

Baptism Service – Victory Christian Centre

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Baptisms are an occasion to **celebrate**, because it gives people an **opportunity to publicly declare** their faith in **Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour**.

We **read from the bible**, about an occasion when apostle Peter was **speaking to the people about Jesus Christ**, about how He died a sacrificial death on the cross.

He explained to them that **even though many of them were religious people**, they still could not make it to heaven on their own merits.

If there is one thing that God wants us to understand today, it is this:

- People don't get to heaven because they are **religious**
- Rather, people get to heaven because they have a personal **relationship** with Jesus Christ

Acts 2:36-38 (NLT) *“So let everyone know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!” 37 Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” 38 Peter replied, “**Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.**”*

These instructions were not just applicable to the people to whom Peter spoke in his day. They are very true and applicable for us today!

1. **Repent of your sins** (that means, turn away from your wrongdoings)
2. **Turn to God**
3. **Be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ**

These folks who will step into the baptism pool very shortly have done exactly that.

The people that Peter was speaking to weren't necessarily bad people.

They probably tried their best to live a good life, obey the 10 Commandments, and yet, they still needed to be saved from the consequences of their sins.

No one makes it to heaven on their own merits

Romans 3:20 (NLT) For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

That's why we turn to God and accept eternal salvation as a gift, purely on account of what Jesus had done on the cross.

Ephesians 2:8 (NLT) God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.

Saved from what?

- Saved from eternal damnation

Believed in what?

- Believed in Jesus Christ and His completed work on the cross
- Believed in the fact that God sent Jesus to die a sacrificial death for us
- And in doing so, He took the punishment of our sins on himself

Romans 3:23 (NLT) For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

Romans 6:23 (NCV) The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A gift that is offered must be received and accepted.

John 1:11–13 (NLT) He (Jesus) came to his own people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

- When Jesus came to earth, Jewish people by-and-large rejected Him

- But to all who received Him as their personal Lord and Saviour, He gave them the right to become children of God
- They became born again, which is a spiritual birth

John 3:1–7 (NLT) *There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. 2 After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” 3 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” 4 “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” 5 Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. 7 So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’*

- Ultimately, according to Jesus, only “born again” believers can see and enter God’s Kingdom and get to heaven
- Jesus emphatically said: You must be born again

How do you become born again?

Apostle Peter’s instructions in Acts 2:36-38 tell us what to do:

1. **Repent of your sins** (that means, turn away from your wrongdoings)
2. **Turn to God**
3. **Be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ**

Romans 10:9 (NKJV) *If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Saved from what?

- Saved from the punishment of our own sins
- Saved from spending eternity in a place called hell

Salvation Prayer:

“Heavenly Father, I thank You that You sent Your Son Jesus Christ into the world to save me. I recognise that I have broken Your commandments, and

that I cannot save myself by my own good deeds. Lord Jesus, I thank You that You have taken the punishment for my sins by dying on the cross. I make a decision now to surrender my whole life to You and everything that I have. I receive You as my personal Lord and Saviour. I thank You that I am now forgiven, and that I am now born again. Please lead me and guide me and show me Your plan and purpose for my life. Help me to be strong so that I can live according to Your purpose and Your plan for my life. I pray this in Jesus' Name, amen. "