

Hello. First of all I'd like to say a huge 'thank you' to everybody here today. I know that for many coming to Church isn't something you really do so I am so grateful to you that you have come to witness this very special point in my Christian life.

Today is not just about me, or Caleb, and our desire for God but it is about giving praise to God and thanking him for sending Jesus to die so that we may have the chance to live with him in eternity.

I was born to Christian parents just around the corner from this Church. My dad is the pastor here, so many would automatically assume that I- by default- would become a Christian. This however is certainly not the case. Becoming a Christian is about one's personal relationship with God and is not about your background. I find it truly amazing to think about the dying thief on the cross next to Jesus who, in the last moments of his life- despite his bad ways and background- saw God's grace and was able to enter in to glory.

Though some people are able to, I cannot pinpoint a date where I became a Christian but there were two times in my life that I can remember as significant. The first time I can think of was about springtime 2006 when I was 6 years old and I was just going about my normal Saturday lunchtime in a normal way when, quite suddenly, a thought came in to my head, something that I had never thought about before and that was the sudden realisation that at some point I was going to die. This troubled me as I went to bed, so I prayed; I didn't really know what I was looking for or what I was asking God for but it *had* troubled me. I listened intently to Dad's sermon the next day, I can't remember what the sermon was about (that's not to say the preaching here is easy to forget by the way!) but the sermon challenged me enough to think further. It was a few days later when I prayed a very simple prayer: thanking God for his son Jesus and that I want him to be a part of my life. Even at a very young age, I felt as if my worries had been relieved.

Despite this, I didn't really understand the radical change that had happened in my life and it wasn't until a few years later that I understood more about being a Christian. I realised that before I was spiritually dead but Jesus died so that I could have the Holy Spirit in me to make me alive! I was about 9 years old when I prayed asking for my wrongdoings to be washed away and that is why I love the words from the hymn '*When Peace Like a River*', where it says "My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more."

When compared to other conversions, my story may not sound particularly dramatic, but every conversion is so significant that in Luke 15:7 we are told that Heaven rejoices at the repentance of one person. As soon as that radical conversion took place, I became a 'new creation' as it says in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come"

My Grandma was somebody who was totally spiritually minded. All of my grandparents love The Bible and have given me spiritual encouragement and support regularly but Grandma, during

her time on earth, spoke about her grandchildren continuing her 'legacy' of reading the Bible and praying every day and making our lives totally devoted to God. I praise God that because I know that if I were to die right now, I would go straight to Heaven and I would see all of the people- such as my Grandma- that I knew who loved God while on earth; not only that but I would see the one who died and suffered for me so I could go straight to Heaven.

My baptism symbolises my old sinful self being buried and being completely dead and rising as a resurrection with Jesus. I take comfort in the words of Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ so that I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

I am getting baptised because I want to follow my saviour who gave up his life for me and I'd like to ask you to consider if you have accepted Jesus as your own personal saviour.