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SHARE YOUR STORY

BAPTISM

2025

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FOR GOD
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JOHN 3:16

—

Just like our birthdays, graduations, weddings, and the joy of welcoming new life, baptism is a significant milestone for us as believers. Today, in the presence of the church body and other witnesses, we celebrate this moment with those who publicly proclaim their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour (Acts 2:38-39).

The stories in this booklet, written by the baptism candidates, reveal how different people from diverse backgrounds experience God in unique ways. They all, however, point to the fact that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. They confirm that Jesus is the answer to our quest for meaning in life. I hope some of these stories resonate with you.

If you are not a Christian, I encourage you to read these testimonies. I pray they spark your curiosity and move you forward in your search for God. The Bible promises that we can find Him when we seek with all our hearts (Jeremiah 29:13).

We are grateful for all the baptism candidates today and for their willingness to share testimonies of God's loving pursuit and transformative grace in their lives. May this day mark the beginning of a wonderful, magnificent, adventurous and enduring faith journey with our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.' Acts 2:38-39



Alan Leung
Director of Connections
Island ECC

YOUTH BAPTISM • 2025

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I BAPTISM • HONG KONG

ADRIAN LIN

Hello! I'm Adrian, and I was born into a Christian family. I have been attending church since I was an infant. With my autism, I was enrolled in the Marvel Program and faced several difficulties growing up at my church. But my Marvel buddies helped me throughout my journey, from entering Kids Club when I moved to preteen, and now I attend Island Youth independently. Jesus was helpful, and what I learned throughout my years at Kids Club was that Jesus always loves me.

God also helped me a lot in my school life. I learned several lessons from the story of David and Goliath, and I was able to challenge myself through those demanding situations. For example, when I first entered school, I didn't know how to communicate with my friends properly, complete my homework, or deal with loud sounds. I faced many challenges throughout my life, but God gave me all my tutors, therapists, and teachers as a gift to help me.

My parents helped me become more of a Christian by knowing what is right and wrong. I learned from my parents that making good choices will help Jesus feel happier. Reading John 3:16, I knew that God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Going to church impacted my life a lot. I learned a lot from the bible by reading different bible verses, such as Matthew 6:33-34, which says, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." I learned that I should focus on what is happening right now and not worry about what will happen in the future.

I grew more keen on the bible when I attended Island Youth. Looking at various bible verses builds my mind on knowing more about who Jesus is. I would never forget to say the proclamations at the end of the service (ie.

"Jesus has died, Jesus is risen, and Jesus will come again.") Since 2021, making friends at Island Youth, attending events such as Summer Camp, Christmas Parties, and Sunday Fundays, have impacted my life. I became more of an independent young man with all those strengths. I also invited my friends from school to church because I want to share God with my friends.

While I'm still learning about Christianity, developing my faith, and growing my relationship with God daily, I've recognised that I can entirely trust Jesus with my heart and wish to declare and accept Him as my Lord and Savior publicly. I continue to get closer to God through worship, attending church, reading the Bible, and praying. And even during uncertain and doubtful times, I will remain faithful to Christ, love God, and trust in his unfailing power. Most importantly, I will continue to seek comfort and support from God through His grace in hardships and troubling moments and surrender my control into His mighty hands, as I know Jesus is my salvation.

I cannot wait to be baptised and live with Jesus as my Lord and Savior. It will be challenging to live like Jesus, but with the power of the Holy Spirit, I will try my best.

Seek first His kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will also be given to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6:33-34

I CAN ENTIRELY TRUST JESUS WITH MY HEART AND WISH TO DECLARE AND ACCEPT HIM AS MY LORD AND SAVIOR PUBLICLY.



AMBER TAN

Hi! I'm Amber and I'm 14 years old. Although I grew up in a religious family, I didn't honestly believe in God until about a year ago, when I witnessed His miracles firsthand. Growing up, I had always tried to "rebel" by acting 'woke' and mocking what I was taught by my family since my youth, being immature and stupid.

Eventually, I realised something was missing - but I didn't know what. I tried being more organised, reading more books, hanging out with my friends more often, but nothing could fill the void. This emptiness got to a point where I was so unfulfilled with my life that I started abandoning my old qualms and experimenting with religion. Still, I never called myself a Christian until my first encounter with Jesus. I had had a rough few days and felt so terrified and discontent with my life that for the first time in my life, I prayed, and I prayed with the intent not just to satisfy my family, but to find God, and talk to him. That night, I asked God to please just send me someone I could talk to, either that or have me just not wake up the following morning. My friend immediately texted me "hi" the second prayer ended. And I knew in my heart that God was a miracle worker and He'd saved me, and that I would have faith in Him for the rest of my life.

After that day, I started trying to get into the whole "Christianity thing", and I felt that little hole in my heart close up. In the past, when scrolling through Instagram and seeing this same feeling being described, I thought they were mad ravings from fanatics and mentally unwell, pretending they felt something so that they'd be "special". How wrong I was. Every night, after I prayed and poured my heart out, I would feel such ease, as if all my worries were gone. After I studied my bible, I would experience two hours of euphoria and happiness. After spending time with God, everything would be well.

GOD WAS A MIRACLE WORKER AND HE'D SAVED ME

I want to be baptised because I think it could be the final (well, not final but close to) step in building a relationship with God, where I can grow under His protection, become a better person, and, hopefully, lead others to be saved by Him. One day in the future, I'll graduate with a job and a family, which sometimes scares me. But I know that God will be with me through it all, and that's all that matters in the long run. That's why I want to lock in this relationship and promise myself to God for the rest of my life.

I can do all this through Him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

God bless!



AVA CHAN

I was born into a non-Christian family, so I was first introduced to God through my helper as a young toddler. She shared bible stories with my twin brother and me, and even taught me how to pray. But because my family wasn't Christian, there wasn't anyone to nurture my relationship with God and teach me more about who Jesus was, so as I got older, I forgot about God, and also heard a lot of negative perceptions about Christianity.

I continued with my way of life without God, and in grade 10 of high school, I started to become an anxious and indecisive person when it came to friendships, academics, and leadership, and I would put a lot of pressure on myself. Later in the year, I met a friend who was a Christian. Initially, I didn't know they were a Christian; I thought they were kind, calm, and chill. I didn't understand this sense of peace they seemed to have, and it intrigued me. This same person invited me to church, and I began to meet other people with the same chill vibe, and I was interested in the sermons and the different series they talked about, and I started to see the world in a different light and how 'weird' it was. As I became more invested in attending church and learning about God, I started praying again. I didn't have a bible, so I downloaded the bible app, and I began to do different bible plans, with one of them called *Putting an X Through Anxiety*. However, coming to church was not always an easy task. My attempts to become closer to God through church were not well-received at home because it departed from my family's traditional Buddhist values.



Eventually, coming to church became a safe space for me where my shoulders and chest felt lighter, Friday nights as a place I could leave my anxieties behind, and this helped me understand the power of God and His word. By being introduced to a community filled with God's love, it dramatically changed my views and my life. By learning more about Jesus and developing a relationship with Him through prayer, my mindset started to change. My anxiety gradually disappeared, and I also became more confident and decisive in my actions. I found that we're not meant to navigate life's challenges alone, that I can trust in God's strength and guidance, and cast my anxieties upon Him.

I wanted to share this new found peace and joy with my family, and now my twin brother and mom come to church with me every week. I've been able to see my mom learn more about the bible and develop a relationship with Jesus, and how that has been able to guide us through the many family obstacles we face; and though my brother has autism, I've also been able to see God speak to him in many different ways. I've seen him grow in how he can express himself through how he engages with worship music, and develop more self-initiative by participating in church activities on Sunday. After the first few times we went to church, he came home and started doing completely new activities, went outside his routine, and came up with out-of-the-ordinary ideas and comments. I feel that God can speak with him in a way he understands, where God has helped him grow and introduced him to another place of joy at church.

God gives me peace and reassurance. I can find comfort in His unchanging presence, knowing He is with me in every circumstance. God has given us the strength to overcome these difficulties and adapt, primarily through the recent challenges my mom, brother, and I have faced. God has brought me so much peace amidst all this chaos and a view on forgiveness that I wouldn't have had if it were not for coming to church and understanding God's word. I'm beyond blessed for all the amazing friendships I've found at church and the people God has placed in my life. I can't wait to grow and deepen my faith.

I CAN FIND COMFORT IN HIS UNCHANGING PRESENCE,
KNOWING HE IS WITH ME IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE.

AYLA YAHYAGIL

I have been incredibly blessed to have what might be considered an ‘uneventful testimony.’ There are no dramatic plot twists or sudden life-changing events – just steady, continuous growth in my faith. I accepted Jesus when I was five years old. The love of Jesus overflows from my family and parents. Our family is centered around Christ; words cannot describe how much God has blessed me.

I had a simple (yet admirable) childlike faith as a child. As I grew up, I wanted to deepen my spiritual maturity, and I realized that seeking God required more than just wishing for an easy path. I often wondered, “Why doesn’t God speak to me like He speaks to others?” The thing is, God hears His children, and He did answer that question. God speaks to us not in the ways we expect but in ways that require us to seek Him. He wants us to intentionally seek and choose Him. He knows that if everyone accepted Jesus, we would all be saved, but then we wouldn’t have a choice, which wouldn’t be true love. He gives us an option – that’s how much He loves us.

As I began to understand these things, one of the struggles that arose was surrendering. I must surrender my hopes and desires to Him, but how do you let go of something you genuinely want? Do you stop wanting it? True surrender requires sacrifice. It requires letting go and trusting God. We must choose between God and the world. Choosing God means the world might look at you scornfully. Choosing God means you might be laughed at – even by some people closest to you. But choosing God is what brings true joy.

John 15:19 says, “If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.”



IT’S NOT ABOUT MY WORTHINESS OR PERFECTION BUT ABOUT HIS MERCY.

It’s human to tirelessly chase after futile things, but once we achieve them, it doesn’t satisfy and leaves us wanting more. Ecclesiastes 2:11 says, “Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind.” The solution to this is simple: chase God! John 4:14 says, “Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.”

Looking back on my journey, I realize I didn’t fully understand the significance of baptism when I was younger. When I was eight, my older brother, who was ten, got baptized. I remember feeling as if I would need to be baptized as well, but I told myself I wasn’t good enough. Before I could, I needed to reach a certain level of faith or perfection. However, I have now realized that I will never get to that stage of perfection – the truth is, no one ever will. It’s not about my worthiness or perfection but about His mercy.

God has been present in every step of my life. He gave His life for me, and as I prepare to be baptized, I am publicly declaring that I give my life to Him. My life no longer belongs to me – I belong to Christ.

You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

CARLEB CHAN

I have attended church for as long as I can remember. From a young age, I had so many Christians around me that I began to assume everyone was a Christian. As I grew up, my parents sent me to a Christian school where there were Bible lessons. As my faith grew at school and in my old church, I never felt a deeper personal connection to God. Even though Christians almost always surrounded me, it always felt like there was a gap between us. As I moved through my school years, I participated in church activities, youth groups, and Bible studies. I learned about the stories of faith, the teachings of Jesus, and the importance of community, yet I often longed for something more. The Bible felt like it was just another textbook at school. There was a disconnect between my accumulated knowledge and the heartfelt relationship I yearned for with God. I don't think I ever realized how important a community of Christ followers was to me until I left and transferred to a new school. However, this was also the start of a much more personal journey with Jesus.

When I transferred to my new school, I felt a challenging sense of isolation. I missed the close-knit community I had and yearned for a sense of connection. I reflected on my beliefs and relationship with Christ in this moment of solitude. I began to read the Bible not as a school assignment but out of my curiosity about God's teachings. Reflecting on my journey with Christ, I realized that God had been by my side throughout my life, and many of my challenges had always been answered when I needed them.

An example is when I was just starting on my *Eagle Rank*, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America. The *Eagle Rank* required a scout to do a service project, and for a long time, I could not find a beneficiary for my project. After a morning prayer, I went to lunch with one of my mom's Bible Study friends. My mom's friend gave me a newsletter about a Christian orphanage for disabled children. When I contacted the orphanage, they were thrilled to accept my



I GRAPPLE WITH THE WAYS OF THE WORLD, I BELIEVE THAT THROUGH JESUS, WE ARE MADE WHOLE ONCE AGAIN.

proposal for a service project. Working with them not only helped me fulfill my *Eagle Rank* requirements but also opened my eyes to the joy of serving others. This experience was a testament to how God can place opportunities in our path when we seek Him earnestly.

After this, I began to take my relationship with Him more seriously. I found other Christian friends and started forming meaningful relationships with others eager to share their faith journeys. Celebrating each other's victories and supporting one another in struggles fostered an environment where I no longer felt isolated but instead embraced.

Today, I stand to be baptized to signify a new step in my relationship with God. I am ready to commit my life to Him, and although I grapple with the ways of the world, I believe that through Jesus, we are made whole once again. As humans, we will inevitably sin. While I acknowledge that I am imperfect, I will still try to serve the Lord and His people. I want to be known not only as a believer but as an active participant in the body of Christ, sharing His love and grace with others. I am excited about this new chapter of my life, where I hope to deepen my faith, serve my community, and walk alongside fellow believers who inspire me to stay faithful to my calling.

HANNAH GREYLING

Since I was born, I've had a relationship with God. Growing up in a Christian family, my parents read the Bible to my brother and me each night. I always saw Jesus as the fifth member of our family. While my faith never faded, it also didn't grow much. Between the ages of 10 and 13, I struggled with being part of a community. I had my family, but I longed for something beyond that.

When I was 10, we lived in a small coastal town in South Africa for a few months while doing online school in China due to the pandemic. I found it challenging to connect with the other kids; they spent lunch with friends at school while I was home. I felt like an outsider, unwanted and unseen. One day, my parents informed us that their teaching contracts in China were cancelled due to China's pandemic travel restrictions. Still, within a week, God miraculously provided a school called CAIS. But this meant leaving all my friends and family behind and starting over in a big city in Asia.

At CAIS, I still felt out of place. In grades 5 and 6, I faced bullying and exclusion. In grade 7, I began to make friends; one even expressed interest in being Christian. I felt seen and wanted, but soon realized these friends were not what I thought. I was confronted with their actual behaviours and almost fell into despair. My faith prevented me from fitting in, and in an instant, I lost most of my friends and my sense of community.

Feeling lost, I came across a video that quoted 2 Kings 20:5, "I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you."



I broke down before God as I read this and cried out to Him. While I struggled to find community, I felt reassured that God saw and heard me.

At the start of grade 8, I attended a retreat with my school's fellowship group. At that time, I found it difficult to worship openly, fearing judgment from others. But during the retreat, a song called "Mountaintops" reminded me of God's work. I knelt before God and felt His presence, realizing I could worship freely. That was the moment I dedicated my life to Christ.

Later that night, a teacher prayed for my friend and unexpectedly included me in her prayer. She used the word "liberation," which means to be free. In that moment, I recognized the Holy Spirit's work. After dedicating myself to God, I finally connected to my church community. I even saw how my brother found his place. I believe the next step in my relationship with Christ is publicly proclaiming my faith and inviting others to hold me accountable to God's standards.

I KNELT BEFORE GOD AND FELT HIS PRESENCE,
REALIZING I COULD WORSHIP FREELY.

JACOB LIM

I grew up in a Christian family, where my mom often read the Bible with me, and my dad served in worship ministry. As a child, I attended a kids' club at Island ECC, but to be honest, I found church boring because I didn't truly understand who God was. As I entered my teenage years, I drifted away from my faith and focused more on sports.

At nine, cricket became a massive part of my life. By the time I was eleven, my dedication was unwavering. I worked hard and became one of the top players in my age group in Hong Kong. This commitment meant giving up church completely for matches and training. Over the years, I received many awards and recognitions, including a selection for the Hong Kong U16 trials as a reserve player. Although it was an honor, it also brought a heavy burden.

As I navigated this pressure, I found myself holding incredibly high standards. I constantly compared myself to other players in Hong Kong, ultimately leading to a decline in my performance and a struggle to keep up with the competition.

During moments of desperation, I turned to prayer, asking God to restore my success before each game. Yet often, my prayers went unanswered, leading me to question Him. I wondered, "Why aren't you answering my prayers?" In that moment, instead of leaning

on God, I convinced myself that I could handle everything independently. I thought I didn't need Him anymore. As I chased my desires, my life began to spiral downward; I felt lost, insecure, and worthless, as if everything was falling apart.

One night, overwhelmed by negative thoughts and tears, I lay in bed. In that moment, I felt God calling me back to church. Listening to that gentle whisper, I returned to Island ECC, where I joined Island Youth. Walking through those doors again felt like coming home; the warmth of the people, the youth leaders, and the pastors was incredibly welcoming.

Initially, I joined Island Youth to make friends and connect with others. However, my relationship with God began to change when my friends encouraged me to pray, read the Bible, and learn more about Him.

One day, while alone in West Kowloon with my Bible in hand, I looked around at God's beautiful creation — the views, the mountains, the buildings, the sea, and the clouds — and I felt a profound sense of relief, joy, and peace. The gentle wind seemed calming, and I began to speak to God as if He were my closest friend.

Gradually, my anxieties and worries started to fade. I began to understand the importance of having a relationship with God, learning to love one another, forgive, and be humble. As I grew closer to Him, I wanted to serve and honor Him by inviting my friends to church and sharing God's love with those around me.

A verse that resonates deeply with me is Proverbs 27:17: "Iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." This reminds me to love, forgive, and share each other's burdens while encouraging one another.

Through my journey, I have understood the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for me. He loved and saved me when I was at my lowest. I discovered He would never give up on me; Jesus always pursues me, no matter my challenges.

As human beings, none of us is perfect. We all make mistakes and struggle with sin. Nevertheless, my relationship with God has empowered me to break free from bad habits and develop a positive mindset.

Today, I have the privilege of serving on the youth worship team. God has guided me to this role and blessed me with the ability to lead worship, which deepens my connection to Jesus through music. Each time I stand to sing, I reflect on how far I've come and how God has transformed my life.

I thank the Lord, my God, my Savior, and my friend for His goodness, and I am committed to following Him all the days of my life.

EACH TIME I STAND TO
SING, I REFLECT ON
HOW FAR I'VE COME
AND HOW GOD HAS
TRANSFORMED MY LIFE.



JOHN CHAN

Growing up in church, I had always been surrounded by the word of God, and being raised in a Christian family, I was able to deepen my knowledge of many Bible stories and lessons from a young age. As a child, I enjoyed reading my children's Bible, eventually becoming able to recite some of the stories word for word to my parents during bedtime. From age 4, I also started attending the Island ECC kids club, meeting other kids like me, many of whom I am still friends with.

I attended church each Sunday, constantly being reminded of Jesus's death on the cross, and how He has paid for our sins, learning more and more of how to treat others, for example, how to be patient, forgive, and love others. But although these lessons shaped me into the person I am today, I don't think that at the time I grasped the true meaning and the beauty of the gift God has given us, Jesus's sacrifice.

In terms of school life, I went to an international school with very few Christian friends. Due to the idea that none of my classmates shared my faith, it was something that I rarely talked about, and did not feel like sharing for fear of being judged or poorly understood. Overall, I think it was this lack of passion about being a Christian that prevented me from exploring and strengthening my faith further.

So, how did I come to appreciate the cross? Just before the start of Year 12, I made a new friend; someone who was joining my school, was also a Christian, and would go to the same church I had attended all my life. Although I hadn't prayed explicitly for this, God was able to provide me with something I didn't even know I needed at the time, and afterwards I realised that it had to have been the work of God.



THE IDEA THAT GOD HUMBLLED HIMSELF, BECAME HUMAN, AND PAID FOR THE SIN OF THE WORLD... ALL BECAUSE HE LOVES US, TOUCHED MY SOUL.

Being able to talk more about the Bible and being a Christian daily did help to strengthen my faith, but what helped most of all was when a couple of friends from Friday night small groups came up with an idea to try and share the gospel with people from our school who may have never heard of Jesus before. My friend from school and I also took on this challenge, setting a goal of trying to share with at least one person each week. Through this, I decided to consolidate my knowledge on what I was talking about to avoid spreading misinformation. I began looking more into online videos about gospel sharing and within the bible. Through this exploration journey, I fully appreciated the extent of God's sacrifice.

The idea that God humbled himself, became human, and paid for the sin of the world, was beaten and killed despite doing no wrong, all because he loves us, touched my soul. Moreover, the more I explored, the more I found evidence that Jesus Christ is the one true God, and this solidified my belief that what I will follow for the rest of my life is true.

For the past 2 years, I have become a more devoted Christian, no longer afraid to share my beliefs with those who ask about it, and with those I want to see in heaven, too, like my closest friends. God has also helped me in my day-to-day life, especially during stressful times such as deciding my future path; what has comforted me has been being reassured that God has all things under control, and that His will will be done. "Try your best, no regrets, and God will do the rest", is what my parents like to say.

I know I am not perfect, as none of us can be. I know we have all fallen short of the glory of God, and that the wages of our sin is death, but I am so glad that I have found Jesus, who gives me hope because all things are in His hands.

LUCAS CHAN

I was born into a Christian family, so naturally, I went to church. I didn't think much about Jesus and the Christian faith when I was younger. Yes, I did know that Jesus died for my sins, and I was familiar with all the Bible stories from church, but I was still stuck on the surface.

Eventually, I started looking deeper. Soon enough, I came across some ideas in C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*. Even without the Bible, our logical thinking can prove that an all-powerful being created this world. It also shows why other religions have some flaws and why the story in the Bible is true. This made me think even deeper. I thought back to a well-known story, the Tower of Babel. In this story, the descendants of Noah decided to build a tower up to the heavens. Since I was young, I have been interested and intrigued by aerospace and spaceflight. This made me question, "What does God have to say about spaceflight? Instead of building towers to reach the stars, we built towers that fly us to space." With the help of other trusted Christians, I concluded that it is all about motive. The descendants of Noah wanted to reach the stars to show that they were just as good as God. However, today, we fly to space to discover his creation and the beauty of space. Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Since God created the heavens, He wants us to explore them and admire their beauty.

Initially, I thought my faith and my interest in aero/astro were separate. However, as I learned more about Christianity, I realised they are interconnected. My interest was originally because I like aero/astro, but now, my interest is driven by my desire to discover God's creation. My interest in aerospace was given to me by God.



I REALIZED THE FULL GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION. JESUS LAID DOWN HIS LIFE AS GOD ... AND DIE FOR THE PEOPLE... IN THIS REVELATION, MY FAITH GREW DEEPER, AND I BELIEVE MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED.

Looking back, I realized the full gravity of the situation. Jesus laid down His life as God and ruler of everything, to come down to a corrupted earth, be rejected by the people, have all of sin placed on him, and die for the people. Jesus also did this while being separated from the Father, which has never happened before. In this revelation, my faith grew deeper, and I believe my relationship with God has been strengthened.

Now you may wonder, "Why did I choose to get baptized now?" I don't think I chose this opportunity; God decided for me. Initially, I had a rowing race on the Sunday that the baptism opportunity showed up. But then, the race got postponed due to weather issues & I couldn't come to church. I felt like God allowed me to get baptized, and I took it.

By getting baptized, I can ground myself in my faith and start looking outward to share Christ. Jesus gave me a new perspective on the world. I strive to help others at all times. I try to follow Jesus' words of treating my neighbour as myself. I hope I can help others meet Jesus and accept this new perspective.

MATTHEW GREYLING

My life has been a constant journey with God, an evolving relationship that has shaped who I am. Since I was born, I was dedicated to God, and His presence has been a steadfast force in my life. I've witnessed Him at work in mission fields and cities, each setting offering its own revelations of His love and power. More than ever, I can see His fingerprints on every part of my story. I often describe my walk with God as resembling the ups and downs of the stock market, moments of immense joy and closeness, and times of struggle and searching. But today, I find myself at the most stable and intimate place I've ever been with Him.

One of the most transformative experiences in my faith journey occurred during a recent mission trip to Chiang Mai with my brothers and sisters from church. Initially, I looked forward to the trip as an opportunity to bond with friends and enjoy a new adventure. However, from the first day, it became clear that God had much bigger plans for me. As the trip unfolded, so did the questions that began stirring in my heart, questions that I hadn't deeply considered before: What is my purpose in life to glorify God? Who does He want me to become? What does He want me to do with the life He has given me?

These questions stayed with me as we traveled from the bustling streets of Chiang Mai to the quiet, picturesque Karen Village. Along the way, I began to sense God's work in the details around me. The mountains felt familiar, as if they carried echoes of my past. When my sister called out "Kwasabisabantu" from the truck ahead, a reference to the mission station where we grew up, it was as though God was confirming His presence in my journey. That moment was more than nostalgic; it was deeply spiritual. I felt the weight of

God's hand on my life and His reassurance that I was exactly where He wanted me to be.

That night, I had a conversation with Jake that I'll never forget. Without knowing the questions I was carrying, Jake spoke words that felt like direct answers from God. Through him, God was talking to me. Overwhelmed by this, I sought solitude. I found a quiet spot in the village, lay down, and gazed at the stars. In that sacred space, I cried out to God with all my heart, asking: What do



WHAT IS MY PURPOSE IN LIFE TO GLORIFY GOD? WHO DOES HE WANT ME TO BECOME?

You want me to become? Who do you want me to be? What is my purpose in serving you? Tears flowed as I poured out everything before Him, seeking His guidance with a raw and desperate longing.

What I experienced next was indescribable peace, a peace that wrapped around me like a warm embrace. I didn't have all the answers, but I knew God was near, and He was leading me. I walked away from that moment with a renewed willingness to serve and a deeper understanding that I wasn't there just to serve others but also to let God work within me.

Reflecting on the entire trip, I see how God moved in the lives of everyone who participated. His grace extended to the people we served and each of us who went out to serve. It's a humbling reminder that when we give our time and hearts to His work, He blesses us in ways we can't imagine.

This journey has brought me to a pivotal decision: publicly proclaim my faith through baptism. Baptism, for me, is a declaration of surrender, a bold and joyful step to affirm that I belong to Christ. It's also a commitment to live a life that reflects His love and grace and to be held accountable by my community of faith. This outward act expresses the inward transformation that God has been working in me. Through baptism, I'm choosing to honor Him, follow Him, and continue seeking His purpose for my life with all my heart.

God's faithfulness has carried me through every season of life through the highs, the lows, and everything in between. I step forward into this new chapter with hope, gratitude, and a deep desire to glorify Him in all that I do.

II BAPTISM • HONG KONG

MATTHEW WONG

I used to be afraid of talking to God.

Growing up, I was far from an introvert. I loved to talk! I would chatter in the taxi, at the dining table, and even during class. I was so good at it that my teachers often asked me to step outside for a chat – what a privilege! Yet, despite being a chatterbox from Monday to Saturday, I always found myself silent during Sunday school.

I rarely answered questions or raised my hand when the Sunday school volunteer asked for prayer requests, let alone volunteered to pray for the group. Nervousness and fear of judgment held me back, making it difficult to express my internal thoughts, not just at church, but everywhere I went, from social events to family gatherings. Instead of seeking help, I bottled up my inner stresses, sorrows, and insecurities, suffering in silence. This continued into my adolescent years, where even the simplest concerns felt too challenging to articulate. I often lied to my parents and loved ones about how I was feeling just to avoid their questions. When faced with a problem, I would bury my head in the sand like an ostrich and pretend it didn't exist. If something went wrong, I'd hide it by laughing and smiling.

This habit extended to my relationship with God as well. If I found it hard to be honest and open up to my earthly parents, how could I possibly do the same with my heavenly Father, whom I've never seen with my own eyes? Despite attending church for years and surrounded by strong Christians, I struggled to connect with God personally. I felt isolated in my faith, as if I had to fight my battles alone. I was lonely and feeling unfulfilled. I believed I wasn't worthy of God's love and care, thinking that my trivial earthly matters wouldn't concern Him. As my stresses grew, so did my insecurities. I started to run away from God, often skipping church and small groups on Friday nights. I would spend extended periods in the bathroom or arrive late, making excuses about having another appointment. I had just been walking around the block, trying to avoid facing God.



IT ELATED ME TO KNOW THAT GOD, MY SAVIOUR,
WANTED A RELATIONSHIP WITH ME AND
ALWAYS LOOKED OUT FOR ME, EVEN WHEN
I WAS RUNNING AWAY FROM HIM.

However, over the past few months, I saw God revealing Himself to me unexpectedly. People would come forward to pray for me, seemingly aware of my struggles, even though I hadn't shared anything with them. I heard sermons and testimonies that felt perfectly tailored to my challenges. It was as if God was actively speaking to me, addressing the questions and troubles I had buried deep within, without me needing to voice them. Once, when I realised there was a connection, I burst out laughing and couldn't stop. An overwhelming sense of joy washed over me, cleansing away any worries and struggles I had been carrying. Through this journey, I realised that my life has no greater joy than a relationship with God. I learned that I do not have to be afraid of being nervous to talk to God about my problems, as God's love for me is non-judgmental and unconditional. It elated me to know that God, my Saviour, wanted a relationship with me and always looked out for me, even when I was running away from Him. Even though I wasn't speaking, God listened to the depths of my heart, and loves me unconditionally.

I'm not entirely transparent and still tend to keep my burdens to myself. My insecurities and struggles haven't entirely faded, but knowing that I can cast my anxieties onto God brings me comfort. Realising that God is always with me despite my adversity is a relief. I don't have to bear my burdens alone; I can lean strongly on my faith and trust that God will guide me to where I am meant to be. Now, I am dedicating the rest of my life to Christ, my Saviour, who sacrificed Himself for my sins, and I strive to live a life that honors and praises Him. Although the future is uncertain, I rest easy knowing that my life is in His hands and that I am not alone.

NAOMI CHOW

Growing up in a Christian household, I learned about God at a tender age. My mother would read Bible stories and devotional books with me and my brother, accompanied by Cantonese hymns to sing us to sleep. I have always known who Jesus is, all His miracles, and most importantly, the unconditional love He gave us.

Even though I was taught that He loves me so, I can still doubt my worth and whether God is working in my life, especially when I became a teenager.

I stopped attending church services at my old church during the pandemic. Not only did I get disconnected from my church community, but also from God. Talking about Christianity was something I would avoid, as I was afraid that it would stop me from fitting into the 'cool kids' group. My source of satisfaction also drifted to academics and the achievements I could garner. Even though I have been making improvements occasionally, the fierce competition with my peers and the desire to become the top at a local school got the best of me. I would find myself in the abyss of frustration every time I received my report cards. Moreover, I got overwhelmed with my relationships with friends. There was always a voice in my head, questioning whether my personality or character was why I could not make friends with the people I wanted to.

It was around this time that my parents brought me to Island Youth. I can still vividly remember meeting a few seniors in high school. Apart from the warm welcome and friendly smiles they offered, what stood out the most was their confidence and the sense of security in themselves. Despite facing public exams and university applications, their smiles remained. This made me ponder, 'How can they still feel content despite all the stress?'



As I dive back into reading the Bible and attending services, I get closer and closer to God's embrace. God has never left my side and used miraculous ways to bring me back to Him. Engaging with different amazing people and witnessing God's extraordinary transformation in their lives strengthened my confidence and faith in God. I started reading His word more seriously and building my true identity in Him. During the Mission Trip to Chiang Mai in 2024, I was blessed to share the gospel with the kids and even share my testimony with a girl experiencing similar stressful moments as I did. As I had always kept my faith to myself, sharing my testimony in front of people was undoubtedly new. So I prayed to God for peace and the right words to say. To my surprise, my testimony resonated with the girl, who decided to turn to God at that moment. This was also a powerful experience, as I could fully feel God's presence. Hearing and answering God's calling made me realize His greater plans in my life and that my actions and words can have tremendous impacts on others' lives. God listens, and He answers. His grace is sufficient; I do not have to worry about my weakness. I no longer have to be anxious.

As I embark on my last few months of high school, I sometimes still feel the stress on my shoulders, but I know that I am not alone. "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" Joshua 1:9.

Despite my flaws, incompleteness, and weaknesses, He is with me. His goodness never runs out.

I am standing in front of everyone today, proclaiming that I will surrender my life to Jesus. I can rest assured, though the future remains unknown, He has grand plans to prosper and not to harm me. His rod and His staff comfort me. He is the lamp to my feet as I walk through life every step of my way.

**HIS GRACE IS
SUFFICIENT; I DO NOT
HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT
MY WEAKNESS. I NO
LONGER HAVE TO BE
ANXIOUS.**

PHEONY CHAU

Hi, my name is Pheony Chau, and I've been a Christian since childhood. As a kid, I went to a Christian primary school and went to church on Sundays, and I was even in the church kids' serving team. I only joined before because I thought it was fun and had some extra time to spare. I always knew that Jesus existed, died for us, and is our Saviour. I always thought 'Christianity' was a religion, and that was probably it, nothing special at all.

But when I graduated from primary school, I started drifting away from Christ, and slowly, I found myself in a toxic environment. I was bullied and manipulated by people in my past school, and because of that, it led to me having depression and anxiety, and I had to stop going to school because of how bad it was, and eventually, I dropped out of that school. During those few years away from Christ, I thought that life had no meaning to me at all, everything was so dark, and I just felt so lost, but the dropping out of school part was my breaking point. I questioned God and I asked. "Why God? Why are You doing this to me? Didn't You say I was Your child, so just why are You doing this to me? Don't You love me?" And from then on, I lost hope in Christ. I also started to lose my appetite; I only ate one meal a day, and that's it; life was just not great for me.

I met a friend online and went to that school a few months later. Things were then starting to get better, I started having everyday eating habits again and had "friends," well, that's what I thought until last November. I discovered they were not my friends, but just some people who talked behind my back, and then I started relapsing into the same state again. I just couldn't understand why God was doing this to me again, cause that's just crazy, it's like He took my friends away from me two times in a row in just one year?



Later on there's this one friend that started bringing me to the youth group in church after me venting to him about my problems and honestly my first impression of the youth group was "Is this church? Am I even in the right place?" Lots and lots of questions because it was just so different from the church that I used to go to. Everyone was really extroverted and somewhat crazy in a good way, of course, and that was something that I did not expect from church, cause in my past church, we just sat there and listened and prayed, which was it.

A month or two after that, I also started attending church on Sundays and found myself knowing God all over again. I found out that Christianity is not a religion, but it is a relationship with God Himself, and I figured out why He pulled me out of my past friend groups at that time. Cause if I stayed longer in those groups, I would've gotten myself poorly hurt both mentally and physically, so I'm just so grateful for everything that He has done for me. He was helping me through in so many situations that I didn't even know that He was; He was there for me when I thought He abandoned me, and that just proves how much God loves us. Cause how can someone be so loving when you doubted Him that bad? He sacrificed himself so that we can be saved, set free, and have a new life, and I think that is the greatest thing anyone can do, and I just can't thank Him enough for everything He has done for me.

I FOUND OUT THAT CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A RELIGION,
BUT IT IS A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD HIMSELF

14 BAPTISM • HONG KONG

RICHARD GAO

Before I came to Christ, I was dead. Figuratively and literally. I felt I had no purpose, so my mind wandered from one idol to another. Eventually, I became so numb I took a blade to my arm because I thought the pain could part the void. Life felt hopeless, and I was lost. One sunny afternoon, I put on “Sunny Afternoon” by the Kinks and drank a lethal dose of iodine tincture. I thought that would be the end of my story.

But it wasn’t. The next morning, as I lay on a hospital bed in the A&E ward at Queen Mary, a wave of peace and relief washed over me. I had been saved, and at that moment, I realized, thank God in every sense of the phrase.

That is how I came to Christ. He gave me new life, both physically and spiritually. While I’ve made peace with the person I was before, I am no longer that person. Being saved by Christ brings about changes in people – I am no longer anxious, and I haven’t had a depressive episode in years. I am much more confident. My outlook on life has drastically changed for the better. And obviously, I haven’t tried to end my life since. I am reminded of 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!”

And that is one of the great mysteries revealed to us – resurrection. I like to think that Jesus has resurrected me from the dead and snatched me from the gates of hell. His power and love are so immense that the devil has no say in His presence. And on that hospital bed, I felt loved; it was deeper than any romantic or familial connection I had ever known.

So, for me, baptism was an exceedingly easy decision. I would be cheating myself and God by remaining unbaptized. How could I deny the love of God, who saved me from death, both spiritual and physical?

By His mercy, I was saved. By His grace, I was granted new life. I’ll testify to His kingdom, power, and glory for that. Amen.

HOW COULD I DENY
THE LOVE OF GOD,
WHO SAVED ME
FROM DEATH, BOTH
SPIRITUAL AND
PHYSICAL?



SAMUEL CAVE

I grew up in a Christian household, and I was always told that God loved me no matter what, but I didn't think about this that much, why would I? My parents and brother loved me, and I had friends who loved me. What did it matter if someone I had never met loved me? So, I didn't think about this at all, and I didn't see the need for God or His love or Him at all. Because of this, I became more and more distant from God by the day. Over time, I walked further away on the wrong path that led away from God. My sin grew, and I became shackled to the bad lifestyle that didn't have God in it.

But last year I started to think about what I was doing, and ask questions about God: "Is He there? What things that I was doing count as sin? Does He love me ideally?" I had been thinking about these questions for a while, and I was desperate for answers but couldn't find them anywhere, and fell further into sin. I thought that this sin was the only thing that could make me feel happy and that I needed to do it to feel right or to feel good about myself.

One day, someone talked to me about this and they told me that God didn't want me to live this lifestyle. After they said this, I could feel God telling me what I was doing wasn't right and that I needed to change. Even though I thought there was no way He could still love me after everything I had done, He showed me that He still loved me perfectly and that He always will. When God told me this, I felt the Holy Spirit convict me, and I felt God telling me that He is there, loves me perfectly, and that I needed to change my ways. This made me feel an overwhelming love for God that could only be given by Him. Since that first encounter with Him, I started to read the Bible regularly, pray regularly, and I began to change my lifestyle with God so that I could be closer to Him, because of this realization that I needed Him in my life and that He was the thing that I was desperately searching for.

This was the beginning of my walk with Christ. But I'm not perfect, and I still sin and have bad habits that try to make me stray from God, but I know that no matter what I do, God will always love and forgive me. Even though I still sin and am not perfect, I am trying to become a more righteous person through the power of God. Throughout this journey, I have recognized that Jesus is the only way to heaven and that it is crucial to share the good news with others so they can come to Him and become Christians. I have also recognized that God can do anything and that no matter what I pray for, He can do it, no matter how big or small the request is. Because of all these things, I have decided to be baptised today to declare my faith in the Trinity. I would also like to thank all the people who have helped me along this journey and the wise teachers who have helped me in all situations.

I THOUGHT THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD STILL
LOVE ME AFTER EVERYTHING I HAD DONE,
HE SHOWED ME THAT HE STILL LOVED ME PERFECTLY
AND THAT HE ALWAYS WILL.



16 BAPTISM • HONG KONG

SAMUEL SIU

Hello, everyone! My name is Samuel, and I am 13 years old. I was born in the United States but moved to Hong Kong when I was around 5. Today, I would like to tell you about my experience and why I am being baptized. Growing up in another country was thrilling as well as challenging. I had to learn a new language and how to make new friends. In all of this, my family also educated me about belief in God and the importance of believing in Him. They instilled values like being kind, compassionate, and loving in me. As I grew older, I continued to learn about my beliefs. Attending church in Hong Kong has been a significant part of my life. I have also been introduced to many great individuals who have made me understand Jesus' teachings better and how His love can guide us daily. It is comforting to know that God is with me wherever I am.

IT IS COMFORTING TO KNOW THAT GOD IS WITH ME
WHEREVER I AM.



TAIA LOGAN

Before I found Christ, everything felt unclear to me. Despite believing in God during my primary school life, I didn't know Him. As a teen, I became obsessed with things that only brought me temporary satisfaction. I constantly disregarded those I cared about because it made me feel superior; I was easily aggravated, completely lost, and could only put effort into something if it made me feel fulfilled. Soon enough, I ended up in a puddle of insecurity and instability, and I let it take over me. My search for guidance through counselling, addictions, trust in people, or trying to believe that my then fragile self could save me, led nowhere. After years of searching for my identity in things that only made me more confused, I had given up all hope.

This was until a little over a year ago, when I entered one of the lowest points of my teenage years. A friend in my community had asked me to come to church with her one Sunday to see how it would go for me. I had nothing else to lose, so I woke up bright and early that Sunday and left for church. It was a small Catholic church in the neighbourhood, just two floors filled with Filipino families. Ultimately, I felt nothing special after leaving church that day, but I decided to keep going in hopes that it would help me get out of the situation I was in then. After about 6 months of my attending this church, it was mentioned that a Christian teen retreat would be held in a couple of weeks. I decided to sign up for it, even though I'd be going without anyone I previously knew well. To this day, I look back on that as one of the best decisions I have ever made.

I distinctly remember leaving that retreat looking at the new friends I made within two nights, and saying, "I'm getting baptised one day." Within those 3 days, I encountered the Holy Spirit right before me. I read so much scripture that changed my perspective on everything around me, and within those 3 days, I had truly experienced what it felt like to be in His loving presence.

My life changed drastically after that experience. As I continued to grow with Christ and learning more about what it means to worship Him, I had been so focused on getting to know Him that I hadn't realised how He had been patiently working on my lifestyle and me. Suddenly, all my worldly clothes were off to charity, and the cursing problem I couldn't get to stop immediately left my tongue. I became more gentle with those around me and found so much confidence in doing my best to represent a living image of God. I finally realised that all the idols I had been worshipping my whole life were giving me what I wanted, but not what I needed. And though I continue to face various challenges as a Christian teen, such as being the odd one out in many settings outside of church, I am proud to say that I have learned to trust God through it all. And whilst the road can always be bumpy, I know that at the end of each one sits a God willing to take me in at my most vulnerable moments and remind me that He never forsakes me. Therefore, I commit myself to worshipping Jesus to the best of my ability in this lifetime.

I FINALLY REALISED
THAT ALL THE
IDOLS I HAD BEEN
WORSHIPPING MY
WHOLE LIFE WERE
GIVING ME WHAT I
WANTED, BUT NOT
WHAT I NEEDED.



WINNI ZHANG

I was raised in a family in which none of my family members were Christian. Even though I attended a Christian school until fourth grade, I never took any religion seriously. I used to think they were all brainwashing people. I remember when I first met my Islamic friend, she introduced me to the fact that she was a Muslim and asked me about my religion. I clearly remember telling her I wasn't religious. When she asked me how it felt to be an atheist, I told her without hesitation that I loved being an atheist, as I didn't have to care about anything. I could just "be myself".

When I was 12, I met a Christian girl with whom I soon became close friends. After getting to know her better, she started preaching to me and sending me Christian-related reels on Instagram. I remember just reacting to her reels with a heart, not to seem rude, but never watching them because I found it annoying back then as an atheist. However, she and I soon became even closer and were inseparable. I realised she was highly devoted to Christianity, and it would make her happy if I started understanding her beliefs to support her. Little did I know that this journey would transform me in ways I never expected.

I remember it was during a summer holiday when I first dug into Christianity. I started by praying every single night before bed. Still, I did not expect that every time I prayed, I felt relieved because I knew there would always be someone who would listen to me, love me, and be there for me no matter what, and that was God. I realized I've never felt so comfortable sharing my true thoughts and feelings, knowing I won't be judged no matter my mistakes, and God will always love me. From that moment, I knew I would always follow Jesus for the rest of my life.



THESE CHANGES MADE ME REALIZE CHRISTIANITY WAS NOT JUST ABOUT RULES AND THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T DO. STILL, IT WAS ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

After the summer holiday, I started attending church with the same girl who had introduced Christianity to me. During sermons, I reflected on my life and the changes I wanted to make. I reflected on my sins, then tried to sinless, wanting to become a greater person. These changes made me realize Christianity was not just about rules and things you shouldn't do. Still, it was about a relationship with God. As I further built my relationship with God, I realized that situations that once frustrated me became more manageable because I knew I could rely on God's guidance.

Ultimately, I've decided to include baptism in my journey: It represents my commitment to my faith and a public declaration of my relationship with God that I am genuinely proud of. It is a celebration that allows me to express my gratitude. I hope to inspire others to have their relationships with God through my experience.

What It Means To Become A Christian

HE LOVES

God loves you because He chooses to.
“God wasn’t attracted to you and didn’t choose you because you were big and important ... He did it out of sheer love...” (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).
He loves you so much that...

HE GAVE

He gave Jesus, His one and only Son. While we do wrong things daily, Jesus is sinless. Though sinless, Jesus took our sin. He died on the Cross in our place. Our response to this great gift is simple...

WE TRUST

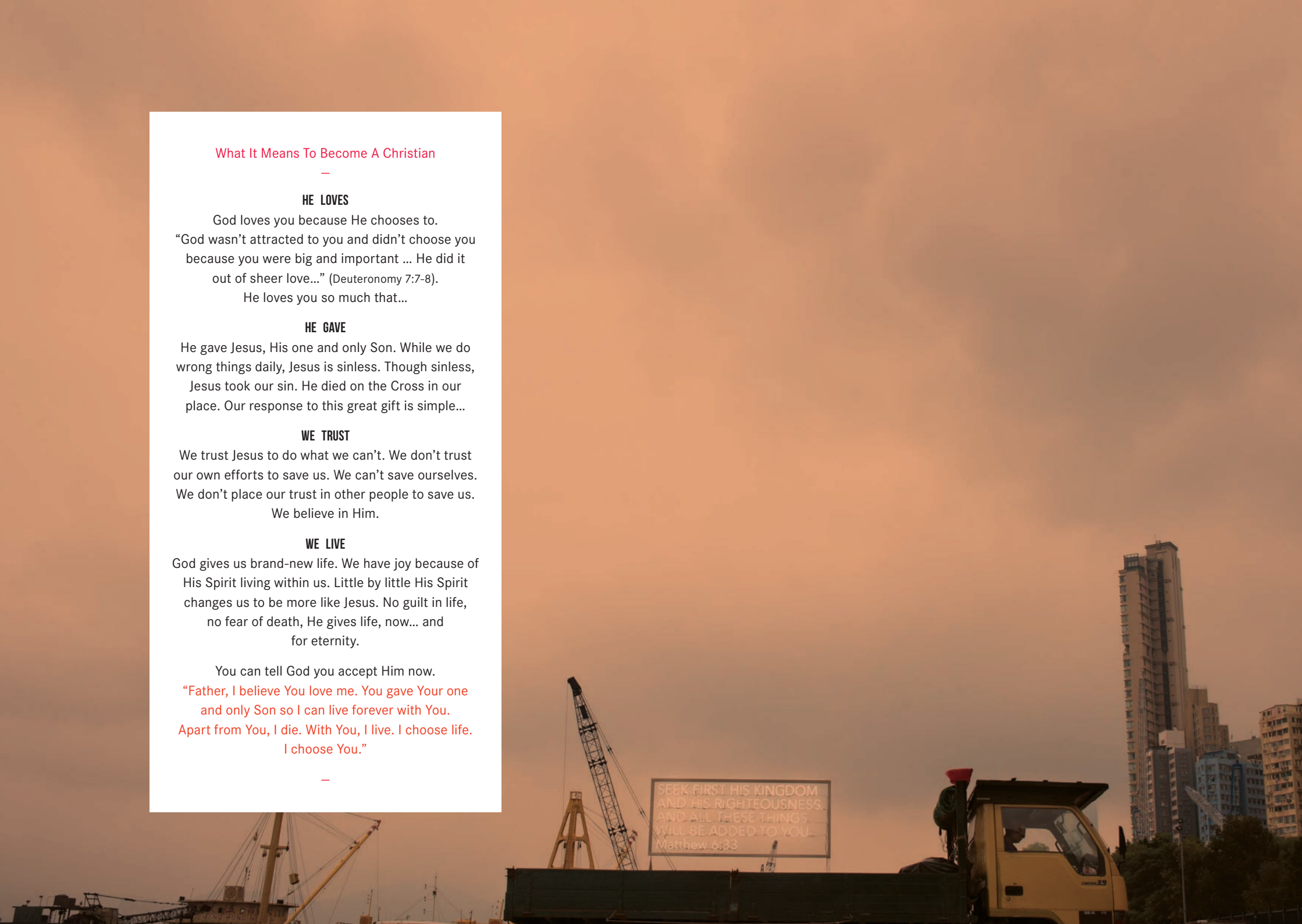
We trust Jesus to do what we can’t. We don’t trust our own efforts to save us. We can’t save ourselves. We don’t place our trust in other people to save us.
We believe in Him.

WE LIVE

God gives us brand-new life. We have joy because of His Spirit living within us. Little by little His Spirit changes us to be more like Jesus. No guilt in life, no fear of death, He gives life, now... and for eternity.

You can tell God you accept Him now.

“Father, I believe You love me. You gave Your one and only Son so I can live forever with You.
Apart from You, I die. With You, I live. I choose life.
I choose You.”



SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM
AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS,
AND ALL THESE THINGS
WILL BE ADDED TO YOU.
Matthew 6:33



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SHARE YOUR STORY

BAPTISM

2025