



BAPTISM TESTIMONIES
April 16 & 17, 2022

Saturday, April 16

James Shipley

My name is James Shipley and I grew up in a loving home with parents who instilled in me good values like no drinking, no stealing and no lying, to name a few. As I grew older, I grew taller and because of my height I was bullied in school and that hurt. My dad was also older and due to having a bad heart, I never got to play catch with him.

When I was around 15 or 16 years old, I accepted Jesus at an altar call at my local church.

One day I was driving with my dad and he froze, which caused a crash. I was rescued but my dad went to the hospital, and I couldn't bare to see my dad like that. Losing my dad was very hard. I was very upset, but I know looking back God was with me even though I couldn't recognize it at the time.

I always put off baptism; I don't really know why, but seeing God being with me through my life makes me want to finally take the plunge. I am thankful that I have a heavenly Father who loves and accepts me and works everything for my good.

“¹⁴ Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. ¹⁵ When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. ¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.” Psalm 91:14-16

Saturday, April 16

Marcy Oakes

This quote from Maya Angelou has meant a lot to me: “Stepping onto a brand-new path is difficult, but not more difficult than remaining in a situation which is not nurturing to the whole woman.”

I have faced many challenges in my life. My twin boys have autism, and it has not been easy. I have had to endure many things, including many days of evil ... however I know that it was the devil affecting people. Not everyone knows God’s love and I see how people live with hardened hearts and minds. It grieves me that people choose fear over love.

I have needed God’s serenity, and called out to Him for it so many times. I’ve prayed this prayer: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. God has answered this prayer many times.

God taught me to surrender and stop believing the devil’s schemes of ego and lies.

I am happy to say today: Lord Jesus, I choose to go Your way and to turn away from the works of the devil. Jesus, You are my Saviour.

I stand before Jesus today to pledge my everlasting faith and trust in Him.

I have the happiness and peacefulness of Jesus living within me. I know that God is always guiding me and I thank Him for that gift. I want to live with clear eyes to see God’s truth and His direction.

I know God’s truth, that He sacrificed His Son on the cross for me. For so long I felt so unworthy of that love. But now I know how real it really is ...

I am so thankful for Heartland. God thinks each one of us is special. It’s great to be part of a church family that believes that we are forgiven, and we know our Lord, who is kind and ready to forgive. I’m happy to be with people who believe that God is rich in grace and faithful in love to all those who call on Him. Psalm 86:5

Saturday, April 16

Marcy Oakes cont'd

Lastly, I believe in myself again. I see God like a good friend who's like a star shining up in the sky; you don't always see them but you know they're always there. I've been seeking and searching for such clarity for so long heavenly Father, on what I'm supposed to do when I grow up. I want my light to shine for Jesus. God is guiding me into a new career path and I am excited about it.

I want to keep choosing love and not fear. I know that if God brings me to something that He will also bring me through it.

Today is the first day of my new birthday—my born-again day. Thank You, heavenly Father; thank You, Holy Spirit; thank You, Jesus.

I just want to say, heavenly Father, thank You for your work in my life. I am so proud of what I have overcome and the woman I am today. All I stand for is from You and I know that there is so much more that I have to do. Thank You for taking my hand and being my crutch. I know that this is just the beginning of our long walk together. Amen!

Connor Henschel

I really want to be baptized because Jesus was baptized in the water and I want to follow Jesus.

Everybody will cheer me on. That makes me so proud. God and Jesus will be so proud of me.

I choose to follow Jesus with my life.

Saturday, April 16 - Small Group Baptism

Seth Pauls

Hello my name is Seth Pauls. I'm 19; I grew up in a Christian household with four brothers and attended church most of my life. I recently moved from Terrace, BC and have been attending Heartland ever since. I knew God existed but I didn't have the right understanding of Him. He was just a person who had impossible rules and punished you if you disobeyed.

This idea played a huge role in my life throughout my childhood and my teen years. In grade four, I had to leave my Christian school and skip half of the year. This was difficult for my family and gave me a wrong image of who God was. This made me bitter towards God, because it produced hardship for my family. Now I see how blessed our family was, and even through the struggles we stood by each other.

I started homeschooling while my older brothers went to public school and few friends remained in my life. The two years I was alone doing homeschooling were really tough. I became addicted to pornography and neglected my school. Being ashamed of who I was and what I was doing, I became insecure of my personality. After two years we realized homeschool wasn't working so I started public school.

They bumped me up to be with my age group so I was lacking three years of school. These were the years that I discovered that I was socially awkward and had no filter. In high school God blessed me with a gift of trades and working with my hands, which was perfect timing because I really struggled with most academics. I went to a trade college for grade ten and competed in trade competitions. I planned to pursue carpentry and start a cabinetry company which I would be doing on my own strength and not giving God credit for blessing me in this. At this time I was battling depression, pride and lust. This was my lowest moment; then God stepped in and used my brother's baptism testimony to lay waste to the lies that I was telling myself, and He planted a seed that grew in its rubble.

Saturday, April 16 - Small Group Baptism

Seth Pauls cont'd

A few months later when I was 16, I dedicated my life to Christ and confessed everything to my dad. It wasn't easy because we never said our problems out loud and God was the only one who could give me that strength. I graduated a year early because of the trade program. That's when God said "no" to all my plans. He gave me a job as an auto glass technician, which was the only trade that I said I would never do.

I hated it but I can see He kept me in it because it was in high demand when I moved to Edmonton. I didn't plan to move to Alberta, but God knew I needed to get away from my old life and move somewhere I had only visited once. I didn't know I was lacking fellowship but He provided it through Heartland, my small group and Conquer. I have witnessed change in my life with these groups and God is the only one who can plan that. And I want to walk with Him throughout my life, giving Him praise in all things.

Sunday, April 17

Erin Hollingsworth

In Pastor Al's sermon a few years ago on baptism, he talked about the lies the devil uses to stop us from getting baptized. I've believed those lies for longer than I should have. I believed the lie that this baptism would negate my infant baptism. I believed the lie that I wasn't strong enough of a Christian to be baptized. I believed the lie that it wasn't necessary in my journey. I believed the lie that my testimony isn't really that important.

But today I stand up and say no to Satan's lies. It's true that my testimony really isn't so special or unique, but it's a lie that it's not an important story to God. I grew up in a Christian home with fantastic Christian parents and was baptized as an infant. I then did profession of faith as a teen in the next logical step in my faith journey. But nothing has changed much since then—at least not until a few years ago. The last few years have seen some hardship. The last few years have seen love. And the last few years have seen A LOT of growth.

I have jokingly asked my husband about why he married me six years ago when I think about the person I am today in comparison. Through all of this, God has been there, waiting. Jesus has been there, waiting. And when I asked the Holy Spirit a year ago to give me a heart more eager to know the Lord, the Spirit did just that.

There's been growth since that moment—small, steady steps towards knowing Jesus and God more. I'll keep praying for a heart that longs to know Jesus more and I'll keep making slow steady steps towards him. Today is my public confession of my love for God. It's also a step forward in my journey as a follower of Christ to live a life that is more faith-filled, more holy, and more pleasing in God's eyes.

Sunday, April 17

David Bollana

When I was little I always tried to do good and I made sure to thank God even for the times of suffering in my life. He loved me so much that He sent His Son to die for my sins. I knew this, but I did not understand it. Instead of rejoicing in this revelation I felt shame and guilt. I felt terrible every time I did anything wrong in my life, and so each time I stumbled, I would punish myself. I would try to find a way to pay for the sin that was already paid for. Only then could I confess and ask for forgiveness.

I did not actually pursue the life that Jesus wanted for me; I kept trying to find purpose in the world instead of in Him. The only way to feel like I was achieving anything was when I was fighting something. To me, pain and struggle was still the best way to show God that I was trying to be good enough for his love. So I joined the Infantry, with the hopes that I would finally prove my worth to the one who died for me. This is where I learned that I am not enough; I cannot do this job on my own. I needed something more, so when my mom told me about Mount Carmel Bible College, I applied as soon as I could.

I consider this school to be the place where I came know to Christ. Through my teachers, my family and my friends at the school I learned what it meant to be a Christian. I was given new marching orders, taken out of my comfort zone, and taught about the true meaning and extent of God's grace.

I am still an infanteer and I love my job, but now I understand that God did not put me here so that I might pay for all that I have done. He put me here to be a light, so that He can shine through me to those around me. Now that I am no longer a slave to my shame, I want to declare my allegiance to Jesus Christ, so that the heavenly and earthly realms will hear.

Sunday, April 17

Meghan Guest

The reason I am getting baptized today and that I even have a testimony is because of the powerful unfailing love of Jesus pursuing me throughout my wandering. He has never abandoned me, but gently reminded me of our original relationship.

I was born into a Christian family during a time of duress and marital breakup. One morning during my mother's devotions I asked her about Jesus, she explained who He was and that He could come into my heart and be my friend. At two-and-a-half years old, I said yes to Jesus and gave my heart to Him for the first time. As a child I had a pure and innocent faith; I knew and memorized Scripture and I talked to every stranger I met about Jesus.

My teen years were more like a rebellious disaster; I kept seeking my own truth and avoiding the call on my life.

At 20, in university, I slipped into a major depression, so I began praying to God again. I realize now that during that time Jesus kept meeting me where I was at.

At 25 I met my husband and we married. I started regularly attending church in 2014 while I was pregnant with our first child, Grace. The Lord led me into a period of rededicating my life to Him; repenting, committing and worshipping. In 2016 at a retreat I was completely freed from the past shame and guilt of all my sins! Since then I have been walking with Jesus, eager to learn and obey whatever He asks from me.

It's a constant discipline to surrender my thoughts, words and actions daily. But Jesus has taken me on this journey carrying me, guiding me, and patiently waiting for me. I have such a real and authentic joy now; my relationship with Him progressed from a simple knowing to a deep and meaningful everlasting life. I can't be complacent or ordinary anymore – I want to be the hands and feet of Jesus. I want that fire to burn so everyone can see it; it's a boldness and courage unfounded by my own effort. I am so dedicated to be in His presence and so grateful for all He has done to help me, I will never take that for granted. I want to keep my life relevant for Him, and now I have the gift of teaching my children all about who He is to me! For the first time in my life IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL!

Sunday, April 17

Phil Wilcox

2 Corinthians 13:5 says, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves." I was brought up in a good Baptist home to two parents who did their best to instill the fear of the Lord into me. As a young boy I was asked if I would like to invite Jesus into my heart and so I said a prayer to do so and not long after was baptized. I went to church on Sundays, I knew all the Bible stories, I didn't drink or do drugs, was saving myself for marriage and did all the things I needed to do, to be a Christian.

But as I grew older the life I was being asked to lead was too restricting and the rules felt over the top and downright oppressive. So I held onto the rules I deemed made me a "good person" and figured I'd let Jesus pick up whatever I missed. I lived by putting myself first with not a thought of God. I did what I wanted, I said what I wanted. I had an unwholesome tongue which spoke carelessly, saying whatever it desired. I was a liar, a thief; I would like to say I wrestled with lust but I didn't put up much of a fight. My heart was cold and filled with hate for those I deemed did me wrong. The worst was the self-righteousness that judged others but made excuses for myself when I did the same things, saying, at least I didn't do what that guy did or, I'm thankful I'm not as bad as him. It was all good though because I had said a prayer once, right? I walked in darkness living by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

About four years ago I was taking stock of my life, a life that included addiction, a failed marriage, a feeling of emptiness and loneliness full of shame and guilt and an apathy to life. I had come to the realization that the claims of the Bible were true and I had wasted my life. 1 John 2:3-4 says, "We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person."

Sunday, April 17

Phil Wilcox cont'd

I was a fraud and Jesus would never accept me; I had examined myself and failed the test. After a lot of struggle, through absolutely no doing of my own, I was called by the father and he granted me repentance.

Jesus said "*If you love me, keep my commandments.*" I told the Lord I am not sure if I can ever love you but I will do my best to follow and obey you. As it turns out, "*this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.*" Though I am not perfect and have a long way to go in all areas, I now have the desire and commitment to do the will of my Lord and Saviour.

How to Begin a Journey to New Life

1. Acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the only way to God and that you need Him in your life.

John 14:6, "*I [Jesus] am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*"

2. Be willing to turn from the things that God would not approve of as outlined in the Bible, and instead, decide to live according to His Word; honour Jesus Christ by how you live your life. (Repentance)

1 John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins to him, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*"

3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the grave and accept His payment on your behalf.

John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*"

4. Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come into your life. Expect the Holy Spirit to live with you, live in you and give you power to live His way.

This prayer enables you to live eternally with Christ in heaven.

Lord Jesus,

I know that I am distant and disconnected from you because of my wrong behaviour and that I need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins and I trust in You alone for You to save me. I choose to turn away from the things in my life of which You don't approve and now surrender my life to You, to obey You and follow you. I invite You to come and reign and rule in my heart and life and open my spirit. Establish Your presence within me by Your Holy Spirit. I choose to trust and follow You as my Lord and Saviour. Amen .

Easter – It’s a Big Deal | April 16 & 17, 2022

The Small Group Sermon Study

1 Corinthians 15

Prayer: *Father, in Jesus’ name, through the Holy Spirit, thank You for the death and resurrection of Jesus. We pray that You would enrich our experience of Your life and give us boldness to share this good news with the people around us.*

Icebreaker: Tell the group about a favourite Easter memory or tradition. Why does this stand out to you?

Read the key passages of Scripture from the sermon, then discuss the following:

1. Pastor Al shares 2 Corinthians 5:17, talking about metamorphosis. He then tells a story about a larva becoming a dragonfly. He tells us that “we will be changed into something beyond our wildest imaginings.” Do you believe that we will be changed into something beyond our wildest imaginings? Why or why not? Describe for your group why this is important to you and how this truth can positively change your day-to-day life.
2. Pastor Al tells us that Jesus coming to earth is the catalyst that brings incredible change to our lives. Take a few minutes to talk about a positive change that Jesus has made in your life. Now share about an area of your life that is hard to change and you need Jesus’ help and the support of your group. Take a risk and be as vulnerable as you think is necessary.
3. Pastor Al says, “Once you are ‘born again’ into this new reality-change, growth, metamorphosis doesn’t stop.” Why do you think that this is important to keep in mind on a regular basis as a follower of Jesus? How does the Holy Spirit help you with this?
4. 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 is a powerful passage about going from earth to heaven. Why is Jesus’ victory over sin and death important for your group? How can you as a group encourage each other with the hope of heaven today?

Personal reflection: *Jesus calls each of us to ongoing change. Spend a few minutes talking to Jesus about how you want His help for you to change. Invite the Holy Spirit to fill you in a fresh way today.*

Spend a few minutes thinking about what heaven is like. What does this do to your spirit, mind, will and emotions? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sense of the hope of heaven today.

Who do you know who needs to hear about the good news of Jesus today? Take some time to write down their name(s). Spend time as a group praying together about these people and asking for opportunities to share Jesus with them – or that the right person would share Jesus with them.

**See the weekend resources for help to walk people through praying a prayer of salvation.*

Is there anything He wants to impress on your heart about the resurrection today? Take some time to thank Him for this.

Prayer: *Pray as a group for each other to be filled with the hope of heaven and the power of the Holy Spirit for change in the here and now. Spend some extra time praying for the names that the Lord put on your heart today.*