

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

September 1st, 2019



ELEMENT
christian church

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)*

RYAN RAE

Hello all, my name is Ryan Rae, I was born and raised here in Orcutt. For a very long time it seemed to me that everything good has happened to me on the Central Coast. One of the greatest blessings was meeting the girl who would become my beautiful wife, Megan, senior year at Righetti High School.

I eventually went to college at Biola University, but after graduating came back to my “home” in order to get married on the beaches of Pismo. When we wanted to start a family, Megan and I knew the best place to raise our children would be on the Central Coast. So we moved back 6 years ago and had two kids, Kaitlyn and Aiden. They are a gift from God and we’re enjoying every minute of it.

I honestly feel that I have lived a blessed life. I grew up in “the church” and have been a Christian since I was young. My parents raised me with good morals, a strong work ethic, and to trust in the Lord Jesus with all my heart. For as long as I can remember I have always believed in God and the saving grace Jesus provides. I know it’s not by any works I do that can save me, but the grace of Jesus Christ that I have been rescued and redeemed.

Baptism was an area of struggle for me because of how it was mis-represented by my college friends. They told me that I wasn’t saved because I wasn’t baptized. I knew this wasn’t Biblically sound, but it still had left a bitter taste in my mouth. Scripturally speaking, I was saved the very second I trusted Jesus. He came into my heart and His Spirit removed my deadness and brought me back to life again; I knew that that was sufficient!

I’ve since realized that sometimes “sufficiency” is not the same thing as obedience. I have felt God calling me to receive a new fullness of the Holy Spirit. I know baptism doesn’t save me, but in being baptized I believe I will be able to give my whole self to God in new ways. I want to better serve the church, my family, and most of all Jesus Christ because He first loved me.

JESSICA LANGTRY

My name is Jessica Langtry. I was born in Moreno Valley, California, but in the 20 years of my life, have moved around every 3-4 years because my dad is in the military. My family and I moved to Santa Maria in January of 2018 and I started going to Element a year later.

I grew up in a Christian home, going to church for as long as I can remember. In middle school, I was part of a youth group that I had been invited to attend by a friend, and I started realizing that I was just “going through the motions.” I wasn’t really in love with Jesus, I simply did what everyone else did. I did this so much that I even got baptized, but don’t even remember it because it was that insignificant to me. I only know about it because my mom recently reminded me. Needless to say, after that I didn’t stay on the path that God laid in front of me, instead I grew away from my faith.

The summer before going into high school I went to Island Lake Christian Camp. The camp lasted for one week. On the last night we did an activity while at bonfire where you wrote down a sin that we were struggling with on a notecard, then we threw it into the fire to give it up to Jesus. I had written “Turning away from you.” That night I had accepted God back into my life.

Unfortunately, like the last time, I didn’t stick with it. We, again, moved in the middle of my freshman year of high school and, again, I grew away from Him. I started saying, “I believe everything happens for a reason, but I don’t know if that reason is God.” Throughout high school until my senior year I kept saying the same thing. But then I volunteered for a Vacation Bible School and I started to think, “What was I thinking, of course God exists and has control over all things!”

Shortly after VBS we moved here to California. I met Jim and Steve, the leaders for a Christian group on campus called CRU and started attending Bible studies with them every week. Then, my boyfriend, Robert, invited me to join him at Element, volunteering in the kid rooms, and attending his Gospel Community with the Warrens and Shavers. Element had opened their arms wide to me and taught me more about my relationship with God. CRU and Element helped me develop a strong relationship with God. I feel like I finally have a true understanding of my faith in God and a strong enough relationship where I won’t turn away from God again. Not that there won’t be moments of trial and failure on my part, but I know where my hope lies, it is in Him.

It is for this reason I want to get baptized today. Unlike that moment in middle school when I was doing it to fit in, today I am doing it to stand out and profess my desire to always follow God. I know baptism doesn’t make me more spiritual, but it is a commitment in front of all of you, that I love Jesus and commit to follow Him all of my days.

JENELLE CASSARO

Hi, my name is Jenelle Cassaro. I am nine years old, and I am in the fourth grade. I am adopted. I miss my parents, but I know God has a plan for me. I have lived in many different homes. First I lived with my mom and dad and then my Aunt Danielle and now with my Uncle Jason and Aunt Justine.

Going to church helped me learn about God. When I pray, I get closer to God. When I read the Bible I get closer to God. One night when I was seven, I had made a bad choice. I was really upset about what I had done and felt like no one cared about me. My mom, Justine, showed me some verses in the Bible about how we have all done bad things and broken our relationship with God, that's why we need Jesus! I decided that night to ask Jesus into my heart. I understood that Jesus died for my sins and that He came back to life – that I am forgiven! He loves me no matter what and He helps me. He is good when I am bad. I felt so happy, the next morning I told my whole class!

Now I know that God loves me no matter what I do. I want to get baptized because I know what it means. It means when you ask Jesus into your heart and you want to tell everybody that you are a Christian and want to follow Jesus. Now I like to learn more about Jesus and go to AWANA and church to learn about Him.

POPPY MARKSTONE

My name is Poppy Markstone and I am 8 years old. When I was 5 years old my brother and I were both sleeping in his room, and I asked him if he had accepted Jesus. He said yes, and asked me if I had, and I said no. So that very night he helped me pray and receive Jesus as my savior.

My whole family are Christians and they have a hope of life with God that goes on forever. I knew I needed a Savior because even at 5 years old I knew I had some sins in my life, but I also wanted to be with Jesus and my family forever. So I asked Jesus to forgive me from all my sins and be my Savior too. After we prayed, I ran into my parents' room and told them what happened. I told my parents I had received Jesus as my Savior and that my big brother helped me do it. My mom and dad cried, but they were happy tears.

Ever since then, I have been a Christian. I love the Lord and I do my best to obey Him every day. I know that God loves me, and it changed me into a kinder and sweeter person. But God has done it all. I have followed Jesus ever since then and I will follow and love Him forever.

JAIMIE GLAZEWSKI

My name is Jaimie Glazewski and I am from Southern California. I was practically born in the church and attended Christian Schools from kindergarten through college. I made the personal decision to accept Christ when I was 13 years old, after attending a weekly youth group service. I was a Chaplain at my high school, and a Ministry minor in college. I even met my husband in a "Christian Life, Faith, and Ministry" class.

Being a person of faith is nothing new to me. My whole life has been influenced by God's word, Jesus' life, and other believer's examples. Though my life has had its ups and downs, I have never really "strayed from the path" so to speak. So why did I wait nearly 17 years to be baptized?

I always thought I should have done something BIG for God because of my background: started a group, led more people to Christ, (etc. etc. etc.) before getting baptized. But as time has gone on, I've seen that it's not what I have done that qualifies me for baptism; that's the point of baptism, it's for everyone no matter the background, common or radical. God's grace is for everyone, those that have amazing conversion stories AND those that have "always been believers."

Maybe I was never destined to preach my testimony in front of large crowds, but that doesn't mean I (or you) can't still be examples of how to live by faith. God calls us to believe and be baptized, so here I am. Not another moment wasted, simple as that.

In the end we are here on Earth only for a short time, so if my only accomplishment was living a life that may have led others in the direction of Jesus, I will consider that a life well lived.

"All the kingdoms built, all the trophies won, will crumble into dust when it's all said and done. 'Cause all that really mattered, did I live the truth to the ones I love? Was my life the proof that there is only One whose name will last forever? I don't want to leave a legacy, I don't care if they remember me, only Jesus. I've only got one life to live, I'll let every second point to Him. Only Jesus."

- Only Jesus. Casting Crowns.

RYAN VANDERLEI

My name is Ryan Vanderlei and I am 37 years old. I was born and raised in Orcutt and am happy to settle down here with my family.

My family and I have attended Element for five years. We chose Element because of the inviting culture and commitment to spreading the word of God.

In my youth, I attended church and my mom taught me about faith and Jesus. Those teachings are what ultimately led me to seek a deeper relationship with God as I grew older.

I spent a good portion of my twenties pretending that I was in control of my own destiny. I looked to myself for answers instead of the Lord. During this time, I felt my life lacked purpose.

It was around 2009 when I met my wife Brittney and we discussed our hopes in exploring our faith. We both grew up with traditional rigid church backgrounds and knew we wanted to find a better fit, however, life always seemed so busy and we unknowingly put our faith on the back burner.

It wasn't until 2011, when we took a huge leap of faith with our careers, that we found ourselves in need of Jesus; not that we didn't need Him before, but this move really brought it to bear. We had moved to Monterey and on the first day were introduced to a couple that would later play a huge role in our journey with God. This couple fostered us while we were settling into our new home.

In 2013 my career brought us home to Orcutt which is where my story leads us thus far. My wife and I now have 2 beautiful children, Reese (4) and Charles (2). I am getting baptized today because I feel I have finally reached a place in my faith and heart to make an honest declaration of my commitment to Jesus. I'm excited to share this commitment with my Element family.

BRODY ELKIN

My name is Brody Elkin and I was born in San Luis Obispo, Ca. I've lived in Santa Maria my whole life and I was brought to Element at the early age of 7 by my family.

When I was around the age of 10, I was introduced to God's word and would say that's when I started following Him. I went to a Christian school called Pacific Christian for 9 years. I was a part of many of the shows and plays that helped spread God's word to others; I've also gone to church for the majority of my life and I plan to keep doing so for as long as I live.

I would say my life actually changed was when I was about 12 and finally realized that I was at "home" with God. I felt like I truly understood what God had done for me and what He gave to me. I have since realized that He is the one true God and our refuge and Savior.

Ever since my conversion I've become less boastful and more generous as well. I've also helped to spread God's word to others that needed it. I've also become more diligent and honest in the things I do as well.

The reason I want to get baptized is I want to show the world that God is our true Salvation and that He has done so much for us. I will continue to trust Him with everything that happens within my life!

RON CROMWELL

My name is Ron Cromwell, I am 44 years old and I live in Lompoc with my wife. Together, we have 5 kids.

I grew up in Bellflower, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. I lived with both of my parents until the age of 15. At 15 my parents divorced and my dad got custody of my two brothers and I. Growing up with my parents I witnessed a lot of fighting, drug use, and the use of pornography. At a young age, I found pornography at home and I became addicted to it as well. However, in my home it was considered to be “normal” and I was told by my parents that it was a natural thing.

When I was about 12 years of age, I met a friend who invited me to go on a beach trip with his youth group. This was the very first time I was ever introduced to a church event or a church. I continued going to their events, but it was really more of an escape to get out of my home than a quest to know Jesus. My parents allowed me to attend but always reminded me to not become a “Bible thumper.”

After my parents divorced, we moved to Newport Beach and I stopped going to church services or on church trips. We later moved to Moreno Valley and I eventually graduated from High School.

With newfound freedom, I decided to move out of my house with a friend for the summer and began drinking excessively and experimented with marijuana a few times. However, the freedom didn't help me, as I fell deeper into a downward spiral of illicit acts by beginning to watch porn excessively. I knew I wanted a future that was different than what I was experiencing, so I joined the military at the end of that summer and served 2 years on active duty and then transferred to the USAF Reserves, in which I still serve.

After leaving active duty military, I went to work as a police officer in Los Angeles County. While working as a police officer, I met my wife. We eventually moved to Lompoc to raise a family in 2011 after the police department I was working for went through a merger with another agency and I was laid off. Our first daughter was born in 2012.

In 2013 we were introduced to Element and started to attend occasionally. We loved the Word that was being preached and the focus on the Gospel. I, however, was only playing church on Sundays as the reality was that there was no true repentance in me; I was still watching porn and living a sinful life. The Scriptures remind us that to the Lord there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known...and Jesus sees all and He saw me.

This exposure is what almost caused the downfall of my family, but in the end Jesus worked His way in me and brought me to Him. I was close to losing my family and I had no one and nowhere in which to turn. I was in a desperate situation where I saw no way out, but instead, the end of everything. It was at this moment I realized the need I had for God. I reached out to a member of the church who opened their arms and home and took me in. I spent time with them, reading the Scriptures and in prayer. I had never felt the presence of God in my life before then, but now I felt Him working in me. In the worst place I could have been I felt His presence surrounding me, telling me that everything will be okay in Him.

Never had I thought that I could ever be saved or cured from a disease, but now I have surrendered my life to Him and everything in it. That doesn't mean there are never any struggles, but I now know I have been reborn and I am a new creation in Him. The old

is gone and the new has come. God has restored me to the place I once knew only as a child, where I don't need lustful things in my life. I have a place in Jesus where I don't feel ashamed of my past, as I know He paid the ultimate price for me. I feel as though God has done a tremendous work in me, and has helped me to find Him as the true anchor my life (versus where it was anchored before in the world). It is such a great miracle as I now get to see this bleed over into my family every night when I hear my kids pray to God and see that they are diligently following Him.

I am getting baptized to show my faith in the Lord, and my newfound obedience to Him. All my sins were paid for at the Cross, but today I want to show everyone: my family, my church, and whoever else wants to see, that my old life is buried and I get to start anew.