

“At least He’s Going to Church!”

Have you ever heard someone say that? Usually, it’s said by a parent about a child who has joined a different Christian denomination. The conversation goes something like this: “Oh, pastor, you know my son John? Well, as you know, he moved away some time ago. He has since found himself a good Christian girl, and they are getting married. He intends on joining her church. But nevertheless, he was confirmed here. It’s a non-denominational church but is still Christian. While I wish he hadn’t left the church he was confirmed in, he did. But at least he is going to church!”

Good news or bad news?

Of course, that depends on the church. But usually, it’s “bad news.” Why? Today, most denominations and non-denominational churches are following the “*ways of this present world and its spiritual ruler*” (Ephesians 2:1). So, to say, “At least he’s going to church” may not be a good thing because of the false doctrine they are being fed.

To help, 1 John 4:1 gives us a good suggestion for church searchers, parents, and godparents in seeking out a faithful church for their “dearly loved.” The Apostle John writes, “*Dearly loved people, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God! For many false prophets have gone out into the world.*”

Before anyone changes their church affiliation, they ought to “test,” investigate, and study what their present church teaches and what the one(s) they are considering really teaches. Joining a church ought not to be an emotional thing but simply answer the question, “Does the church teach what the Bible teaches?”

“Testing the spirits” isn’t that hard. Does the church you are considering confess the Nicene Creed as a faithful summary of the Christian faith? There is more than that, but that is a good place to start. If a church avoids the Nicene Creed, that probably means they also deny some basic doctrine of the Christian faith, which should be avoided.

It is sad but true that most people are more inclined to join a church where they are made to feel good rather than a church that emphasises the right doctrine or even the right conduct.

And yet, teaching the right doctrine is exactly what Jesus tells the Apostles to do. He says to teach “*them to observe all that I have commanded you*” (Matthew 28:20). That’s doctrine! So, is it good that “at least he’s going to a church” or not?

That really depends on what that church teaches. “*Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 1:3).