

BAPTISM TESTIMONIES

FALL 2025

*Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves
you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as
an appeal to God for a good conscience, through
the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

I PETER 3:21

4 THINGS YOU NEED TO DO TO RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST INTO YOUR LIFE

1. ADMIT your spiritual need. “I am a sinner.”
2. REPENT and be willing to turn from your sin.
3. BELIEVE that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.
4. RECEIVE through prayer, Jesus into your heart and life.

PRAY
SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM
THE SINCERITY OF YOUR HEART

Dear Lord Jesus,
I know that I am a sinner.
I believe that you died for my sins.
Right now, I turn from my sins and open the door
to my heart and my life. I receive your forgiveness
and ask you to be my personal Lord and Savior.
Thank you for saving me.
AMEN



Life before knowing Christ:

Before I found Christ, I was not religious and often avoided those who were. After graduating college and starting my career, I began to wonder if this was all life had to offer. I felt lost and empty, expecting something more. For years, I relied solely on my own decisions, which, in hindsight, were not always the best. I struggled with worries alone, leading to years of insomnia and anxiety.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

When I began dating Mike, who later became my husband, he was the first Christian I had ever dated and attended church regularly. Although this was new to me, I supported him by attending church at EV Free Fullerton. However, I felt no connection there. In January 2007, we were led to SBCC, which was closer to my home and started attending regular services.

Just one month later, I was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer. Having always been healthy, this news was devastating. My mother had passed away six months earlier, and my father years before that, leaving me feeling like an orphan with no one to turn to. Despite Mike’s support, I fell into depression.

Soon after, we attended a Tuesday night prayer meeting at SBCC, which provided the hope and love I desperately needed. Through this community, I learned about Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to erase my sins and grant me salvation. I quickly became a follower of Christ, finding in Him the father I needed—someone to give me hope, peace, and unconditional love.

While attending SBCC my world grew. I was blessed with many new friends with the same faith and now they are a big part of my life.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

My faith and knowledge of the Bible especially grew while being a part of a small women's bible study group led by Kathy Lai. I can't thank this group enough for helping me grow in my faith, holding me accountable to becoming more righteous and to be my support system. Thank you Kathy, Joy and Sharon!! You are all special to me.

In many ways, my breast cancer diagnosis was a gift. It led me away from sin and taught me to trust and have faith in the Lord Jesus, who granted me salvation. I know I can always turn to the Lord for guidance and give all my worries to Him. I no longer fear death, confident that I will be in heaven with my Lord.

Thank you, Lord, for accepting me as Your child and for all that You do for me.



AMELIA TUCKER

Life before knowing Christ:

Jesus has always been in my life. I have been attending our church since I was a baby. Church was just a thing I did, a part of my personality and identity that I never questioned. My grandma took me to church every Sunday, and I loved it. However, I didn't grow up in a Christian household because my parents aren't Christian. Going to church was my thing, something I did by myself with my Grandma. She eventually moved churches, but I stayed. Partly because of friends, partly because it was what I knew. However, I had never truly

been Christian. I read my Bible because my Grandma said to, I went to church because she took me, it was routine, and I had friends there. I had been told what I was supposed to believe in, so I knew I should believe in God, but I didn't.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

Throughout my church upbringing, retreats were a constant in my life. I knew that twice a year, I got to go to camp. Of course, the main event was Saturday night service, when emotions are high and everyone weeps for our Lord. But I never felt any emotion. How could people cry about this? I never understood it. But at a winter retreat a couple of years ago, I finally got it. I felt God's presence, and I couldn't help but cry in worship. I felt so guilty for my indifference to the Lord, so ashamed of my sins, and so in awe of God in that room. I finally understood what people mean when they say, "I felt his presence, he was there."

After that, I also understood another thing: the emotional retreat high and crash that would follow. I said I would pray and read my Bible and listen to worship music, but that only lasted for about two weeks. I would always consider getting baptized, but once I stopped all my habits, I didn't feel ready.

For the next two years, I followed this cycle of going to retreats, feeling like getting baptized was the next step, and then "never getting around to it," or never feeling Christian enough to "earn" it.

But this feeling of "ready" was my problem in the first place. Of course, the natural step for someone who grew up in the church was to get baptized, so I always told myself I would do it at thirteen. I'd be going to high school soon, I would be a teenager, and it made sense. But thirteen came and went, and I never did it. I still had too much sin in my life, and I got stuck in a loop of thinking that I wasn't ready yet, not yet, just another year. This year, I realized that I would never truly be ready. I would never be free of sin and feel that I deserved to publicly declare

my faith. But I believe in God, I believe that Jesus was the son of God, and I believe that Jesus died for my sins.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

In terms of how my life has changed after knowing him, it hasn't changed all that much. I feel closer to him when I worship, understand more of what he does in life, and am more appreciative. My life looked "Christian" before it actually was. The largest way my life has changed is being more aware of his presence.

In hindsight, I wonder what I was trying to be ready for. I was never going to be perfect enough, because it just wasn't possible. I was never going to earn God's love, because his love is a gift and none of us earn it.

I'm not perfect and I never will be, but I am ready to publicly declare my love of Jesus Christ, our King.



BROOKLYN YEE

Life before knowing Christ:

I grew up in the church and I knew who God was but I didn't get the why part of believing in him and that just didn't make me feel close to him. Most of my life has always felt like there was a missing puzzle piece in my life that I needed to search deeper for. I was still a kid at the time and I felt pretty good as I had my friends and family but I was also trying to fill the emptiness in my heart. I needed to be freed from trying to live my life how I wanted to but instead trust God and let him lead me down my own path.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

I began to come to Christ while I was at a church retreat called Mount Hermon. It was my first year so I had no friends and I asked God to make this week fun and it was as I made friends. But 2nd year came around and this time I bonded really well with my cabin and this time it felt different. It felt like I was getting to know God for the first time, and it felt like another puzzle piece was being added to my puzzle. Just hearing the message and having cabin time was just enough to change my perspective about him. I finally felt like I understood the messages and it felt different from normal church services as I've fallen asleep or was playing with a friend with no intention of listening to the message. But I still had lots more puzzle pieces to fill in my puzzle, except I finally felt like I had peace, joy and a place to call home. I believe that Jesus died on the cross to forgive my sins, and resurrected from the grave to give me eternal life.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

Ever since I've been following Jesus, he's been changing me. I feel more stronger and confident, and I know that I can always go to him when I'm in need. Right now I'm learning how to trust him and ask for help and forgiveness when I need it instead of asking for stuff I don't need. He is helping me through hard times and teaching me to love and forgive others. He's also been teaching me how to grow my faith and share it with my family and friends so that they could get to know him too. I don't know what exactly is coming for me in the future but I know that whatever it is, he will be guiding me every step of the way down the path he has chosen for me.



DARREN HAN

Life before knowing Christ:

I think I always was looking for a place to belong. I just kept constantly feeling like I was alone and every time I built a relationship or felt like I belonged, something always happened to make me feel outcasted again. I just felt like even when I went to church I felt the same way where I don't belong, felt outcast, and didn't feel like a home people said it to be. So when my one friend stopped going I stopped going and rebelled against God. I just continued to live for myself. How can I look or act to feel included? This question was constant throughout middle school to college. I thought that believing that God exists is enough, not knowing or thinking about the Gospel or the resurrection.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

I was going through a breakup and a friend brought me out to a church club and my housemate was looking for a club and a church to go to. He surrounded me with Christians. There wasn't really one moment but a collective of things and people in my life that helped me and led me back to Christ. Like still keeping Garrett in my life and getting closer to him when he was closer to my ex, my housemate wanted to find a church and club, some questions that made me think about my faith, and putting the right people in my life and taking out the ones that I didn't need, just always putting a way for me to come back to Christ and having the right assurance I need, and etc. One big lightbulb moment was college retreat where I learned to surrender it all to him and try not to live for myself anymore. Also just realizing he has always been in my life and never left.

God is always constant even when you don't think about it. The process was long but he was patient with me and kept calling me back in many small ways. Also hearing about other peoples testimony was honestly so crazy to hear and very motivating to see how much God can flip your whole life around.

Jesus saved me by pursuing me relentlessly and surrounding me with people who reflected his love. He saved me by showing me that he never gave up on me and that surrendering it all to him is the start of being free from sin. He showed me that my identity is no longer in sin, my past, or my pain, it's in Him.

He died on the cross for my sins. He took the punishment that I/we deserved. Now I know my sins are forgiven and my relationship with Jesus is restored and received the hope of eternal life.

He saved me from loneliness, rejection, and shame. I used to feel invisible and alone, like I didn't belong anywhere. But Jesus saw me, loved me, and gave me a home where I'm truly accepted. I carried a lot of shame and regret and felt like I couldn't be forgiven. But Jesus forgave me and gave me a new start.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

Just a whole lifestyle change. Who I hang out with, what I do in my free time, what I talk about, etc. Just living my life for Jesus rather than myself and just being more like him. One thing I learned during college retreat was that God's love and view of you doesn't change. God's love is so much better than human love and that love is sacrifice. There are times late at night when I think about what happens after death and go through all these scenarios and thought processes, but knowing that I'm saved just gives me more peace of mind and excitement.

A personal story

I went to church growing up as a kid and I just went because my parents told me to go. But the church didn't feel like a home for me. I just felt like I didn't fit in and everyone knew each other from school and stuff and I felt left out. Then around middle school when my one friend stopped going I decided to stop going. A couple years later I was heading into college and my dad wanted me to find a church group on

campus and I was like sure but didn't really seek it. Then around my third year I was going through a breakup and I was pretty devastated.

Throughout my whole life I was always looking for a place to belong because when growing up, it seemed like I always lost my friend group and close friends. In elementary, middle, and high school something always happened where I always ended up alone. And this breakup again I was like why does this always happen to me. But looking back, I realize that even in my lowest moments, God was moving.

Then my housemate was looking for a church group/church to go to and I started to hang out with my exes friend (Garrett) a lot more and he told us about a church club on campus so we decided to check it out. The people there were so welcoming and nice and just felt genuine and I was like is this what knowing Jesus is like? And as time went on I started going back to church and started to know and learn more about Jesus.

I slowly realized that God was always in my life and he never went away because I started to go to church for myself and my relationship with God rather than someone telling me to go because I wanted to learn more. Trying to fill a void but God is always constant even when you don't think about it. Even during my time with AACF I was just slowly getting more curious and getting asked a lot of questions that just made me sit there and think. When someone asked me did I think I was saved I answered no because I questioned it a lot and I just realized that I have kind of been a fake Christian my whole life growing up. That kind of took me back for a second. I did some reflection and I think God was showing me another sign to really dig deep into it. Hearing my friends and other peoples testimony was just amazing to hear and I was so in awe. To see and hear my friend live a totally different and crazy lifestyle to what it is now and to see it was just motivating.

The AACF retreat and the college retreat both helped encourage me to keep seeking the Lord and surrender everything to him. And I know

that even though I might not know what that looks like and that I will fail, I will keep trying my best to be like Jesus. Other times I said that I never really tried and went back to my sin and desires, but this time was different and I want to really try this time to give it all to God. I won't let my sin define me anymore.



ELLA SooHoo

Life before knowing Christ:

Before Christ, I didn't have this sense of support. I felt alone and helpless. I would go to school, come home, go to practice, do my homework, go to sleep, and then repeat. I didn't feel like I was living for anything. I was just stuck in this cycle of the world where it's all process movements. All the same thing everyday without having a real purpose. I was stuck in these feelings of, "If I get an A on my math test, I will feel happy" or "If I wear these nice clothes, I'll get so many compliments." Basically, I was living for worldly satisfaction. I wanted the world to accept me and love me. I put Christ in my second focus. It's like eating dessert before dinner—He's there, but not what I prioritize first. I would continuously tell myself, "I prayed this morning, so I don't have to spend some time with God." My relationship with Him felt more like an obligation than a privilege.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

Last year, I went to this camp called Mount Hermon. It's this youth Christian camp that goes on for a week during the summer. We have our own sermons, worship, and cabin groups that make it really fun. While I was at that camp, I remember singing a song called "Overcome." We sang, "I will put my trust in you alone. Jesus, You have

conquered the grave. You overcome my sins. All my doubts, all my fears, You're the hope of the world." This really sat with me and just kept playing in my head all week. Another moment that really stuck with me was at the end of one of the sermons. I remember there was a big wooden cross where we all got a little square to write our sins and the things that we surrender to God. Afterwards, we got a nail and a hammer resembling when Jesus had to get nailed to the cross in order to bring forgiveness into the world. We broke that square into little pieces and got to put one of the pieces on the cross representing our ask for forgiveness and repentance. I will never forget that moment because I just experienced God's goodness and mercy for people like me who are broken, shameful, and full of sin. I realized that Christ is not the dinner that I can just skip over for something that has a short satisfaction like brownies. He's the mighty, powerful, all deserving of my praise Lord and Savior. His patience, forgiveness, and love only increases from here. I did not deserve his love at all yet he came to save me! He sent Jesus! His one and only son to save ME from MY sins. That's just unbelievable to me that he would be so willing to bring me into his kingdom for who I was. One of the verses that I found so empowering is Isaiah 40:8. It writes, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." No matter where I'm at, no matter how many sins I've committed, his arms are open wide and I know that I can rely on him everyday and every night because I know that his word stands forever!

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

With Christ, I feel empowered. I feel strong, protected, watched over. I know that someone deeply loves me and I can go out everyday feeling ready for whatever comes my way because I have the Lord. He provides me with a reason to do the typical things of the world. I feel like I have a sense of purpose to reflect Him in all the things that I do. He redeemed my past, reoriented my heart, and flipped my life for good. The Lord has transformed my motives from chasing the world's approval to seeking Him. Moving my motives from selfish gain to serving others,

me first to God first, and my decisions from impulsive to prayerful. My motives are not empty, they're full of my reflection of Jesus Christ in the best way possible. I can now have hope of eternal life with Christ because of his merciful love that saved me from the sins of the world. I now have hope in the promise of eternity with Christ and have made that commitment to live for Him daily and share his love with others.



EVAN MAH

Life before knowing Christ:

My life before Christ was pretty basic and boring. Growing up, I would be taught about God every Sunday. I grew up in a Christian household and was around Christian influence basically all the time. I knew about God my whole life, but never really had a true relationship with Him. Despite being in that Christian environment, I was and am a terrible sinner. I would try to do things that proved that I am deserving of eternal life in Heaven. For example at school or church, I would try to answer all the Bible questions and make myself look like I'm so good and I'm so smart. That was probably the main reason why I even raised my hand in the first place. But the reality was that I wasn't and I was only sinning even more. I would stray away and not make room for Jesus at all. My worldly desires to love and serve myself took over my desire to love and serve God.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

I accepted Christ into my life when I was in 5th grade. My parents talked me through it and asked me if I wanted to give my life to Christ. I never fully thought of such a thing until that point in my life. And at that point something felt kinda different and new. I felt

God kinda urging and tugging my heart to invite Him into my life. As I got older, God slowly convicted me of what I was doing and changed my heart. I had people around me such as my parents, church friends, and youth group leaders teach and help me grow in what was a very distant relationship with God. I realized that no matter how good we think we are, we will never reach God's status as righteous and holy. I came to realize that we deserve death and not Heaven, but God sent His innocent son Jesus to die for our sins. I was able to understand that Jesus didn't just die, but He rose from the grave and conquered death. Because of His resurrection we can have a restored relationship with Him forever eternally. I learned that we are not saved by works, but by grace and grace alone, through the blood of Jesus. His grace and love has impacted me so much and has changed my life forever.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

My life is now new because of Jesus. With Jesus, I am now changed, redeemed, and renewed. Since I've placed my faith in Him, I don't have to worry about anything the world throws at me. All my doubts and anxieties about homework, school, insecurities are now brought to the Lord and not myself. From then and now on, I am trusting and creating room for Jesus, making Him the center of everything I do and worship. Jesus is moving in me and has transformed me into a servant that lives for Him. I try to serve Him by spending time with Him and obeying Him by doing what's right according to the Bible. Everyday, I now strive to do His will and give honor and glory to the one who deserves it.



For as long as I can remember, I've always believed in Jesus. Early in my childhood I was taught that God loves you and that his son came to this earth and died on the cross so that we may be forgiven of our sins. This truth is something that I've never questioned, struggled to believe in, or have had difficulty accepting. The bottom line is this: I knew there was a God and he loved me. However, I would say that this basic knowledge of God was the extent of my relationship with him.

For a bit of context, I didn't always attend a Christian church like how I do before you today. I was actually raised in more of a Catholic background and apart from participating in Sunday school for a couple years in my elementary days, I can't recall finding myself at church on the weekends or engaging in that type of lifestyle. Don't get me wrong, I really enjoyed going to church whenever the opportunity arose but like many families (and I'm sure some of you can relate to this), we got caught up in the busyness of school, work, sports, family events/matters, and most of all the habit of not making the Lord a habit.

When life distracts us and we're not being faithful to Jesus in the ways in which we live, it's important to remember this: even when we are not, Jesus is (2 Timothy 2:13). Thank God for this truth as he has remained faithful to me not only throughout my whole life but specifically during my middle school years in which I found myself in the midst of a struggle that could only be helped by Him and through Him. Around the time I entered middle school was the time when I first encountered one of my biggest struggles, shames, and guilts that I've faced in my life. I had been enticed by and drawn into the lustful desires of my flesh. What started from a classmate talking about how he had watched pornography over the weekend, quickly spiraled into a secret, hidden life of giving into lustful desires, thoughts, actions, and temptations. The pattern of falling short of the glory of God, wrestling with shame and guilt, and running back to the same lustful habits repeated for a few years until something miraculous happened during my 8th grade year of middle school.

During that 8th grade year, I remember struggling more intensely and frequently in my hidden life of lust. The shame and the guilt increased by the day and with each temptation and slip up, more and more lies began to trickle into my head. One of the most prevalent questions on my mind at that time was this: Does God still love me? My inner monologues sounded much like, “Even though Jesus died on the cross for my sins, I keep messing up, time and time again. I am such a dirty person. How can God still love me? What will my friends and family think of me if they ever find out about my shortcomings? Will they still love me or will they turn away from me? God, please don’t stop loving me. I’m sure anyone who has struggled with lustful temptations or pornography addiction has found themselves in a very similar headspace. Your iniquities feel so great that you feel unworthy, you feel dirty, and you feel like God could never love a sinner like you. You feel as if your struggles are too great for God to handle and that he will turn his love and face away from you. I’m here to tell you that this is the lie. God is greater than the lies that we have a tendency of feeding ourselves and thankfully, Jesus is the truth and he has come to set us free.

Whilst I was in this headspace, and by the grace of God, he allowed me to call upon him for help, to offer up my regrets and apologies, and to come to him in prayer about all I had on my heart and mind. For about two weeks, I would pray to God anytime I would fall short and feel the weight of my shame and guilt resting upon my shoulders. “I’m sorry, Jesus. Please don’t stop loving me. Please forgive me,” was something I would find myself saying while on my knees in prayer after a time of struggle. I want to take a second and highlight the thought of God, please don’t stop loving me. Only now am I able to look back on this time and realize that God allowed this lie to enter into my mind so he could bring me closer to the truth; so that he could bring me closer to his son, Jesus. Surely, the prayers, the pleads of forgiveness, the confession of guilt and shame, and that genuine outpour of my heart had been heard by God in heaven because in his timeliness, I received a form of acknowledgement and communication from him that came in the form of a text message.

There was a friend that I had whom I spent some time with because we went to middle school together and our families had met through means outside of the school setting causing us to ultimately become friends. Now at the time of all this going on in my life, my friend was a freshman in high school and I was still in 8th grade. I hadn’t seen her since the previous school year and I don’t remember talking with her during that time, either. Then all of a sudden, after all this prayer I had been lifting up to God, I received a text from her one night basically saying that she had been thinking about me lately and wanted to invite me to join her church’s youth group and her to a night out at Downtown Disney.

I had always known that my friend had gone to church and she went to a youth group but other than that, I didn’t know anything about it. It was part of her life that she hadn’t opened up or shared about with me. I thought to myself, this seems a little too coincidental. I hadn’t talked to my friend or seen her in months, and all of a sudden she’s thinking about me? I knew that she was a part of her church’s youth group but she’s never invited me out before. Is this a sign from God that he hears my cries for help?

Somehow, deep down in my heart I knew that God was calling me to go out and join my friend and her church’s youth group for a night at Downtown Disney. I’d have to be a fool to say, “No.” Taking that leap of faith, I decided to go out that night and I have to say that it was probably one of the most impactful moments of my life because that night I truly know that I encountered God, his love, and his presence. On that night, the youth group ran into a group of special needs adults and we decided to gift them with items and mementos from the nearby gift shop. There was so much love and care and intentionality in that moment and it made me realize that this is a glimpse into what God’s love really looks like. He cares for you, he sees you, and it’s not only for you but for those around you as well.

I’m forever grateful for this moment as God has used it to direct me more and more into a relationship with his son, Jesus. I’ve tasted and

seen the love of Jesus, and I've wanted more and more of him everyday since. It's not about the things he can offer me but because of who he is that makes this life worth living. There are so many vain pursuits and even so many good things worth chasing after but all will leave you empty in comparison to Jesus. Even when I've turned my back to him and spiritually cheated on him, he has always remained faithful to me and never stopped loving me. I used to think that my lustful struggles and addiction to pornography were too great and too repetitive enough to where the Lord would stop loving me. But because of Jesus and the people he's surrounded me by, I know that he would never stop loving me.

Even before I was born, Jesus knew of how I would fall short and how many times I would do so and how at moments I would turn my face away from him and through it all he still saw it fit to breathe life into me and to bring me into this world because he desires me. I think Paul says it beautifully in Romans 8:38-39 when he says, "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

There is nothing that can separate you or me from God. You see, there was a time in my life where lust and pornography addiction coursed through my veins and I wasn't living but simply existing in that. Even though those habits ran through my veins, thank God that it was Jesus who was living in my heart. Not only has Jesus shown me a way out of my past lustful life but he has also continued to care for me and lead me through times of intense loneliness, fatigue, failed relationships, family hurt, and feelings of not wanting to be alive. What started out as something so shameful and dirty and lowly has been transformed by Jesus into a life that I would have never in a million years thought I would experience.

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" - Psalm 37:4 One of my favorite verses in the whole Bible. As I've thought about this verse more and more, I've come to realize that it's

not about delighting in the Lord and the things that he can give/bless you with. It's that as we delight more and more in him, we begin to realize that the desire of our heart is Jesus and he is everything.

I remember when I was a young kid and before school my mom, sister, and I would say this prayer before we got dropped off and it went like this: Jesus is in your heart and God is always with you. Ask for help if you need it. God knows how much I needed help and he knew that with his Son residing in my heart, there would be nothing too great to overcome and there would be nothing that could stop him from loving me. Regardless of what sin you carry or what trial you struggle through, I so strongly encourage everyone to ask for help. It is not a weak thing to do so, for our strength is found in him and apart from him, we can do nothing.

My cries for help have ultimately landed me here at South Bay Community Church and I'm so thankful to Jesus for loving me and surrounding me with a community that reflects his heart. Specifically, I would like to thank the amazing people of the college group for being the friends and family I once so desperately prayed for. There are so many individuals there that have helped me realize that my performance does not determine God's love for me. He loved us first and decided this ahead of time. To the people of the college group, you are not simply my friend's, you are my family. Thank you Jesus for all that you are and how you have blessed me. There's no place I'd rather be than in your presence. Continue to reveal yourself to be more and more each day and show me who you are, not who I want you to be. I find my identity in you the preeminent one.

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GARRETT EGUCHI

Life before knowing Christ:

I was always aware of God and who He was from a young age just by growing up in the church, but I never fully understood the weight of His sacrifice and love, or the meaning behind it. I always felt guilt and shame in my sin because I thought I was never good enough or even righteous enough to be considered His child, and that put me in a hopeless state where I continued to live a lukewarm faith. I felt like life would always be a cycle of sin and shame, which caused me to think I could never reach a “point” of being worthy. This caused me to fall into many doubts and comparisons which led to me looking at the world for temporary fulfillment.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

Jesus remained so faithful in my doubts. He continuously revealed Himself to me over time providing me with mentors, brothers and sisters, and just people in my life that showed me the love of Christ. His love that is never based on anything I do, or conditional in that I need to be worthy to receive His love.

Jesus revealed Himself as the one that can provide a permanent fulfillment from my doubts and comparisons, and I began to believe that He is the only one that can truly save me from my own darkness and provide me a comfort in knowing I am never alone. His death on the cross and His resurrection has given me eternal life and mercies that are new every morning. Through His grace I have been saved and have been blessed with the gift of being able to walk with God, both in this world and forevermore.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

There has been such peace in walking with God. I no longer identify in my sin but rather the identity that God gives me as His child. He

has provided me with a hunger to follow and know Him more, and because of that I never want to go back or live a life without Jesus. There are still highs and lows in my faith and in life overall, but God has remained through it all and His presence has provided so much peace and comfort.



HANNAH KITAJIMA

Life before knowing Christ:

I was raised in church, going to Kidz Krew every week. Every week, waking up for the 9 am service felt like a habit. I didn't think much of Jesus at the time, but more just seeing my friends every Sunday morning. Every night, we would read a bible story, which I always enjoyed hearing about how great Jesus is. Even after reading those amazing stories, I never really thought of the impact Jesus can have on every single person.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

After years of the same, repetitive habits, hearing all the stories told by my parents started to have an impact on me. Not just what Jesus did, but more of why he did it and the reasons behind it. Eventually, I started to believe that Jesus died on the cross for everyone, including me. He died for us so we wouldn't have to go through the pain he did. He saved me by showing me he will lead the way, and we should have faith in whatever he leads us to. Through the hard times, he taught me that he knows what is best for me, even though I may think what I believe will be better for me.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

Since putting my faith in Jesus, I've also learned to choose compassion over criticism. Learning how to forgive, even when you might've not done anything wrong. Now when I read the bible, I try to define the deeper meaning of each story. Learning that he died on the cross for us really impacted me thinking that he cares about each one of us. He is leading me in the direction of wanting to share the gospel with my non-Christian friends through inviting them to SBCC's youth group. I would love for them to know about what Jesus has done for us, just like I learned.



HOLLY SHIOHAMA

I was baptized in 6th grade. In 6th grade, I felt led to be baptized but I wanted to be baptized just to do it. Around that time, I started going to SBCC more and I really felt God pulling me closer. I wanted to live for him, and for a while, I was. But when I got into high school, things started to change. My freshman year, I met a boy who influenced me into drinking and vaping. And honestly, I let myself believe that those things could help me escape the pain I was already dealing with — my depression, my anxiety, the constant feeling of not being enough. I thought if I could feel numb for a while, or fit in, maybe I'd be happier. But the truth is, drinking and vaping didn't give me an escape. They gave me chains of sins and it only made things worse. At this point I didn't believe in Jesus at all; I stopped having faith in God. The summer before my sophomore year, I dated another guy who also drank and smoked. By then, I had already quit vaping and wanted him to quit too, but the relationship was still toxic. I was still battling with

panic attacks, and at home, I was constantly arguing with my parents. Deep down, I knew I was stuck in this cycle of trying to find peace in all the wrong places.

But through all of this, I kept going to church. I kept showing up to legacy (high school ministry at SBCC) and talked to my small group. And little by little, he started opening my eyes. I realized that what I was really searching for wasn't escape. It was freedom and freedom doesn't come from drinking, vaping, or even relationships. Freedom only comes from Jesus. Escaping the "normal" or worldly life isn't about numbing yourself. It is about surrendering your life to Christ and letting him be everything you need.

I finally understood that Jesus came to save me. Not just from my mistakes, but from the power of sin itself. He died on the cross to forgive my sins, and He rose again to give me new life and a real relationship with Him. Because of what Jesus did, I'm not defined by my past, my struggles, or my failures. I'm forgiven, loved, and made new.

In May of 2025, I finally surrendered my toxic relationship to God. And that summer, for the first time in so long, I felt true happiness. Not because of a relationship or anything this world could give me, but because I was finally letting God fill the emptiness inside me. I surrounded myself with people who pointed me to him, and I started to see real healing in my life.

Now that I am a junior in high school, I can proudly say my depression is gone, my anxiety is better, and my joy doesn't depend on anything, it comes from Jesus. God completely turned my life around, and I've never felt so loved, so free, and so whole. I love him with everything in me, and I know without a doubt that he has completely changed my life for the better. Jesus saved me, and I want to live every day for him. God is so good.



JACKIE CACHUELA

JACKIE - BEFORE JESUS

My life as a Catholic was one of ritual without relationship. I was born into the faith, and it was simply a part of my identity, like the color of my eyes. The Bible was a foreign book to me; its stories and teachings felt distant and disconnected from my daily life. I went to church, received the Sacraments, and went through the motions, believing that these actions would make me a “good” person—that they would make me whole.

A False Sense of Security

I relied on a false sense of confidence, believing I had life figured out as a young adult. I thought I could navigate the world on my own terms. My belief that the Sacraments alone could save me was my way of trying to justify myself and tell myself that I was okay. I was trying to earn my worthiness, to fix myself through religious duty rather than surrendering to a relationship with God. The sin I was stuck in was self-reliance and pride. I was convinced I was in control and that my actions could save me, rather than trusting in Jesus’s grace. This pride kept me from truly connecting with God and understanding my need for a savior.

The Weight of Anger and Pain

Beneath this surface of self-sufficiency, I was trapped in a deep-seated anger that I couldn’t seem to shake. It was a pattern of feeling abandoned and questioning God. This anger intensified as a preteen when my father was diagnosed with deep depression that later became bipolar disorder.

Navigating his manic and depressive episodes was an unfamiliar and difficult territory. I loved my dad so much, but I hated the darkness that mental illness brought into our lives. I would constantly ask, “Why, God? Why me? Why are you doing this?” This pain led me to stop

attending church for a time, as it no longer felt like the safe haven I so desperately needed. It felt empty and unable to fulfill the deep ache in my heart.

A New Perspective on Suffering

My perspective on God shifted when my father passed away from terminal cancer. I felt an unexpected sense of peace. In a way, I felt that God had finally listened—that He had taken my dad to end his suffering and spare my family from the prolonged pain of his mental illness and the final stages of cancer. I thanked God, believing He had answered my prayers by ending my dad’s suffering. While this brought a temporary feeling of peace, returning to church did not fill the void I still felt. The rituals and routines still felt hollow. My life was a cycle of trying to find peace and security in things and actions, but none of them could truly satisfy the longing in my heart. I was missing the one thing that truly mattered: a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

JACKIE - BELIEVING IN JESUS

A Life of Success, Hope, and Desire to be a Parent

I thought I was living a good life as a successful nurse in roles of leadership, traveling the world, eventually falling “head over heels” in love. I was no longer single and found myself married. In 2017, we started attending SBCC. Our intent as newlyweds was to be parents and have a child for the first time in my 40s. I remember filling out the prayer cards in my seat every Sunday and asking the church to make me a mom. After countless attempts of IVF, it felt like the cards were not in my hands to become a mom. I decided to leave it to Jesus and trust that He would do what I needed in my life - not answer to what my selfish wants called for.

The chaos of the COVID pandemic surmounted. As a healthcare worker, I was managing an unprecedented time, and my faith was tested daily. I never gave up trying IVF. It came with sacrifices but In 2020, I was

blessed with a pregnancy. My faith in Him truly shined. I gave birth to a healthy baby girl in 2021. I knew this blessing was not a result of my own doing but was a direct answer to my surrender. The IVF worked because I finally gave up control of the outcomes I wanted.

My Hope Turned into Crisis

I thought God truly paved a path for me to walk, but it was just the beginning of my true journey with Him. What should have been a time of celebration as a new family quickly turned dark. The man who should have been a loving father became an abuser, and created a very unstable home. It was a dangerous situation and not fit for a baby. I was faced with a choice: try to fix a broken man and keep our family together, or protect my daughter and myself. It was in this moment of crisis, when I was completely powerless, that I truly turned to Jesus. I had nothing left to rely on but Him. I trusted Him to guide me through this arduous time.

Surrender into the Unknown: Because I Trust in Jesus

My relationship with Jesus truly began in the trenches of desperation. When my daughter was just five months old, I took her and we fled. We went into hiding, moving from hotel to hotel, with no guarantee of safety from the police or Child Protective Services. During this time, we watched SBCC's services online, and worship became our lifeline. It was a constant reminder that Jesus was with us. I learned to live and let go, trusting that He would deliver us. I knew that if I surrendered my expectations and trusted in Him, we would be okay. He did and continues to deliver. He protected us, and I was granted sole custody and a permanent restraining order. This was not a coincidence—this was a direct result of my faith in Him. Jesus lights our path of safety so that I don't need to feel alone as a single mom, live in fear of an abuser, but can walk in confidence with Him. I can show my daughter that Our Father made things possible.

True Faith in Jesus: The One Who was Always in Control

Jesus Christ was more than just a main figure in the Bible. I finally

realized that my prayers had been selfish. I was asking God to do what I wanted, not what He knew was best. My "lightbulb moment" wasn't a sudden flash of light, but a slow, dawning realization that I was not in control. I had to let go of my expectations and trust that Jesus would do what was needed in my life, not just what my selfish wants called for.

This whole process taught me the meaning of true faith. It is not about getting what you want; it is about trusting in the one who holds it all. It is about believing that Jesus is not just a figure from a book but a crucified, risen, and returning Savior and King who has the power to protect, deliver, and prevail. My decision to accept Him as my Savior and King was not a one-time event but a continuous process of surrender, trust, and seeing His faithfulness in every terrifying and triumphant moment of my life.

JACKIE - BECAUSE OF JESUS

When I reflect how Jesus has transformed my life, it often brings a sense of awe and deep gratitude for His sacrifice, teachings, and resurrection. My experience of Jesus' love and salvation is the central point of my life. His presence reorients everything: thoughts, motives, desires, and actions. This is what I want to share with my daughter while she is young. Create a strong foundation with Jesus that she knows we walk hand in hand with Him to strive and be like Him.

Before encountering Jesus in a meaningful and heartfelt way of true faith; I was driven by self-centered desires and wants. Through His teachings and the power of His grace, there's this internal reorientation—where love, humility, and selflessness become the guiding principles.

1. Values and Priorities – Before knowing Jesus, it was easy to be fixed on worldly success, money, or status. Feeling confident that I knew what was best and how I would approach each task. But the gospel introduces a higher calling. A person's sense of purpose becomes more focused on service, love, and compassion, aligning with God's

will. I start caring about things that last—eternal things—rather than temporary, fleeting pursuits. Life is not about the quick wins, but the lessons and growth that I can share with my daughter.

2. Hope of Eternal Life – The resurrection is the foundation of my Christian hope. Knowing that Jesus conquered death gives me confidence in eternal life, even when I face trials, loss, and suffering. This hope doesn't just shape my view of the afterlife—it transforms how I walk through difficulties right now. I hold onto the assurance that my suffering has meaning, and I believe that one day, all things will be made new. I don't question, "Why me," when "tragedy" strikes.

3. Love and Forgiveness – Jesus' sacrifice reveals to me the depth of God's love. His forgiveness changed everything for me—it replaced anger with grace. Experiencing His love has softened my heart, making me more willing to forgive others, more patient, and more able to love those around me. Despite the pitfalls, I always wanted to show my daughter because of God's love we have more than enough to be happy about.

4. Identity – I no longer define myself by my mistakes, fears, or past failures. My identity is now rooted in Christ. The resurrection not only assures me of eternal life, but it also brings transformation in the present. In Him, I've found freedom from shame, guilt, and the exhausting need to prove myself. I am who I am because God made me His child. I want my daughter to exude confidence knowing she's a perfect child of God's creation.

5. Motives and Desires – My transformation reaches into the core of what I want in life. Love, peace, joy, and a desire to serve others have become more important to me than chasing material gain or selfish ambition. The Holy Spirit is at work within me, gently refining my desires to reflect God's purposes. I took for granted when others would pray for me. Walking with Him, I know how rich in spirit praying for and with others is a priceless act that goes above and beyond.

6. Decision-making and Actions – Jesus has taught me a new way to think, feel, and act. I strive to make decisions based on His example—choosing love and selflessness over personal gain. This shift has led to meaningful changes in how I treat others, manage my resources, and prioritize my relationships. God first.

I want to emulate our triumphs to show that leaving all trust in God will keep her safe as it always has since she was born. Many will not understand the significance of my commitment to profess my responsibility and promise to raise Lincoln to be Christ-like. I am thankful for the chance to grow in Christ as a family where we can feel safe.

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JOY CHIYA

Life before knowing Christ:

I grew up in a non-religious family. My father was a non-practicing Christian, and my mother was raised in a Buddhist family. They could never agree on what religion I should be raised on, so I ended up being "Neither". The only time I went to church was to attend weddings. Throughout my school and working years, none of my friends talked about religion.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

I first started coming to SBCC on special occasions – Christmas, Friends Day, etc. And afterwards, having lunch with the lunch bunch was fun! Then one day, a friend started asking me questions about Jesus and we went over the Salvation Prayer. And that was when I accepted the Lord.

I would attend church every Sunday. But it wasn't until a very dear friend started our little Bible Study group that I really began to learn about Jesus.

I believe Jesus died for my sins and rose again. He is my one and only God. He is supreme, powerful, faithful, righteous, and forgiving. He guides, protects, provides, loves and comforts me, listens to my prayers. I am thankful He healed me and has gotten me through some tough times.

About nine years ago, I had cancer in my appendix and adrenal gland. God pulled me through surgery twice and saved me from having to go through chemo or radiation.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

Jesus gives me hope and peace knowing He is always there for me. When I start to worry, I remember how He has helped me, turn my worries over to Him, and pray for His strength, guidance and direction.

I am leaning on God more and more, slowly turning my worries over to him. God loves me and is there for me. I have seen the miracles God has performed on my friends, I remember all the times He has helped me, and I pray that with His guidance, strength, and support, God will continue to bless me.



Life before knowing Christ:

Before I came to know Christ, I felt like I was just drifting through life without any real direction. I often questioned the point of everything and struggled with a sense of emptiness. I didn't have much of a community, only a few friends, and a small family, and deep down I longed for something more. I wanted to be loved, to be truly known, and to belong somewhere, but I had no idea where to find that. Because of the way I had been living, I struggled with negative thoughts and severe anxiety, constantly worrying about things like death and the pressures of life. I thought I had control over my future, but in reality, I felt lost and powerless without any clear purpose.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

I grew up in a Catholic family that only went to church on Christmas and Easter, and honestly, I only went because I was forced to. I always believed in God in a general sense, but I didn't really know much about Jesus Christ or care to learn, other than knowing Christmas had something to do with Him. During my junior year of high school, I remember overhearing two friends in the lunch line talking about a retreat they went on with the SBCC youth ministry, and I thought to myself, "I wish I could go to something like that." Fast forward a year later, the summer after I graduated high school while transitioning into college, I hit one of the loneliest points of my life. I stopped hanging out with my high school friends, and my sister moved out of state, leaving me at home with just my mom. With all that alone time, I started questioning my life and even the existence of God.

On top of that, I was dealing with severe anxiety. I would constantly stress over things like death, the future, and whether my life had any real purpose. That weight on my chest pushed me to search harder for answers because I desperately wanted peace and clarity. I started looking into different religions and diving deep into apologetics, testimonies,

and historical accounts, all while being skeptical and doubtful. I needed solid, undeniable evidence before I could put my faith in anything. That's when God met me where I was at and revealed Himself through Jesus. I realized that the teachings of Jesus weren't just fairytales but they spoke directly into my struggles with fear, purpose, and control. The fact that He claimed to be "the way, the truth, and the life" made sense of everything I had been searching for. His sacrifice on the cross showed me that I was loved and forgiven, even when I felt lost and undeserving. Slowly, God softened my heart, and I saw that the answers I had been chasing could only be found in Christ Himself.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

When I finally put my faith in Him, it felt like the heavy weight I had been carrying was lifted off my chest. For the first time, I had real peace, not because I had figured life out on my own, but because I trusted the One who had already overcome death and promised eternal life. I found peace in knowing that the Lord is in control and that every step of my life is ordered by Him. I remembered that conversation I overheard a year earlier between two students in the lunch line about the SBCC retreat, and I thought, "Maybe I should check that place out." Taking that step ended up leading me here into this community and helping me grow deeper in my relationship with Jesus.

Jesus has completely transformed my life and given me a family through so many of the ministries here. Because of His love, I now want to pour that same love, joy, and peace into others, which is why I'm now serving as a youth leader in middle school ministry, heading into my second year. It is all because of the grace of Jesus and what He has done for me that I want to share His goodness, not for my own name, but for His. My heart now is to dedicate my life to following Him faithfully for the rest of my days.



In April 2023, I entered one of the darkest seasons of my life. I sank into a depression that made me lose hope and the light in life. But even in that hopeless darkness, I experienced several moments that felt like small miracles and true happiness, pointing to a new life. Now I know that it was a glimpse of Jesus, who was closest to me, carrying me when I couldn't walk on my own, when I was suffering the most. Through slow healing, I began to see myself becoming whole again, though not in the way I used to be. Losing hope with constant anxiety made me naturally reflect on what truly matters in life. That is when I realized my heart longed for a life built on what is eternal, not on things defined by uncertainty, things impossible to achieve on my own while carrying all the sins of a broken world.

Defining my values and life by uncertainty, such as success and status, had been my whole life. But that was my sin and brokenness. My envy, dishonesty, pride, and inability to love perfectly had separated me from God. This sin caused me to fail to move forward on my own feet. I realized how powerless I am as a human being. But I know, when Jesus died on the cross, He bore the punishment I deserved for my sins. His death was a real sacrifice. Through His crucifixion, He took my guilt and gave me His righteousness. The fact that I stand here forgiven, recognizing the reason for my suffering, realizing how broken this world is, understanding how unable I am to handle it on my own, and finding the courage to surrender, is proof of His grace. Because of His death, I know I am forgiven and reconciled to God. And because Jesus rose on the third day, because He defeated the power of sin and death, I know that I, too, will live forever with Him. The only hope for my life and future, the one I can trust with all my heart, is His victory over sin.

This truth became the foundation of my new life and identity. I repented of living for myself and put my faith in Jesus as my Savior. He saved me from despair and gave me a new identity. Not built on the brokenness of this world, but in Him alone. With Christ in my heart,

I am more fulfilled than I ever imagined, because He can do things far beyond my imagination and understanding. I no longer live in fear, because I trust Him. I trust that He has given me a life defined by love, faith, forgiveness, and the eternal joy of knowing Him.

Jesus is my savior. I am more grateful than I have ever been before. I surrender my life completely to Him, and my greatest joy is to follow Him into the eternal life He has given me.



KEALA KATO

Life before knowing Christ:

I grew up in a Christian home and have been attending South Bay Community Church almost my whole life. I was always taught about who Jesus is, what he did for us, and the incredible love God has for us. These truths were always present in my life, and I have always had a relationship with God. Over time, I realized that I had become too comfortable in my faith, and my connection with him began to feel routine. I had all this knowledge about who God is, but it didn't translate into a more personal relationship. I was not actively seeking him or depending on him as much as I should have. I took his presence for granted and my faith became lukewarm.

Even though I wanted to get baptized, I often felt like I was not "ready" and I needed to fix myself or reach a certain level in my relationship with God before I could take that step. As time went on, I began to feel ashamed for delaying what I knew God was calling me to do. I was trying to control the process rather than trusting God's timing and grace.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

During my sophomore year of college, I was suddenly hospitalized and diagnosed with cardiac arrhythmia. I went through a six-hour heart surgery, hoping that it would all be resolved. Two and a half years later, I found out that the irregular heartbeat had returned. Sitting in the doctor's office, I cried, feeling defeated and helpless. A couple of weeks after my appointment, my grandpa suffered a heart attack and passed away in July. Dealing with my own health struggles while grieving his loss made me realize that I cannot control life.

This past September, I attended my college ministry's retreat, where the theme was about God's preeminence. We learned how he is the creator of all things, how he holds everything together, and yet desires a close, personal relationship with us. While listening to the sessions, I felt God reminding me that my life is in his hands and that I need to surrender my fears, my health, and my future to him. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God who took the punishment that I deserved and died on the cross for my sins. Jesus conquered sin and death so that I could be forgiven. Because of this, I am no longer separated from God and can have eternal life with him. Because of God's great love for us, he invites me to lay it all down and trust that he is working through my problems even when I cannot see it. I have been continuously praying for God's guidance and the faith to keep relying on him instead of myself.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him? Even though I still don't know the current situation of my heart yet, I don't carry the same weight of fear or the pressure to control what I can't. I am learning to trust that my life is in God's hands because Jesus has given me peace during uncertainty. God's comfort in my grief and his strength when I feel defeated has allowed me to fully depend on him. That is why I decided to get baptized. Baptism is not about having it all together but declaring that my life belongs to Jesus. It is a way for me to publicly proclaim what God has

already done in my heart. The testimony I shared today is just one of the many ways God has moved in my life and I am excited to see how he will continue to grow my faith and use me for his glory.



LAUREN YONEMORI

Life before knowing Christ:

My testimony is going to be a walk through my childhood to where I am currently and the events in my life that showed me God was real. Everything I could remember and have stated are the stepping stones to my journey of following Christ, seeing him work in my life, and also the points where he showed himself to the point I can not deny his presence any longer. The formatting of my testimony is mainly how I saw my walk with God, and how I became delivered and also believed he was real even when I couldn't see him. I consider myself very objective and one of my main deterrent from Jesus was that I couldn't prove his existence. I believe the way God showed himself to me was through the lens where my objective brain had no room to deny his presence. All the moments where there was no other answer for the cause or event, but him. Facts, events, feelings, coincidences, that I truly couldn't ignore. God through my journey also showed me he was with me all along, whether I was with him or not, he was always with me. God was so basked in truth that the unbelievable became so undeniably believable and the truth in my eyes. This is my journey and this is how I would describe my route to Jesus.

Growing up, I grew up in a loving Christian household. Christ and church were always a normal integrated part of my life. My family and I would go to church and I prayed fairly frequently, attended church camps, kids groups, and services. From elementary to middle school I

grew my foundation in God, and prayed to him when I was sad mainly and looking for guidance. I never fully understood the depth and meaning behind God and following him seemed more out of routine and just something that was expected vs. a genuine personal search for him.

Around and between middle school and the early years of college, I had grown very distant from faith and God, eventually turning agnostic due to some questions I had about Christ. Around this period of my life, I had also fallen deep into depression/SI and also dealt with ED, turning to drugs as a form of coping. Between those years, I was heavily lost, sad, and seeking hope and deliverance from the pain of depression and finding that outlet through drugs, which unfortunately wasn't the answer and brought me deeper into my own despair. At this atheist/agnostic point of my life, I still remember the first start of searching for Christ (apart from when I was younger). At my lowest, I encountered some of my first personal encounters with Jesus, having the opportunity to experience his presence even when I chose to be distant. During one of the rock bottom moments of my life, I would cry out to him. Being a skeptic of Christ, I believed I was talking to the "void", crying for answers and pleading to find peace in the chaos.

Somehow, and I attest this to this day, I knew in my heart someone (Jesus) was listening to every word I was crying out. It was such a gut knowing and feeling, that sounds truly unexplainable, but I understood someone was listening. That day was the first personal connection to God I had felt in a long while. At that time, I was not following the faith, nor searching for him, being an unbeliever, and I knew somehow in my chest that someone was listening. My cries and desperation I knew were being heard by him when I felt no one else was there. That was one of the first memorable personal connections to Christ that will always be ingrained in my heart. From that point forward, I felt indebted and overly grateful to him, and just person to person so grateful he was there for me when I was broken and listening to me when I felt I had nowhere else to turn.

Before fully committing my life to God, another instance of my introduction to Christ was a night in 2021. Still at this time struggling with depression/SI and turning to drugs to find peace, God showed his everlasting presence again. Looking back, this was another moment of God showing he was always present, even when I didn't want him, believed in him, or was seeking his help. That night I had taken double the amount of a certain drug, mainly to cope with the ongoing state of depression and trying to find relief. Going through the process of being intoxicated and nearing the peak of the high, I noticed something was off and felt for the first time that my body and mind were going through alarming physical deterioration. It felt that it was a physical and psychological understanding that I was in danger to the point of death, feeling my body shutting down. My mind had felt as though irreversible damage had been caused to it, to the point of (in the best words to describe) the brain feeling as if 50% of the capacity had died. I felt my heart racing and struggling, deciding to call for help and at that moment of feeling of physical decline and closing my eyes, I saw Jesus. I could have been wrong, but this time, before following God fully, I somehow felt it in my soul and knew instantly without question that he was the one in front of me, an extremely bright beautiful figure with his arms open. After a few moments, I started to "come to", my mind somehow felt itself repaired and healed and my fear of causing irreversible damage to my brain disappeared as my cognition came back to a state of normalcy.

On that day, I truly believed and still believe to this day that God had saved me from death, and the brain damage that I had caused. Of course, I could be wrong, but personally, based on feeling the physical symptoms of the loss of cognition, I just had a gut feeling in my heart that what was in front of me was him. I fully believe to this day God saved me, even before I knew him or as I am now, searching for him.

Years passed and my depressive state slowly healed, somehow. I believe it was due to age and the change in social environment. At that time, I was still agnostic despite the times God had shown himself to me and

his kindness. During my sophomore year of college I had gone through a heavy breakup and was looking for answers and guidance from the world. I looked in the wrong places and started leaning into the new age practices. I dabbled in tarot cards, crystals, numerology, astrology, attempting astral projection, and etc. The cards gave me answers to my questions. I felt I was learning and growing and finally I had something that was a guiding light to my future and to what I was searching for. I found answers but I also found more questions and more holes in my life. By dabbling in the occult I found myself in symbolic terms trying to fill a bottomless pit. There was no stability in the practice and even with all the answers I still felt I was going nowhere. Through a year of going down the path of the "new age" practices, I gained what I can only describe as a demon inside of me.

Around this time I was still dabbling in drugs and I found myself as illogical and out of the box as this may sound (and I could also be interpreting these symptoms incorrectly) with an abnormal weight on my nose. I started developing heinous thoughts that were not of my own and lusting over anyone within range of my sight. I was tormented by extremely horrid and truly evil thoughts such as thoughts that were specifically and individually attuned to individuals' insecurities that were driven to bring a person down mentally. Almost every thought in my mind was derived to despise, hate, and to emotionally and psychologically bring down anyone around me. I struggled so much, always avoided making eye contact and any range of eyesight toward "private areas". The more I practiced in the occult and dabbled in drugs, the thoughts (I thought I could manage) grew louder and my control over my emotions and eyes became uncontrollable. I started isolating myself as to not harm the people around me, with me battling to stay in control over my mind and my lust that wasn't of my own. I subtly destroyed relationships and it caused a lot of harm to my overall mental state. At this I knew that the only answer to this torment that I had brought upon myself was through stopping the occult practices and drugs and to start seeking for God.

This was around 2024 at this point and I started actively praying and soul-searching for him and praying for something that I knew wasn't in my control. The upside to this journey of my life is that I truly understand that there is a "supernatural" in this world. Unfortunately, what I had encountered was the dark aspect (which is all "supernatural", apart from God, are from demons/satan) but at the same time, it led me to search for the truth of the "supernatural", which is Jesus. Through being in a state of not being in control of what was occurring in my body and mind, this was the spark that started my very intentional and personal search for Christ.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

I want to add that slightly prior to full heartily searching for God, I knew objectively that God was real and the one true Lord. On paper I fully believed that what the church was preaching was the truth. Some of the notes I noted that showed the factual proof that Christ is the one and only way and religion was that (1) the world's common enemy was Christianity (solely against Christianity and not of any other religion) (seen through music industry, Technology, ie. Apple phone logo ex, roots of witchcraft, Nasa, Entertainment industry, Olympics opening act, etc.) (2) Personal Testimonies of Death Experiences with Heaven & Hell (3) Christ's death and resurrection was factually proven (4) Environmental landmarks that aligned with Biblical stories, etc etc.

In my mind I knew factually that God was ultimately the truth in this world. Unfortunately though, you have a choice to believe the truth. Choosing the ladder I knew factually Christianity was the truth but I ignored the truth, and went about my days. When I searched with my heart though, my heart and soul found him. Through that encounter, I couldn't ignore what my soul knew was the truth. Even though prior, my mind knew factually God was the way, being in a relationship with the Lord is something you can't ignore the truth of. After dealing with the occult practices and turning to God searching for help and relief from the things that I had brought into my body, I felt that that was the start of me stepping through the doorway.

Through releasing my connection with occult practices and stopping drugs and reaching out to God for help my symptoms of the "demonic presence" and influences subsided slowly. At that time I was still not quite with God yet. I wasn't fully surrendering my heart out for him to take. In all honesty I was searching for God for a quick fix in the spiritual warfare that was going on in my head and body, that I didn't know how to control nor get rid of. But ultimately reaching for God, even for the not most ideal reasons, was the start of my journey.

Around 2025, I became consumed with conspiracies and I started hearing about events of the coming times and became fearful and knowledgeable of future catastrophic events that were to come. Learning about these events filled me with fear and panic as I started to "prep", prepare, do everything in my logical scope of mind to handle unchangeable catastrophic events to the best of my abilities. From the information I was consuming I eventually stumbled across all the catastrophic events being tied to biblical prophecies. At that time I was still reading the bible searching for God, but in a more transactional form of finding a cure for my demonic thoughts and what I was combating internally. When hearing about the biblical prophecy and researching I came to the ultimate conclusion that what I had feared was coming. Of course, I could be wrong but in my mind that was the conclusion.

Through this fear and making the logical connection I started seeking him out of fear, trying to connect to him, trying ultimately to be saved, rescued from this, and also searching for guidance now, now knowing that if I believe that this is real, thus he is real as well. My motives switched as I was now not only prepping but also searching for God. In response I started reading, actually reading, and actually searching with my heart and soul for him. Unfortunately though in my general opinion I was searching still seeing Christ as more of a genie, looking for answers to be solved.

I continued my dedication to searching and I unknowingly started to become more hungry for his word, and more curious to learn more

about him. I don't believe my story of coming to him is quite cookie cutter, but my truth of finding him was, as uncookie cutter as it may sound, was through fear of the future. I started reading the bible, going to church, praying, watching sermons online and generally full-heartily searching for him. As time passed I continued to be more hungry for his word, I in my heart (in an indescribable way) yearned to learn more about him and to read as if my soul was pulling me to him. I came to him due to fear of trying to find answers and trying to be saved but with time my perspective shifted. I realized that there is something here. There was something in the words of the bible that I couldn't explain what it was but there was something there. In odd terms it was similar to a drug, I felt in my soul that there was something far greater than anything mortal, within the bible. The word was nothing like any book I had ever read, no feeling or drive to read, a yearn to read, that I had felt with any other book I had ever read in my life. I knew through time through searching that there was something there.

So I continued. I continued searching, searching now though for my own curiosity and drive and just yearning to learn and seeing hope in those words. As time passed, I went through another hard time of my life, my uncle passed away and some relationship stepbacks and I started slipping again into depression and SI. I felt in a very very long time hopelessness again. I started having SI thoughts again and searching for an escape from the day. I turned to my old coping skills of drugs and one night I became intoxicated again to find that sense of peace. That night though, I read the bible while intoxicated.

Through all the hopelessness, darkness, and sadness I felt peace when I came to the bible. There was peace and I found my hope, hope (in such an illogical way of saying this) but I found hope for the next day in the bible and now knowing, in him. I couldn't understand and I know it all sounds crazy but I found the light that I was looking for to bring me into tomorrow. After reading I believe it was in John, a passage over and over again I stepped outside, and by this time it was morning, and looked up into the sky, broken, lost hopeless yet again, and said (some-

thing along the lines of) "god, i dont what to do, i dont know where to go next but i surrender my life to you, i give my life to you, im here". In that moment I felt so much peace and hope, something that I was so dearly searching for just in an essence in order to survive the next day.

From that day forward I've committed to living my life moving forward with God, to search for him, and to always have him be a part of my walk in life. I am fully grateful and fully believe now that Jesus gave his life on the cross bearing the weight of the worst physical and spiritual pains of the world for us, for me, in order to save us. An act of love and sacrifice Jesus loves us so greatly there is truly nothing he won't do to save us, love us, and protect us. He is for us, not against us and I know now that I will not fail if he is with me.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

After that day I continued to live with God, searching for him, asking him questions, and ultimately living my life now with him alongside, vs. walking alone. The coming days after (and as so supernatural and quick of a change it was and sounds) I felt a presence of peace, and hope. Somehow in my soul I knew that I wasn't alone on this journey through life. Through my still very new search and walking with God I have gotten to (and I still to this day don't quite understand how I know) but I've come to learn more about him, his character, his love, and I've ever so slowly began to trust him. Through my walk I've come to learn he is so gracious, so loving, and just as a person I could never be anything like him, but I am so grateful to have him with me in my walk in life. I've learned his heart, through consciously walking with him I've seen his character and his beauty and how he only wants what's good for us.

I still have questions through my walk, I still have my doubts, I still have my moments of feeling distant from him, and trials and tribulations in life still come, but I am so positive when I say that I am so glad that I am going through it all with him. Comparing my life prior to God vs now even as I am still very new to it all, even with all my questions

still, I am so certain that I would much rather be with him than without.

Although I am still very much new to life with God, I know in my heart that I wish to never go back to life without him. I am so grateful for him and his light and all the times he was there for me even when I wasn't there for him. I am truly so grateful he loves me and wants to walk through life with me. I love you lord, and thank you you are my light in the darkness.

Prior to fully committing and seeking God, I now understand a few characteristics of Christ that some members of my family and church mates would proclaim that I never understood. I understand now through the times following God, (1.) the meaning behind "his timing". I initially thought that it was a more general statement that God would time events through our life to make things "fit". After an incident where the Lord used me to help a fellow sister, God revealed to me that he is truly and undeniably in control. With that day, there were certain things that had to happen at certain times. I had to be in exact positions, and exact events prior had occurred for me to prepare me to be in that such position, to the point where the event could not be claimed as "coincidence". I also never really understood (2.) why and how people had the ability to be praised so full heartily. I never understood how someone could praise something. The idea of praising something or someone was such a foreign concept to me. I understand now though, now walking with Christ I feel the desire to praise him. I'm overwhelmed sometimes with gratitude and love towards him, feeling the least I can do for all he has done is to praise him and follow his words. Through growing that personal connection with Jesus, learning his character, I feel deep in my soul the desire to praise and sing worship for him. Before fully coming to God, I remember seeing when I was in a drug group counseling meeting that members found refuge in Christ, (3.) recommending others to find their sobriety through him. I always thought that it was a form of a hook, in hopes to feed the word to those in desperation. I was wrong. Seeing through the lens of a being with God, he's truly hope when there is no hope. His presence is undeni-

able, and his love and guidance is the only aspect you should search for if you're drowning. Another aspect I learned more through my journey with Christ is the (4.) pulse of conviction. Quite immediately after turning to the lord, I felt a (supernatural) gut feeling, deterring me from actions that were not meant for me. I became more attuned to swear words (quite literally the words become hard to hear), lying, selfish acts, etc.

A goal in my life arose to live my life like God, glorifying him in my actions and my way of life. Striving to move with kindness and seeing the world through his lens, vs. my own. An additional concept I now understand is the idea of (6.) "being washed new". Prior to finding the lord, I thought it was a bunch of bologna, for how can someone change and be washed new? In my walk with God, unexplainable things have shifted. My thoughts, actions, goals, values, are different. I swear I'm talking and thinking in parables and examples more often and viewing the world differently. I'm filled with an unexplainable increase in peace, hope, and joy. I truly can't explain the shift, and it was incredibly quick, but I truly feel a difference in the way I am, feel, think, everything. Finally, I always heard the saying, "Christianity isn't a religion, it's a relationship". Truly I didn't understand the concept then, but now I fully understand. (6.) Walking with God, you have a friend with you at all times. My walk in "Christianity" can be defined as walking to seek and grow my relationships with Jesus. I talk with him, tell him about my day, I'm learning his characteristics, personality, what he values, and how he's always present. Even if it sounds crazy, I feel truly close and connected to him, he's a friend and my creator.

Through my journey with him, even with all my questions I know I won't be walking life without him from now on. To those who have not found him, truly I state that life is already hard enough, why wouldn't you want to have him in your walk through all of it. I never thought I would be where I am now, as being deep in a state of doubting Christ and Christianity (mainly through my middle-early college years). Through seeking him though, I found him and truly there is so much

hope and peace that can be found through him. Unexplainable, undeniable hope and peace is found through him. I still have my questions, doubts, disagreements, but I would choose this route with him in an instance than back when I was without him.

Truly in my heart I know that he is the way, the light, and through my time with him my trust and faith grows. This presence can be symbolically equivalent to an umbrella, covering you from the rain of life and his light as the guide to where you can trust your next step to be. Still new on this walk with the lord, I know every step with him I would never regret. Truly, objectively and with all my “objective” heart I know and claim that god is the way, the only way, and truly seek and you shall find him. He is the light in the darkness and hope for the hopeless.



Life before knowing Christ:

I was born into a Christian family so I grew up going to church. I learned about Jesus in Sunday school where I listened to bible stories and worship songs, but I didn't really have a personal relationship with God. As I got older, I didn't read the bible often and sometimes I didn't want to go to church. My life wasn't centered around God and I was drifting off away from him. I knew that he was helping me but I didn't really do anything to go to him.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

My family and I moved to Taiwan about 3 years ago. When we first arrived, I was trying to adapt to the new environment, language, and culture. It was difficult because I didn't have any friends, didn't speak the language, and didn't know my way around. I felt more of God's presence within me when I started to reach out to him for help. I started praying and reading the bible more and asking him for guidance. I felt God responding to my prayers by helping me adjust and learn the language and surroundings. I realized that I needed to answer his call and tell him that I'm his and he is mine. I believe that Jesus died for me and he saved me. He helped in times of trouble and gave me joy, peace, and love. I give him all the praise and glory for bringing peace to my heart.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

My life changed because Jesus has changed me for the better. Now I can adapt to change and be open to exploring different paths in my journey. Me and my family moved back a month ago and God has made this move back easier since God has helped me become a better adapter to change and learning new things. I have seen myself going to him more and praying for myself and for others. God has helped find my faith in him and has guided me on this journey to becoming

a child of God. He has been there for me since day one even when I don't want him. He is always there to catch me when I fall. God has truly changed me and I am so glad I have Jesus in my life.



MARGARET CUMMINS

My journey with Jesus began as an infant when I was baptised Catholic. As I grew older I went to Catechism classes after grammar school. I made my holy communion and went to church every Sunday with my parents and grandparents. When I reached my teens I felt there must be more to life than getting dressed in your Sunday's best to go to church. I felt empty and that something was missing. I did not have many friends and the friends I had did not go to church.

When I graduated high school I went on to pursue my career in fashion design. After that I got married and gave faith to my son. Later in life after his father I were divorced, my son was very instrumental in bringing me to know Jesus.

Whenever I was down or confused he would ask me to send verses from the Bible. Which as always helped me get closer to Jesus.

Years later I remarried. He was a Catholic but unfortunately, he got cancer and passed, he was anointed before he passed and gave his life to Jesus.

Now I know why I go to church every Sunday - and that it is to worship Him and follow His teachings. My friend Lori has brought me to SBCC. I have accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior and will continue to put

Jesus first in my life. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive my sins, and rose from the grave to give me eternal life. I thank my son and Lori for helping me grow closer to Jesus.

I worship Thee. I glorify Thee. I magnify Thee and most of all, I love Thee.



MARICELA LUCERO

Life before knowing Christ:

I grew up going to church and always knew about Jesus, but for a long time I was relying on my own plans and effort to feel secure and satisfied. I thought if I could achieve my dreams of becoming a doctor, building a career, and balancing a family alongside that, then I would be "enough." Deep down I struggled with control, perfectionism, and the belief that I could write my own story better than God could. Even though I believed in Him, I was still trying to save and justify myself through my accomplishments and the life I imagined.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

Over time, especially in college and then in motherhood, I came to realize that my plans weren't unfolding the way I had expected, and that it wasn't a mistake. God was redirecting me. Motherhood, in particular, became the season that revealed how deeply I needed Him. I couldn't do it all on my own strength, and I began to see that Jesus wasn't just part of my story, He was the story. There wasn't one single dramatic light-bulb moment, but instead a steady surrender : recognizing that Jesus truly is my Savior, that He died for my sins, and that life with Him at the center is far greater than anything I could achieve on my own.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

Today my life looks nothing like I once envisioned, and yet it is richer than I could have dreamed. I am a photographer, a stay-at-home mom, and we homeschool our children, and in this, God has given me the joy of teaching them, being present with them, and leading them to Christ. My priorities, values and desires have shifted: I no longer measure my worth by career goals or accomplishments, but by God's faithfulness and calling. He has reoriented my heart to trust His plans instead of forcing my own. I find joy in surrendering to His remodeling work in me, as C.S. Lewis described: I thought I was building a little cottage, but God is building a palace where He intends to dwell. My hope is not in my own efforts but in Jesus. Because of Him, I have the assurance of eternal life, and baptism is my way of publicly declaring that I belong to Him, that He is my Savior, and that I trust His plans over my own.



MICAH NGUYEN

For as long as I remember, I have always known about Jesus because of Kidzcrew. Kidzcrew is a church program for kids. In Kidzcrew, I learned about the ABC's. A equals "Admit that you have done wrong and ask God to forgive you for disobeying him". B equals "Believe that God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sin". C equals "Choose to spend your whole life depending on God's power to help you say NO to sin". I know that I am a sinner and not perfect, but I also believe that Jesus is the only way to God.

I know God is real, because when I was in lots of pain, he was there. I sprained my arm when I was in second grade. My dad was driving me

to the hospital. I was in so much pain when all of a sudden the radio switched channels on its own and started playing a song. The song was "Be All Right" by Danny Gokey, Evan Craft, and Redimi2. The song is about how everything is going to be all right, because God is always with you. At that moment, I knew I was going to be okay, because my dad said that Jesus was talking to me and comforting me through that one song.

Because I believe in Jesus, I pray to God when I am hurt. I pray for my friends that don't believe Jesus is the only way to heaven. I pray, because I believe that Jesus can heal them and save them from their sins.



PATRICIA IBARRA

For a long time, I thought I was saved simply because I was a "good person." I believed that being kind and doing the right things would earn me a place in heaven. I used to think the Bible was a collection of stories meant to teach us how to live better lives and as long as I was following that belief I would go to Heaven. I had not been to church in about 15 years despite growing up where we went to church every Sunday. The intention was always there but I was always "too busy." About three years ago, my husband and I met a family that moved into our community, and they told us about the church they were attending. Little did we know this family would become family to us and stand by us through some of the hardest of times. We decided to give South Bay Community Christian Church a try.

In the beginning, it honestly felt more like a chore than anything else to make it to church every Sunday. My heart wasn't fully in it. I even

questioned the smiles and kindness of the people there, thinking it might not be genuine. But slowly over time something started to shift. Week after week, the sermons began to speak directly to me. It felt like God was using those messages to reach into my heart. I found myself crying during the services—not out of sadness, but because I was feeling something deeper. For the first time, I felt the presence of God and started to realize how much I needed Him. I started to realize that it wasn't about earning Heaven but more about trusting Him with my life and receiving the gift of Grace and walking with Him every day. At this point, I was not fully surrendered, and I was still being lazy in my obedience by not praying with intention, consistency with reading my bible, and truly building my relationship with the Lord. I was doing more in my walk but not where I should be.

Then 2025 came and quickly became an extremely hard year. I went through trials that pushed me to the edge — emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. There were times I felt completely broken, lost, and alone. I saw how the enemy was working. It wasn't just life being hard — it was spiritual warfare that I was witnessing right in front of me, in a loved one. Even in the middle of the struggle, I started seeing signs. I started encountering people and situations that felt too perfectly timed to be coincidences. I'd hear something in a sermon, a song, or a conversation that spoke directly to my heart even more than ever before. Strangers showed me kindness at the exact moments I needed it most. Loved ones prayed for me without even knowing what I was going through. It felt like God was sending angels — not always with wings, but with love, truth, and comfort. I was actually seeing for the first time!

I started noticing how the enemy moves—not with red horns and a pitchfork, but with lies, distractions, confusion, division, and despair. I saw how the devil attacked, twisted truth, used addictions, whispered discouragement, and sowed chaos in someone close to me. I could see it—how he worked subtly, how he tried to convince people they were alone, unloved, or beyond redemption. At times, I felt him trying to whisper the same things to me.

But then, just as clearly as I saw the devil at work, I began to see the Lord moving all around me. It wasn't loud or dramatic—it was quiet, powerful, and undeniable. I'd see someone speak a word of encouragement at just the right time. I'd see a situation shift that I thought was impossible. I'd feel peace settle in the middle of my anxiety. I started realizing that God was speaking to me—showing me that He was present, that He was working, even in the middle of my battle.

That's what brought me to this decision — to get baptized. Because after walking through hell and still finding heaven's hand reaching for me, I knew it was time. I don't want to just survive anymore. I want to live fully in Christ. I want to leave behind the person I was in the darkness and rise again in the light of Jesus.

Baptism, for me, is not just a symbol — it's a turning point. It's a public declaration that I've seen the truth: the enemy is real, but God is greater. I've seen Him show up for me, and now I'm ready to show up for Him.

I'm choosing to be baptized because I know who saved me. And now, I want to live for Him. What once felt like obligation became a place of refuge and renewal. I am learning to understand what it takes to truly follow Jesus, not just to believe in Him, but to surrender my life to Him. I know my journey is just getting started and I'm excited to continue to build my relationship.

✱

PREECHA KONGKEO

Life before knowing Christ:

I grew up in Thailand and became a Buddhist when I was 20 years old. I served as a monk for a brief period before moving to America. I met my wife, Ruthy, who was also Buddhist, shortly after arriving. Ruthy passed away a year and a half ago. A week before she passed she accepted Christ. Since then I began to think about my salvation.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

I began attending SBCC Saturday afternoon service after hearing about it through a friend. I was drawn by the music and the friendly people. I began to feel this peace every time I was there and started to think that maybe Jesus is real and Ruthy was with Him. I began attending the Men of Faith and when a brother asked me if I wanted to accept Jesus at one of the gatherings, I said, “Yes”.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

I am more conscious of my life. The way I live and behave. I feel a conviction to do good. I feel motivated to know who He is and to build a relationship.



ROSSI LOPEZ

Jesus has always been in my life but it really started to get serious at the start of 9th grade. I’ve been in church ever since I was little but I only went because my parents made me and my friends go. Before Jesus I cussed a bunch bringing people down and didn’t watch what I said

around others. I wasn’t aware of who was around me and definitely hurt people I never intended to hurt. I struggled with lust before, and am continuing to fight against this temptation.

And yet, one of the people I have to thank the most is Jacksen Sera. He is the one who invited me to youth group where my faith really took a turn for the better. And if I’m being completely honest, I was going because a girl I liked went there. But it was soon after I realized that she wouldn’t fill the gap I was feeling in my heart, only God would. I started to come every week I could for the Lord, to get to know him better. When I went to my first summer retreat that is when I truly started to believe in God. Going to that retreat made me realize the power God has to move so many people. At this retreat I think this was the first time I’ve shed true tears of happiness. The first time I wasn’t afraid to worship God and the closest I’ve ever felt to him. He has really worked wonders in my life and I will always be eternally grateful. He saved me when I needed him the most. When I was at the bottom of my life he brought me back to where I needed to be. I realized my need to be saved from my sins, and have put my faith in Jesus who died and rose again.

After finding God my ways of life have definitely changed. My relationship with Jesus has led me to try my hardest to keep my mouth clean from all of the bad things I used to say to people in their face and behind their back. With God in my life I now want to share Jesus with others. My friends Soshi and Yushi didn’t believe in a God or they made up one. My brother Cruz and I told them about Jesus Christ and how He saved us all from our sins, and the gospel helped them get a grasp of who Jesus is and what He did for us. I think that is truly one of the things I’m grateful for, sharing my faith with my friends who don’t know Christ.



TOM SIRI

Life before knowing Christ:

Before knowing Jesus, I've had an issue with feeling inferior to others, and at times feeling the need to prove something to the people around me, even if that means being afraid to ask for help of any sort. It stems from my days of facing chemotherapy at an adolescent age, and years of getting bullied during my middle school years. To add on, I had my share of toxic relationships losing sense of who I am, esp. having my own faults in the relationships. I also wasn't in the best place financially, living paycheck to paycheck, even with an overdrafted checkings. I always try to do things on my own, but sometimes it leads to more difficulties, sheltering things from others, and ultimately alcoholism.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

Before believing in Jesus, I used to think he was more of a public figure. I never thought of him to be a God, and used to scoff at the idea of him being a deity.

For much of my life I had a leaning towards Buddhism through my family background. Little did I know just a few years back, would my life completely change. I had a heartfelt conversation with an Uber driver just months before the encounter, telling her pleas about the Mark of the Beast, why the world needs Jesus, her heartfelt cries for our salvation, and her seed planted getting me to where I am today. Not too long after, with some self care involved, would I finally get my driver's license, and then a series of numeric patterns appeared before me. I was seeing 33, or 333. I didn't know what they meant at the time, but they hold spiritual weight in my heart.

One night after a few drinks, I had a dream of the Lord standing right in front of me, in his ragged robe, scars. I lifted my head to look into his eyes, and confessed that I was sorry.

I believe Jesus paid the ultimate punishment to give us grace and eternal life. He suffered a long painful death as a payment for our sin. The ultimate debt for sin is death and eternal separation from God and heaven. He took our place and rose from the dead on the 3rd day, overcoming death, and resurrected. And his promise is that whoever shall believe in him shall have eternal life beside him in the kingdom of Heaven, saved by his grace, through faith, and not of our own works. Though through that faith bears fruit through the Holy Spirit, are we made new. (John 3:16, Romans 3:23, Romans 10:13, Ephesians 2:8)

I had confessed all my vices, being a serial liar, a cheater in a couple relationships, and pride in relying on my own efforts

And he lent out a hug as I broke into tears. I woke up from that dream with some weight off of my shoulders, having my first ever encounter with the Lord himself.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

After encountering Jesus, I learn to honor my words and promises, and with any decision I make, I do them consciously before the lord, and not out of impulse. A lot of the worldly things in my daily life, don't satisfy me as they use to, reminding me that I am made new and whole through the Holy Spirit.

Looking back at my early days with the Lord, I started reading the NLT bible through the Holy Bible app, and have been seeking churches where I can attend mass. After a few churches, in search of finding a place of belonging, where I can finally proclaim my faith, here I am at a SBCC, not having to follow any sacraments, or be constantly questioned on where I am in my faith in any condescending way. As a result, my life, and my sports Massage career was bearing fruit

And in light of my heartfelt encounters with the Lord, I finally cut alcoholism out of my life, declared not to rely upon my own self deeds

to prove anything, only keeping my heart to what the lord has done on the cross. With that comes a peacefulness that's not at all perfect, but presides my heart. From here on out, I saw the Lord, his kindness, Love, and Promise of Eternal life.

Let me conclude with this. Jesus loves all of you very much. All he wants is your trust in him. He's our Heavenly Father willing to open his arms to you and clean you of your sins. As a common saying in the faith, read a Proverb a day. Praise God! Our savior, Jesus Christ!



TYLER LUM

Life before knowing Christ:

I am blessed to be a person who grew up in the church. Both my parents made it known that attending church is a very important part of life. But as a child I did not know what it really meant to be a Christian. In all honesty I saw going to church as I had to wear pants on the hottest day of the week because "Sunday" had the word Sun in it and that means it's a hot day. My focus in life was sports. I was a two sport athlete playing baseball and basketball every second I could. Everyone at church knew me as the sports kid. Even so there would be some Sundays that I would miss church because I would be playing in a sports tournament. Overall, I took coming to church for granted as I was able to come to church to hang out with friends but, I truly did not realize the importance of Christ at church.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

My personal walk with Christ became real to me during a winter youth retreat in sixth grade, where I experienced a profound moment

of surrender. The overall theme of the retreat was the importance of our identities. Specifically we learned why it is so important to have our identities in Christ. This concept is what truly brought me to believe Christ is my Lord and Savior. Saturday morning sermon we discuss our identities and what creates them. Therefore, my youth pastor thought of a cool idea where we paint our identities on a 3 by 3 inch tile to represent who we are. For myself I painted myself as a green stick figure with a baseball hat on, baseball and basketball in hand because a big part of my identity was that I play sports. Along with that I painted a sea turtle in an ocean as that was my favorite animal and a mountain in the background as I thought that would look pretty. I saw myself as a simple guy who just loves sports and sea life. Later that night for Saturday night sermon our youth pastor. He spoke on how without Christ we are broken people though we are all sinners here on Earth. Therefore, we got into small groups and talked about our sins. Because we have sinned and are broken our youth pastor told us that we need to break our titles we are not whole and are broken. This message really hit me as I felt lost and confused with my identity. Everything I knew I was, was no more and I did not know really how to be or act. The next morning we had our last Sunday morning sermon before we head back down the mountain to be back with the world. During this sermon our youth pastor talked about how we are broken people but through Jesus who died for our sins. Through Jesus's death if we believe that he is our Lord and Savior we will be saved. It is not easy to try to be like Christ and our youth pastor stated how we as God's Kingdom need to come together to help support each other here on Earth to get to be back with Jesus in Heaven. After that our youth pastor revealed a mural of all of the kids in the youth group titles and it formed a cross. Through this action I was blown away. Throughout the whole retreat I was not only hearing from God but, I was able to experience God's Kingdom through the community of people he surrounded me with. This is when I put my belief as Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior and it has been the best thing I have ever done in my life.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

Life because of Jesus has been a roller coaster of emotions. But, throughout it all I have always found myself to be able to lean on him as my Lord and Savior and he has always shown up for me. Specifically, after giving my life to Christ in 6th grade I found myself trying to understand what it really means to have Jesus as my Lord and Savior. The passage that always stood out the most for me growing up through middle school, high school and a large part of my college is Galatians 5:14 “For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus changed my heart to be selfless, empathic, and loving to everyone. He developed me as a person who should always put others first and love as Jesus loved us. One of the major challenges that Jesus put me through was when I was selecting which college to go to for school. I really wanted to go to Biola University as it was a Christian school and I felt that it was a very safe place to be. But, I ended up not going to Biola as Jesus used me as a disciple of him to not be comfortable and go to a school that is not surrounded by him. When I was in school I felt Satan really took some attacks at my faith but, luckily for me I was able to stay strong and remind myself that Jesus is where my heart belongs. He has saved me and was using my story to bring others to Christ without me even trying to do so. Along this time Jesus gave me the opportunity to become a Resident Advisor which is where I found a passion and a career in serving students through a pivotal life transition.

Where Jesus is leading me. This year 2025 I felt a calling from Jesus to dive into being intentional with him and be more involved in the community of Christ. The verse he is putting on my heart is Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” I just completed my masters degree in student affairs this May and will work a full time job without school for the first time in my life. I got a job as a Residence Director at Azusa Pacific University where I did not plan on working but, I felt Jesus put me there. From my background of going to two schools which are not Christian based I felt

that Jesus is now putting my talents into a school where I am able to give back to students and help them deepen their relationship with him along with navigating the normal challenges of college. Along with finding my community at work I found my community at SBCC. Therefore, to pledge to continue living my life with Jesus as my Lord and Savior I want to be baptized in the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit.



VILAYAH KEM

Life before knowing Christ:

I grew up going to church, but for a long time, I didn't have a relationship with Jesus. Without a desire to glorify God or know His word, I treated my siblings very poorly from a young age. The impact this had wasn't clear to me until I was twelve years old. As I began to see how mean I really was and how it affected my family, I felt immense guilt. Eventually, this guilt became selfish. I hated that it was me who did that, which became a distraction for trying to do better. I also was aware that God had forgiven me, but I pushed that aside. I wanted to forgive myself.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

As I attended church and the youth ministry more, I began to dive deeper into God's word; filling my mind with truth. I realized I was holding on to the sin that nailed Jesus to the cross. He declared, “it is finished”, paid in full. Because of His resurrection, I can have a new life with Jesus. He's always working in my life, I just have to focus on Him to see it. I repented and surrendered my life to Jesus, asking for forgiveness and to be made clean.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

After giving my life to Jesus, my mind became less, “Why did I do that?” and more, “How can I glorify God now?”. I now have a desire to live according to the Bible. I’ve been reading it more often in order to know how God wants me to act, and I’ve seen Him working through me in my interactions with people. Though I’m still growing, I’m growing with Jesus. I’m learning from Jesus, who I put my faith and trust in. Because of that, I have hope in the day I come face to face with my Savior.



ZOE TSAI

Life before knowing Christ:

I am a generational Christian and have been attending church since I can remember. I started going to SBCC Sunday school when I was baby. At Sunday school we did a lot of worship dances, bible stories, and we did arts & crafts about the verses. My faith has grown by the day and that was my first introduction to God and his kingdom.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

My journey in growing my faith had a lot of ups and downs. I lived in Taiwan for around 3 years (2022-2025). My church in Taiwan was a lot smaller than SBCC, but I did my first mission trip with my family to go to Boracay, Philippines to help 2 elementary schools and those in need. We did feeding schemes for the neighboring children in need. Our team did construction work, tutoring, and arts & craft activities

with the elementary schools. On this mission trip I learned how I can spread the gospel about God’s word and got to know my team members a lot better. The little help I’ve provided made a lasting impact on the children. I think this trip changed my mindset on how I wanted to live my life and how I could be a better Christian.

The bible verse that stuck with me when I was thinking about getting baptized is:

Psalm 62:5-6: “Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken”. This verse spoke to me because now I know that I will always have hope when the worst comes because the lord is my shepherd and I can always rely on him.

Life because of Jesus: how has He changed you since you placed your faith in Him?

My experience living in Taiwan changed me and helped bring me closer to God. I choose to fully put my faith in the Lord’s hands by letting him guide me to his direction. I’d never regret living in Taiwan. Some days at night I find myself lying in bed unable to sleep, so I just talk to God, tell him about my day, my dreams or wishes for my life and pray for the best to come. This is what draws me closest to him. He has always been there for me when I needed him or not. I truly understand the sacrifice of Jesus and will always be grateful that he died for our sins and won’t ever take it for granted. I’m so glad to worship him and live in his world forever.





SERVICE TIMES:
SATURDAY 5:00PM
SUNDAY 9:00AM & 11:00AM

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