

**Mid-Week Meditation**  
**May 5, 2020**  
**Rev. Mark McLennan**  
**New St. James Presbyterian Church**

What is a Christian, anyway?

Is it about believing a certain set of theological doctrines and statements?

Is it about acting in a certain way to others?

Is it about doing certain holy things – like worshipping, praying, the sacraments?

Is it about not doing certain things – smoking, drinking, gambling?

In short, I guess the answer is **yes**.

In the movie, Sergeant York, Gary Cooper plays a poor mountain man who sometimes raises hell when he drinks – until one night he “gets religion”

His pastor is played by Walter Brennan.

In one scene Pastor Pyle says to Alvin York – “*Alvin, you got the doin’ kind of religion, not the meetin’ house kind of religion.*”

I have always leaned toward the “*doin’*” kind of religion – I am not a great theologian, but I am a “*preacher/pastor/storyteller*” as it says on my business card.

Frederick Buechner – “*Some think of a Christian as just a Nice Guy.*”

Jesus said “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me*” (John 14:6).

He didn’t say that any particular ethic, doctrine, or religion was the way, the truth, and the life.

He said that **he** was.

He didn’t say that it was by believing or doing anything in particular that you could “*come to the Father.*”

He said that it was **only by him**—by living, participating in, being caught up by the way of life that he embodied, that was his way.

I was raised in a Christian home, and I had a “*come to Jesus*” moment when I was about 14.

All my life, in a sense, I have been a Christian.

Buechner concludes:

*A Christian is one who is on the way, though not necessarily very far along it, and who has at least some dim and half-baked idea of whom to thank.*

*A Christian isn’t necessarily any nicer than anybody else.*

*Just better informed.*

That makes sense, I think

