The Jesus Way

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Eugene Peterson has written a provocative book entitled The Jesus Way in which he shows how the Jesus way wedded to the Jesus truth brings about the Jesus life. The way of Jesus is the way that we practice and come to understand the truth of Jesus, living Jesus in our homes and workplaces, with our friends and family.

Peterson unpacks the difference between "the America way" and "the Jesus way." The American way has been to turn the congregation into a consumer enterprise. It didn't take long for some pastors to develop consumer congregations. Peterson says, "If we have a nation of consumers, the quickest way to get them into our congregations is to identify what they want and offer it to them, satisfy their fantasies, promise them the moon, recast the gospel in consumer terms: entertainment, satisfaction, excitement, adventure, problem-solving, whatever. This is the language we Americans grow up on. We are the world's champion consumers, so why shouldn't we have state-of-the-art consumer churches?"

There is only one thing wrong with this approach: it is not "the Jesus way." The cultivation of consumer spirituality is the antithesis of a sacrificial, "deny yourself" congregation. Peterson goes so far as to say, "a consumer church is an antichrist church."

So in this book Peterson considers all the ways that Jesus is the Way compared to the distorted ways the American church today has chosen to follow.

He begins with a study of how the ways of those who came before Christ—Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and Isaiah—revealed and prepared the "way of the Lord" that became complete in Jesus. Then he goes into the New Testament talking about "the way of Herod" and "the way of Caiaphas." These chapters are filled with many "sermon seed thoughts." The book ends with a discussion of "the way of Josephus." I found this last chapter very helpful since I didn't know much about the life of Josephus.

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