn't say in the text that Paul told them to do this; it was just part of their response to the Gospel. Share about something you "burned" or left behind after you accepted Jesus. How has leaving this in your past changed your life?
2. In Acts 19:30-31, we read: Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. Even some of the officials of

the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater. Paul had to be restrained from going in and preaching the Gospel. When have you had to "go where angels fear to tread" in order to share the Gospel? OR Have you ever had to stay true to "The Way" when everyone else around you was following the ways of the world? Share your experiences with the group.

## START PRAYING

Pray for the people that your group said they want to invite to the Carols services. Pray that God would make their hearts open to His love.

## START DOING

Who are you going to invite to one of our Carols services? Make a point of intentionally inviting at least one person. (Don't forget to book your seats online at [www.cityhillchurch.com](http://www.cityhillchurch.com)).

# SUMMARY

## OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

In the Bible, we see three churches that functioned as bases and that had a major influence on their cities and regions.

Through our Frontline series, we have been learning from these base churches and have gained insight as to why they were so influential in spreading the Gospel. This Sunday, the final week of our Frontline series, Peter Rasmussen challenged us with the example set by the Church in Ephesus and what it means to be "Followers of The Way".

The Ephesians turned out to be the powerhouse Church of Asia Minor. The Church in Ephesus was also positioned strategically for growth and influence, as it was surrounded by development and wealth in the region. In Luke 12:48 (NLT) we read: *"When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required."* As a Church, we have a big responsibility to steward what we have been given.

### The Way

The believers from the church in Ephesus are referred to twice in Acts 19 as "followers of The Way":

- *But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus."* Acts 19:9
- *"About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way."* Acts 19:23

This is what set the church in Ephesus (and the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch) apart. We need to understand that we too are 'people of the way'.

'The Way' would in the mind of the early believers have meant:

1. They were passionate followers of Christ. *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6
2. A reference to the prophetic nature of the people of God speaking of John's introduction of Jesus. *"A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."* Isaiah 40:3
3. A way of living and speaking (this really represents the power of the early church).

### What do we know about Jesus' disciples?

It was common practice for teachers of the law (Rabbis) to pick disciples (Talmudin). Normal practice was to pick the best of the best, but Jesus made a point of not doing so. The disciples Jesus chose were most likely teenage boys who were working with their fathers - a telltale sign that they had not been selected for higher education.

The point of having disciples was that they could perpetuate your teaching (yoke) as a Rabbi. *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* Matthew 11:29-30. The disciples would do this by imitating their teacher (do all and be all that He was). So being followers of the way was all about:

- A way of being.
- A way of living.
- A mandate of gospel proclamation.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: "Christianity without discipleship is always

Christianity without Christ."

### 1. A WAY OF BEING

We don't just have a message to deliver to the world; we are the message. *"And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."* 2 Corinthians 3:3. The whole point of being a disciple was to emulate your Rabbi. To do what He did to say what He said, to be like Him - To carry His 'yoke' to the world. As Howard Hendricks put it: "You teach what you know, but you reproduce what you are."

### 2. A WAY OF LIVING

Reference to 'The Way' in scripture is significant - it's not just theology. In Matthew 28:19 we read: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"* Often see this as a general call to evangelise the world, but Jesus' disciples would have understood this quite differently. This would have been a more personal call to make disciples - follow me as I follow Christ. The primary method for the world's evangelisation was showing. "Our Lord's conception of discipleship is not that we work for God, but that God works through us." (Oswald Chambers).

The way of living Paul spoke of really was a way of freedom: *"Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily."* Acts 19:18-20. Using today's monetary terms, R14 million worth of occult books were burned. There is a connection between 'the burning' of all that holds us and the power of the Word. For some of us, the Word has little power because there are 'things' that we need to 'burn'. We need to live in the freedom of the way.

### 3. A MANDATE TO GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

These Christ-followers were such passionate followers of 'the way' that all of Asia minor heard about them and the Gospel. They were passionate in their faith and about taking the gospel to the heart of a heathen culture. Everything in Ephesus centred on belonging to the cult Artemis. There wasn't anywhere you could go or anything you do that wasn't influenced by Artemis. During an annual procession to Artimus, Paul wanted to address the crowd that had been chanting for 2 hours! (Who would want to go in there?) And he had to be restrained from going in and preaching the Gospel. Are we willing to go "where angels fear to tread"? When last did anyone have to hold you back from preaching the Gospel?

The power of this Church was its demonstration of power - a regular refrain from Paul which he first shared with the other powerhouse Church in Corinth: *"And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,"* 1 Corinthians 2:4.

In conclusion, there is a way of being, living, and demonstrating freedom to the world that God wants to show off through your life. We should commit ourselves again to be demonstrating people, a way people. Use every moment - good or bad, lots or little to show off the power of God.