

Baptism Testimony
By Phoebe Chan

Hello, my name is Phoebe Chan, I'm 15 years old, and I'm a sophomore at Gabrielino High School.

My experience with Christ began as an obligation because I grew up surrounded by the gospel. My parents were Christians, so they brought me and my brother to church. Every week, I would attend Sunday school class and memorize Bible verses. People always told me to believe in Jesus; so without understanding much, I simply said that I believed. At church, I would present myself as an obedient child with genuine faith. But every day, I would still disobey God's commandments: I would lie to my parents and cheat at school. I would be cruel and jealous of others. As I grew older, I would even avoid going to church, becoming irritated when my parents forced me out of bed to attend service. I also lived my life in constant anxiety. I was more concerned about what people thought of me, rather than my relationship with God. Whenever something went wrong, I would become hysterical. However, I trusted my feelings of panic more than I trusted God. I didn't know that I needed salvation, so I relished in this comfortable life of sin.

It wasn't until the summer before eighth grade that I understood the depth of all this sin. I began to see the consequences of my actions, like how my selfishness would cause hurt and conflict with others. But I could never escape my desire for sin. It felt so natural, even when people around me told me it was wrong. At church, the teachers would tell us about "spiritual death". Spiritual death is when a person is in a state of isolation from God. I realized that I was like this. My sin was separating me from having fellowship with God, and I was unable to save myself from it.

During this time, I also recognized my need for Jesus. For years, I had watched so many people gather as a community to share in their love for God. After attending countless sermons, hearing the experiences of others, and having the guidance of my parents and church teachers, I began to understand how important He is. Romans 6:23 says that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." I understood that no matter what I did, I would not have the ability to redeem myself from the hate in my heart. But I realized that Jesus was the solution. If I accepted Him as my savior, I would be washed clean and redeemed from spiritual death. So, I repented and asked Him for forgiveness.

However, when the world locked down and we were sent to quarantine in our homes, I became overwhelmed by feelings that told me I was completely alone and worthless. I spent a lot of time doubting the meaning of my existence, which made me doubt my faith in Christ. I fell into a state of hopelessness, and every week I would refuse to attend my Sunday school classes. But with nothing else to do, I began to carefully observe God's word. I found verses that stood out to me. In Matthew 28:20, Jesus proclaims, "Behold, I am always with you, even until the end of the age." Overwhelmed by the gravity of this promise, I realized that He had not abandoned me

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in my time of suffering. After this rejuvenated understanding, I sought His word with new interest. I opened my heart to see the love, power, and mercy of God through his son Jesus Christ. Even though I didn't feel special or worthy, God still took the initiative for my salvation, and Christ bought my redemption with His sacrifice.

After receiving salvation, I am now considered "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus". But I am still living in the process of sanctification, and I still regularly struggle with sin. Like in Romans 7:19, "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing." Yet I know that God has dominion over the sin that dwells in me. I am no longer a slave to sin, but a slave to righteousness. God alone has the power to help me overcome sin. He is working in me everyday so that I become more and more like Christ, so I can trust His grace instead of my own works and efforts.

If anyone here is struggling like me, I encourage you to look to Jesus. He wasn't just willing to die for me, but God sent him to die for all sinners. God will be there in all your struggles, and His spirit will transform your heart just like it is continuing to transform mine. Please join me in loving God and following Christ, and let us walk in the "newness of life".