

# WHY STORY?

At Element we believe it is important for people around us to understand the changes that are taking place in our own lives based on the work of Christ in us. To help others understand what Baptism is and what it means to those being baptized on a personal level, we have asked them to share their life and stories with you, those attending and those online, in a more personal way than maybe you are use to.

In Baptism we are making a public statement about our life and commitment to walk in the ways Jesus calls us. Many people only get the Jesus "as seen on TV" and don't understand what Jesus does in "real life" or what following Him looks like on a practical level. Baptism is not magical, but it is a deeply spiritual event that reflects the work Jesus has done in our lives. The act of Baptism is symbolic in that we identify with the death and resurrection of Christ. We are essentially being buried (by going under the water) and raised to walk in new life (by coming out of the water).

The entire point is public identification with Christ and His work within us. That He is our great God and Savior that has come to restore a broken humanity that cannot have a relationship with God on our own. He is the Redeemer, He is the Remedy, He is the Hope, and He is our Life.

We also have the hope that one day you too will come to the saving knowledge of trusting in Jesus with your life. It makes all the difference in the world.

Aaron



# OUR STORIES

June 4th, 2017



ELEMENT  
christian church

# EMMA ENOS

## Want more information about JESUS?

**Ask any of the people baptizing,  
and the Element Leaders,  
or read more here:**



[http://www.ourelement.org/about/  
what-we-believe/statement-of-faith](http://www.ourelement.org/about/what-we-believe/statement-of-faith)

Hello, my name is Emma Enos, I go to Element Church and I am 10 years old. Before Jesus saved me I didn't quite understand everything about God.

I prayed to God when I was very young, younger than 10. All I said was, "Forgive me of my sins." I thought that's all you had to do, say those words and believe that the Lord existed.

When I was 8 years old, my Bunga (Grandma) said, "Oh, my spiritual birthday is coming up." I asked, "What is a spiritual birthday?" My Papa (Grandpa) said that it is the day when you got saved by Jesus. He then told me to get a Bible and read Romans 3:23. *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* He explained that I am a sinner and God paid the price for my sins in the person of Jesus. We prayed together on January 1, 2015 and I was saved. It was more than "forgive my sins," it is that Jesus is my Lord and God.

I am happy that I now know the Lord and love Him! I am very excited to be baptized and let other people know that I am saved. Even though I am now saved, I am still not perfect, but I am a child of God no matter what happens.

# TIARA BUMANGLAG

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Hi everyone! My name is Tiara and I am 20 years old. I have been raised right here in good, old Santa Maria for most of my life.

Growing up, I was not raised in a very “religious” home. I come from a dysfunctional family, with my mom and dad being absent from my life growing up due to substance abuse. The times when my mother did show up and try to parent me, there was a lot of moving around. I witnessed a lot of things that I did not understand. This dysfunctionality led me to the place where I mistrusted and became angry with God; I felt so hurt that He didn’t protect me when I needed Him the most. Because of my view that God didn’t care, I had given up on any relationship with Him at a very young age.

It was during my teen years that I began my path to destruction. I began living a reckless life that consisted of underage drinking. I gave up on myself because I believed that God had given up on me. I became more and more broken and disappointed in myself. Eventually, I started to realize that the way I was living was not sustainable in the long run. I was in desperate need of change and I knew it; I just didn’t know or believe there was a way out.

Until, God sent me a sign to show me the way out of my destructive life and back home into relationship with Him. It began with my dear friend Vanessa Kernes, she was the sign God sent to me, when she introduced me to Element; that Sunday Jesus changed my life.

I kept coming back and I remember crying every Sunday for about a month after attending my first service. I came to see and know that God had been reaching out to heal me for so long and I continuously neglected Him out of anger and resentment.

After being at Element, and hearing the Gospel, I decided to give my life up to Christ and accept Him into my heart.

Jesus sought me out in the middle of my brokenness, my sadness, my hurt, and saved my life. He works miracles through the pain we experience in our lives because He is good and He loves me and He has never once left me in my times of despair.

Since I’ve learned of God’s grace and accepted Christ into my life I have experienced profound healing in myself. I have also experienced so much forgiveness for the people who hurt me the most, and through that, He has brought me the peace I have been longing for. The relationship I have with Christ is stronger than ever, and I love living in His image and sharing the gospel (His good news) with everyone I encounter.

# ALMA SANCHEZ

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My name is Alma Sanchez. I am 41 years old. I was born and raised in Compton, California. I recently moved to Lompoc from Paramount, California. I have 5 children. My oldest is 21 and my youngest 2.

I come from a Christian Family, my parents converted to Christianity when I was 6 years old. When I look back at my life I would say I never had any "thing" missing in my life. What I mean is that I believe God had blessed me with wonderful parents that have loved and served the Lord for as long as I can remember. They did so with all of their heart. Even until this day they remain faithful. I pray to the Lord that one day I can become like them.

However, somehow in the midst of all the blessings I received, something went wrong in my life (by "something" I mean me). I grew tired of my nice life and wanted nothing to do with God. I wanted to live like the rest of the world. I thought everyone seemed "happy" being accountable to no one other than themselves. In my quest to find "happiness" I hit rock bottom.

At 19, I became a single mother and I became involved in the party scene, poor relationships, and drinking. I thought I would be happy if I simply settled down. I got married and had my second child. However, after getting married, the party life, bad influences, and drinking continued. Eventually my marriage ended up in a terrible divorce. In the process, I ended up hurting my children. My children hated me! My heart had hardened and I sunk even deeper, but I still wanted to prove that I didn't need Jesus in my life.

I met my husband and we had 3 children together. I felt I had finally got my life put together because I now had a loving,

understanding husband and beautiful children. But I still felt a void in my heart. I felt lonely inside, and betrayed by life. It was at this time that I first came to Element. It was my 21 year old daughter that brought me.

She had come to Element through an invite from a friend. Everything in the message was nothing new to me, it was something I had heard all my life, but chose not to truly accept. Once I decided to stay at Element I found that I really enjoyed the messages that were preached. I have enjoyed it from the first time attending. I have now chosen to fully accept Christ as my Savior and follow Him.

As I look back through it all, I now see that God in His mercy has shown me how much He loves me! He has opened my eyes to see everything I've been looking for. He has shown me that He was always right in front of me. I can now see that the world cannot give me the peace and joy I need; the peace and joy only God brings. I now realize that worldly ways only bring destruction. God has restored my relationship with my children and through Him I can see His Glory!

Since going through all the ups and downs in life, I found that God has always been calling me. I have been able to renew and strengthen my faith because my faith is in Him. I have been able to help my family dedicate their lives to Christ as well. Through the ways of Jesus Christ, our faith has grown. Now my oldest son, Nathan, and I have decided to get baptized together.

# NATHAN ORTIZ

My name is Nathan Ortiz and I am 15 years old. I was born and raised in Paramount, California. I recently moved to Lompoc from Paramount, California. I attend Cabrillo High School and I enjoy being part of the cross country and track team.

I come from a family where my grandparents are Christians. As I was growing up, my grandparents were the ones who cared for me and my oldest sister most of the time, as my parents were mostly busy working. Growing up, my grandparents were the ones who always talked to me about God.

My uncles were like father figures and always talked about how good Jesus is and what He has done for our sins. I am very grateful for what He's done for me, and for the things He's given me. I have seen His glory in my life.

Throughout my childhood I have had a lot of negative things happen to me. My parents were constantly arguing which led to a divorce when I was 10. Since then my dad has not been in my life. However, my mom remarried a few years later and I get along well with my step dad.

I came to Element with my parents and I enjoy the service and the worship and I am constantly reminded of how good Jesus has been to me. I want to get baptized because I want to honor Jesus and grow closer to Him. I have surrendered my life to Him as my only God and Savior and I want to live a life that honors Him.

# SARA HYLTON

My name is Sara Hylton, and I am 29 years old. I have two amazing parents, Dan and Connie, who raised me in a home that made sure I knew the love of Jesus. They would not only take me to church regularly, but show me Jesus daily through their actions. I was dedicated as an infant, but my parents always believed that baptism should be my decision.

I cannot remember a time that I ever rejected God, but I did slowly drift away from Him in my mid teens. I attended a very legalistic youth group during this time that reinforced the idea that if I went to sleep without repenting for every sin I committed that day, I would surely be destined for Hell. In the end it was too much for me to keep up with (I mean, who could possibly remember every sin they commit in a day?)

As human beings we sin every day, many times when we aren't even aware of our actions, but instead of seeking counsel, I decided to abandon my "religion." As you can obviously see by reading this, I didn't understand the meaning of grace. I also didn't understand Jesus' sacrifice; I knew he died for me, but I didn't fully understand the "why."

I can honestly say that I never stopped believing in God. Throughout my teens and adult life. I definitely had my doubts, but I always defended my beliefs, no matter how shallow they may have been at the time. When I went to college I became a science major. As you can imagine I was faced with a lot of adversity concerning my faith. One classmate in particular would harass me about my beliefs to the point where I was in tears. After a while it became easier to just keep quiet and pretend like I didn't believe at all. Taking college science courses confused me in my faith because every day I was listening lectures and reading

## SARA HYLTON (CONTINUED)

excerpts that said that same thing, that God couldn't possibly be real. When people who have no faith sit in authority over you, preaching every day their belief, it can begin to make you question.

I continued this path for years, but I felt a constant emptiness that I tried to fill with meaningless relationships and friendships. My feelings became hurt left and right. Just when I thought that, surely, God wouldn't allow any more pain in my life, my brother passed away; it was the worst day of my life.

When a family member dies, your family either falls apart or becomes even stronger, my family experienced the latter. Many people ask God, "Why?" They abandon Him because they feel that He abandoned them. My parents, instead, leaned on Jesus more than ever before. He got us through the pain of the loss and I believe my brother's death was the catalyst for my rekindled faith.

I moved to Chico, CA for school about 6 months after my brother's death. I knew no one and was six and a half hours away from home. I had a lot of time to think and reflect on my life during this time. I was forced to grow up in a very short period of time. I thought about God a lot, but I was still afraid of not being good enough for Him.

Finally, in January of 2016, I reached out to Jason (who is now my husband) about Jesus. We had many mutual friends, but had never crossed paths ourselves. I saw what a strong believer he was and wanted him to share his experience with me. Jason explained God's grace to me and He told me that I was enough because Jesus was enough.

It wasn't until I moved back to Santa Maria and participated in Redemption Groups that I fully understood what being enough really looked like. I learned that it's ok to be a "work in progress;" that Jesus died for us when we were his ENEMY. It continues to baffle me that He made the ultimate sacrifice for us knowing full well that we would continue to sin. Jesus died for me. God gave up his son for me because I was worth it to Him.

The beauty of my salvation experience is that God has continually drawn me to Himself throughout my life circumstances. There are times that my legalistic view of God still rears its head and I start to freak out, but then Jesus reminds me that it is He who accepts me as His child. I am accepted because of Jesus' work for me, not because of my own works of righteousness. My old misunderstanding of grace now gives me the ability to have compassion for others in the same condition. Today, if you are struggling with how you think God sees you, He sees you through the eyes of Jesus. You are precious in His sight, and Jesus longs for a redeemed relationship with you.

I am getting baptized today because I now understand grace better. I now understand all things can become new, even me.

# NATHAN DAYLEY

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Hello, my name is Nathan Jay Dayley. I was born in Pocatello Idaho. We moved from Idaho and I grew up In Nebraska, I have two other siblings.

Growing up, my family and I weren't regular church goers, we were those who would come on Easter and Christmas. After I grew up and graduated high school my life became a roller coaster with no real direction. There would be moments of desperation where I would want to better myself and change, however, I was never fully ready to surrender to God. By not surrendering, I continued living a life that was centered upon myself.

In March of 2016, I thought that making a geographical change would help me get a grip on my life, so I decided to move out to California to try to "find myself." That's the problem with trying to "find myself" though, it always results in the same thing, living my life, by my own will, to no avail.

In July of 2016, I had hit rock bottom where I once again felt hopeless and broken. I knew if I ever wanted to have true and meaningful life, instead of just existing, that I couldn't be the center of my own life. There would need to be a change in me that could only take place by turning my life over to something, more importantly some ONE, greater than myself.

My brother Kris and sister-in-law Lee picked me up when I was at my lowest and that is what saved my life. I then walked into the doors of Element through the suggestion of a great friend of mine, Shane Piper and his wife Annette. I'm not sure that they even knew the impact that that day would have on me, and every day since.

Jesus, through Element, has opened my eyes and heart to how loving, forgiving, and gracious God is. Every Sunday I feel like I'm at home amongst my peers and my beautiful partner in crime Kait who I met here.

It's funny that I moved out to California to "find myself," but in the end, it is Jesus who found me. I thank God every day for giving me the willingness to seek Him and with His strength in me live a spiritual life with Him as the center. Today I declare my love and faithfulness to my savior Jesus Christ in baptism.

# TODD YODER

My name is Todd Yoder and my story was written on a lonely night in Sept of 2013. I'm from Ohio and I was on a travel nurse assignment in San Francisco; no family or friends were near. I've always believed in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, but something different happened this night. This is what I had written shortly afterwards, and my life has completely changed.

*I'm not really sure how to start this so here goes. Last week I was watching a video about the Gospel by a minister, it had to do with what can be fearful about the Gospel of Christ. The first time I watched it something happened. About half way through it I broke down. Literally broke down crying for what seemed like forever.*

*I felt shame, guilt, pain, sorrow, loneliness, worry (pick your adjective), I felt it. It was like a million pounds of pressure on my shoulders. In the middle of this video I started thinking of my past relationships and how they faltered. It was as if I was experiencing all the emotions that I had caused in some way (or my exes had), all rolled up in one giant 'hit you like a ton of bricks' wave of emotion. I was sobbing.*

*There have been times where I wasn't always the best boyfriend in terms of communicating and being honest about how I felt. I tended to bottle up feelings/emotions and tried to figure out things on my own instead of sharing them and talking things out. My last 2 relationships were serious, but both were ended by me; one ended by breaking off an engagement. I know there was plenty of hurt that I'd been the culprit of. Obviously not intentionally, but my fault, none the less.*

*Three of my deepest values are honesty, trust, and communication. In my mind I was very trust worthy and honest, but I was holding in the honesty and severely lacking the communication of it. I felt that shame and hurt when listening to this preacher talk about the Gospel last week; it was awful and punishing.*

*Finally, in the midst of me crying like a baby, I started to pray. I prayed so hard I couldn't believe the depths of my heart it came from. It was one of the truest forms of repentance I have ever experienced. I asked God and Jesus for forgiveness, strength, courage, and the power to change. I asked for grace, love, faith, and hope; all of it. Almost instantaneously the pain, hurt, shame, guilt, sorrow, all of it, was lifted from me and was gone. It's like it was taken out of my heart to be replaced by Jesus' grace. I felt like a new man because I am a new man through Jesus. I am a changed man, a better man.*

*Afterwards, I watched the video again. This time I took notes and sat in thought. I pondered the words I had written down and looked over the passages of scripture. I started to listen to my Christian music. I have also started watching old sermons from the church in North Carolina I once attended and started taking notes. Coming closer to God and my savior Christ Jesus is now my focus.*

Now let's come to the present. Every day I see things differently; it's as if I'm seeing everything through the lens that God wants me to use. My sin is more pronounced, the greed, lust, pride (all of it), but more importantly, so is His love, forgiveness, and faith. At home with my family, at work in the hospital with patients/co-workers, things on TV, on hikes, at the golf course, I know Jesus is right there with me.



## TODD YODER (CONTINUED)

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Now I talk to Him all the time. Do I still sin? Yes, I do. I am getting better at recognizing sin and changing, but now I know I'm forgiven and I can lead by example (even if I'm still coming along slowly in the communication department).

I would like to thank you for joining me today and allowing me to take part in baptism. I know I will share it with anyone who will listen, and bear witness to our Savior, Jesus Christ