



BEGINNING THE *Journey*

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Congrat

ulations!

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The decision to say YES to Jesus is the most important decision you will ever make.

You probably have a lot of questions, and we hope that this will begin to answer the, plus provide a few resources to help you learn more on your own.

We want to share with you the message of God's love and hope based on God's Word, the Bible. We are praying for you as you begin to explore your faith.



Your Story Matters

You have had experiences, both good and bad, that have brought you to where you are today. God loves you no matter where you have been or where you are on your journey.

What is even more amazing is that He loves you no matter what you have done. When you look at what Jesus said in John 10:10, you will learn that He wants you to discover what it really means to live.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. -John 10:10

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

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Sadly, many people think or have been taught that the way to experience full life is through using religious activity or traditions to make up for the wrong things we have done in our lives.

The truth is that there is nothing we can do to earn God's love. Just as there is nothing we can do or have done that can make him love us less.



For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. -Romans 6:23

Romans 6:23 talks about how we all share a common experience that leaves us in desperate need of a Savior. There are three words that are really important in this verse: **wages**, **sin**, and **death**.

If you look at the word **wage**, what do you think of? Most of us think of a paycheck. We get a paycheck that we believe we deserve. This verse says that we have a paycheck coming for something: **sin**.

Sin literally means missing the mark. Every day, every one of us miss the mark when it comes to comparing our lives with a perfect God. That sin separates us from God and that leads to something tragic: **death**.

Death is not just a physical reality. There is a spiritual death to which this verse is referring. It is spiritual separation from God. Notice how below, there is no way for us to get to God.

Our deepest desire is to experience a right relationship with God, but because we miss the mark, we cannot close the gap between us and God on our own.

us

wages
sin
death

God

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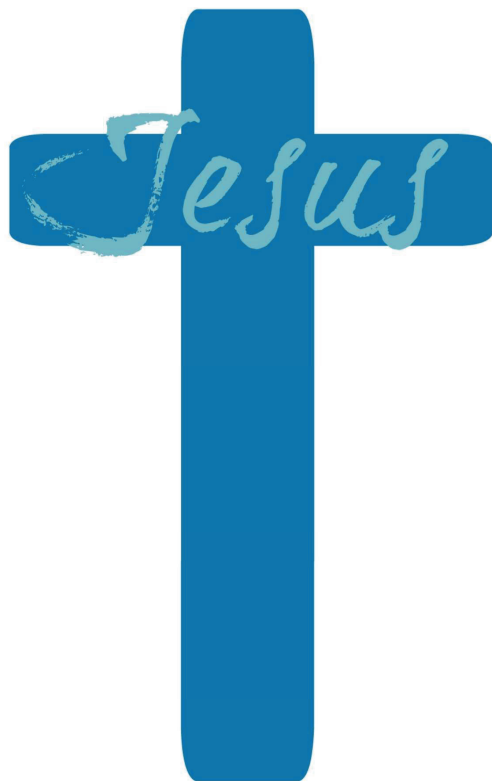
God had a plan to close the gap between us and Him

When we were still broken and seperated from God because of our sin, the Bible says that God reached out in love through Jesus. (Romans 5:8)

Jesus came and lived a perfect life so that He could offer His life as a sacrifice for our sin. Someone had to pay the penalty for our sin (the wages of our sin that result in death) and if Jesus would not have died on our behalf, we would have been separated from God forever. But Jesus did die for us, and we have the opportunity to find forgiveness for our sin and the ability to experience life both now and for eternity because of that sacrifice.

God simply asks that we make a conscious decision of our will to say YES to trusting Jesus alone for salvation. It is through receiving His free gift, not anything we can do or avoid, that we can be made right with God.





The last part of Romans 6:23 helps us understand this. Let's look at these words : **gift**, **God** and **eternal life**.

Whether or not we realize it, we have tried to close the gap of separation on our own. How? Being a good person, giving money away, and even church attendance are some of the ways we have tried. God is not concerned with our efforts because we will never compare to His perfection. So, His response was to offer us a free **gift**.

God knew that we would always fall short and would always be separated from Him. So, he gave us a gift that we could not earn on our own.

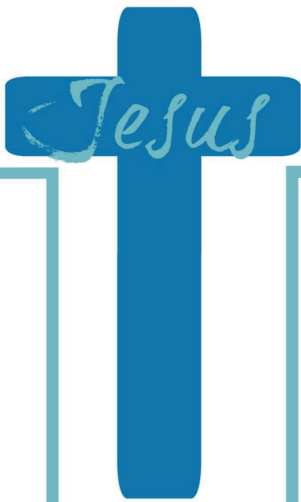
This gift of **God** is **eternal life** that we have available to us because of Jesus. Jesus lived a perfect life and then sacrificed Himself in our place to pay the penalty (wages) of our sin debt. He died so that we could live.

Jesus bridges the gap to God that we cannot get across on our own. He does this despite our sin.



For the wages of sin is death, but
the gift of God is eternal life in
Christ Jesus our Lord. -Romans 6:23

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us  *God*

wages
sin
death

relationship
eternal life

You have a choice to say yes to Jesus by accepting God's gift

Forgiveness of our sins is a gift from God. It comes when we accept what Jesus did for us. His death and resurrection for our sins provides forgiveness and enables us to have a right relationship with God.

A gift isn't a gift until it has been both given and accepted. So, we must individually accept that Jesus Christ saves us from our sins to receive eternal life.

When we say YES to Jesus, the Bible says that God gives us eternal life, and that this life is found in His Son, Jesus Christ.

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. -Romans 10:9-10

Here are four questions to ask yourself;

1. Do I know that God loves me and has a plan for my life?
2. Do I know that I have sinned and that my sin is a barrier to my relationship with God?
3. Do I believe that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for my sin and is the only way to find forgiveness for my sins?
4. Have I accepted Jesus as my savior by believing in Him, by saying YES to Him?

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If you want to begin a relationship with God through Jesus Christ right now, you can, by talking to Him through prayer:

"God, I confess that I am a sinner, and I believe that Jesus died to pay for my sins and then rose from the dead for me. Today, I say YES to following You by accepting You into my life. I turn from my way of doing things, to Your way, and give You control of my life. I accept You and You alone as the only way to have my sins forgiven and the only way to have a right relationship with You. Thank You for saving me and giving me new life. Amen."



you said Yes to Jesus... now what?

Saying YES to Jesus is exciting but can feel overwhelming. Our commitment to you is that we will walk along side of you as you start growing in this new relationship. Here are three connections that we believe are critical and beneficial for you:

1. Connect with God through reading the Bible.

The Bible is the best "User's Guide" in your relationship with Jesus. We have included a beginning Bible reading plan in this booklet. This plan will help you become familiar with the Bible as well as help you gain some understanding to some of the basics of living in a relationship with Jesus.

2. Connect with others who have said YES to Jesus through our Growth Trails. We have a great opportunity through Growth Trails to connect you with others who may have also recently said YES to Jesus or are newer to Trailhead and looking for connection.

3. Allow others to connect with your story through baptism. Baptism is a public way we can share with others the change Jesus has made on the inside.



Growth Trails are small groups of adults that are pressing deeper into their faith and finding new ways to live out the things they believe. There are Growth Trails for people at all stages of faith and life... Starter Trail, Intermediate Community Trail, Advanced Community Trail and the Extreme Trail. Each trail can be beneficial for you and you don't necessarily have to approach them sequentially. Just lace up and get started! These Growth Trails may be the most fun, important and beneficial part of being in the Trailhead community!

Go to: www.trailheadwellington.org/trails to find out more

At Trailhead Church, baptism is a celebration! We think it is the best picture of what life-change looks like and we are excited to celebrate with you!

Let us know you are ready so that we can make a plan for your baptism during one of our services!

Celebrate!



Questions about Baptism

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Why get baptized? Being submerged under the water seems like a strange way to start following God, but it is a powerful symbol of what God is doing in your life. It is a symbolic way of saying, “I’m dying to my old way of living” (being buried under the water) “and being raised to live a new lifestyle” (coming back up out of the water). It is a public declaration of your love for Jesus, sort of like a marriage is a public declaration of your love for another person. God (the Father) asked Jesus to make this public declaration of love and obedience, so Jesus was baptized around the age of 30 (Matthew 3:13-17). Later, Jesus told those who would follow Him to do the same thing (Matthew 28:19) and the early church practiced baptism in the same way (Acts 2:41, Acts 8:36-39, Acts 9:18).

What does baptism mean? To baptize is to “dunk” or “immerse.” But the meaning of baptism is much deeper than just being placed under the water. It actually means that you’ve chosen to die early. That doesn’t mean we’re going to hold you under the water :) It means that everyone eventually dies. But as believers, we choose to die now – giving up control of our lives – so that we don’t have to worry about death ever again. Just as Jesus voluntarily died for us, we voluntarily “die” with Him through baptism and are raised again to experience new life (Romans 6:3-5). This action shows the world that we are now united to Jesus (like a marriage) and that we are submitting to Him as the head of our household for the rest of our lives.

Who should be baptized? If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and you want follow Him – imitating His ways of love, generosity and self-sacrifice – then your next step in faith is to get baptized. There is no specific age that this happens. For some people, this decision becomes clear to them as children. For many others, this decision isn’t made until they are in their 20’s, 30’s or even after they are retired. But, all people who believe that Jesus is God’s Son and want to follow Him should get baptized to start their journey with Jesus.

What does baptism do? Baptism declares to all who are watching that you have united your life with Jesus. It shows them that you are not “on the fence” about your faith.

Baptism at Trailhead

We hold baptism services several times a year during all of our service times.

We encourage you to invite family and friends including non-Christians, who will probably be intrigued!

We supply changing facilities:
please bring a change of clothes.



You will receive a **baptism shirt** when you talk to us about scheduling your baptism



The day of your Baptism:

- arrive 30 min.
before service

- Dress Code:

Him- Trailhead
Baptism shirt or tee
shirt and
swimming trunks/
shorts

Her- swimming
suit, Trailhead
Baptism shirt or
dark tee shirt and
swimming/workout
shorts

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Questions about Baptism at Trailhead

Do I have to be baptized in front of everyone? While Trailhead will not force you to get baptized publicly, private baptisms are highly unusual. Since baptism is kind of like a marriage, you want witness. Just as a bride and groom invite guests to encourage them in their marriage, people getting baptized often invite friends and family to join the congregation for encouragement as they begin following Jesus publicly. It's a celebration! So, we encourage you to let others rejoice with you.

What if I have been baptized before? Many people who have been baptized at Trailhead were previously baptized as infants. While infant baptism is kind of like an arranged marriage (probably more meaningful for the parents than the child), believers baptism is a personal, life altering decision. So many people choose to get baptized as adults in order to make the relationship with Jesus personal. Once believers are baptized in this way, they don't ever have to get baptized again. Everyone experiences ups and downs in their relationship with God, but just as ups and downs in marriage doesn't make the ceremony invalid, struggles in life doesn't negate your relationship with God. Some may get rebaptized to "hit reset" in life (kind of like renewing their vows), but that is a personal decision which isn't really practiced in the Bible.

Is baptism necessary for salvation? No. Jesus didn't baptize the thief who died on the cross next to Him, but He did promise him that, "today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Baptism doesn't save us. It is a symbol of the relationship with Jesus that we already have established.

Do I have to take a class before getting baptized? No. At Trailhead, we would love to have one of our leaders discuss baptism with you before you get baptized, but you do not have to go through a class.

What should I expect if I'm getting baptized? After discussing your baptism with a Trailhead leader and getting it scheduled, you'll receive an email announcement that you can share with your friends and family. On the day of the baptism, come prepared. Bring a towel and change of clothes. Baptisms happen at the very end of services, so you won't have to hang around too long after getting wet. Once you are in the water, you will be asked, "do you want Jesus to be the Lord of your life?" You Will respond. Then the person baptizing you will say a few more words, lower you into the water and raise you back up to the cheers and celebration of everyone watching.

Bible reading plan

- Get a bible that is easy to read and understand. We have HCSB versions for you if you would like one.
- Write down something that jumped out to you and carry it with you through your day.
- Share with someone you know what you are learning. The Growth Trail Groups are a great way to find someone!
- Ask questions! Trailhead Pastors and Leaders are happy to answer questions!

Day Book Chapter Topic

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Luke 1 Preparing for Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 John 20 Resurrection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Luke 2 The story of Jesus birth | <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Luke 24 Jesus' appearance after |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Mark 1 The beginning of Jesus ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Romans 3 Paul's theology in a nutshell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Mark 9 A day in His life | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Romans 5 Peace with God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Matthew 5 The sermon on the Mount | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Romans 7 Struggles with sin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Matthew 6 The sermon on the Mount cont. | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Romans 8 Life in the Spirit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Luke 15 Parables | <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Romans 12 Life in the world |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 John 3 A conversation with Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Ephesians 2 Our life in Christ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 John 10 The good shepherd | <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Ephesians 4 Unity in Christ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 John 14 Jesus' final instructions | <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Ephesians 5 Living in Christ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 John 15 Jesus' final instructions cont. | <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Philippians 2 Being Christ-like |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 John 16 The work of the Spirit | <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Philippians 3 Maturing in Christ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 John 17 Jesus' prayer for His disciples | <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Philippians 4 Trusting Christ through trials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Matthew 26 Jesus' betrayal and arrest | <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Galatians 5 Life in the Spirit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Matthew 27 Jesus' execution | <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Colossians 3 Life in Christ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 31 2 Timothy 2 Being strong in Christ |

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