



A GUIDE TO
STARTING YOUR LIFE WITH JESUS



I Said Yes

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INTRODUCTION

Every time Jesus met someone, He extended a profound, life-changing invitation to follow Him. Within this short booklet, you'll explore the stories of several unexpected individuals who encountered Jesus and were offered the chance of a lifetime to say "Yes!" to Him. Their responses may inspire and challenge you—even transforming your life in ways you never imagined possible.

A THIEF MEETS JESUS

READ: Luke 23:32-43 (NIV)

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Jim Vaus was a criminal. In the 1940s, he served as the chief wiretapper for Mickey Cohen's infamous Hollywood crime syndicate. Despite his dangerous lifestyle, Vaus felt an emptiness he couldn't ignore. One evening, he attended an event where a young preacher named Billy Graham spoke about the love, forgiveness and grace found in Jesus Christ. Deeply moved, Vaus made a life-altering decision. That night, he said a resounding "Yes!" to Jesus' invitation to follow Him—and it became the best decision of his life.

Saying "Yes" to Jesus meant Vaus had to leave behind everything he knew. Just imagine the magnitude of that choice: he was walking away from a world steeped in organized crime, where his connections ran deep and dangerous. Yet Vaus understood that a relationship with Jesus was worth more than anything his old life could offer.

In Luke 23:32-43, we encounter another criminal—this time, a thief on a Roman cross, being crucified next to Jesus. In fact, Jesus was flanked by two criminals, both fully aware of their guilt and the punishment they deserved.

One thief mocked Jesus, saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself and us!" But the other responded differently. He rebuked his fellow criminal, saying, "Don't you fear God? We are getting what we deserve. This man has done nothing wrong!"

Then, in a moment of boldness, the second thief made an audacious request: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

What gave this man the right to believe that standing up for Jesus in his final moments would be enough for God to show him mercy? He had lived a life of crime. Yet Jesus' response was nothing short of remarkable.

"Today, you will be with me in paradise."

Instead of turning him away, Jesus welcomed him into heaven. Instead of condemnation, He offered grace.

The truth is, we are all like that thief. None of us can stand before a holy God and claim we're good enough to earn our way in. But that's the beauty of grace—it's not about deserving or earning anything. It's a gift freely given to those who recognize their need for it. If we could earn it, it wouldn't be grace. All that's required is to believe and receive.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What surprises you about God's grace?

2. What are some specific areas of your life that God has extended grace to you?

3. This story shows us that God created a way for us to restore our relationship with Him through Jesus. What does that mean to you personally?

NEXT STEP

*What's the best news you've ever heard? Was it surprising? Did it change the way you think? Or was it something you wanted to be true but didn't dare hope? **Christianity Explored** will dive deep into the best news ever heard. It will give you the space and time to think about life's big questions, such as the Identity of Jesus, Sin, The Cross, The Resurrection, Grace, Obedience, Serving, Repentance and Following Jesus. Over seven sessions in Mark's Gospel, we'll discover more about the life of the One at the heart of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ, and how we should respond.*



Scan the QR code to learn about what it means to follow Jesus through **Christianity Explored**.

A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL MEETS JESUS

READ: Acts 8:26-40 (NIV)

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

“How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

*“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

*In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”*

The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Charlie was a young man invited to a youth ministry event by his friends. Before that night, he considered himself an agnostic, believing nothing could be known about the existence of God. He was just living life, enjoying it and expecting to die someday. But that evening, he heard about a Heavenly Father who created him, loved him and sent His Son to die for his sins. For the first time, Charlie heard the Good News of Jesus, the Messiah, and that night, he took a step of faith, choosing to say “Yes!” to a relationship with God through Jesus.

After saying “Yes,” Charlie’s life began to transform. His desire for God grew, and he dove into reading the New Testament. With a flood of questions about faith and life, he sought out guidance from leaders who were further along in their spiritual journey. As Charlie’s faith deepened, his enthusiasm impacted other students, and many of them also chose to follow Jesus and grow in their relationship with God.

In Acts 8:26-40, we encounter two strangers who met at just the right time: Philip and an Ethiopian eunuch, a high-ranking official in charge of the queen’s treasury. The eunuch, a devout man, had been worshiping in Jerusalem, unaware that Jesus had been crucified and resurrected. As he traveled home, he wrestled with a passage in the Bible about the Messiah. God saw his confusion and, in His grace, sent Philip, a mature follower of Jesus, to help answer his questions. Once the eunuch understood, he also said “Yes!” to Jesus.

We all have questions about faith, and that’s OK—questions are essential to a growing relationship with God. The key is connecting with others who can help guide us. For the eunuch, that person was Philip. For Charlie, it was the leaders at his youth group. Who is that for you?

Every church committed to helping people grow in their faith has men and women ready to walk alongside you in your journey. No question is too simple, no doubt is too small, and no curiosity is without value. Chances are, if you have a question, someone else has had the same one!

Don’t hesitate to seek guidance. Like Philip, we all need spiritually mature believers to help us along the way. Saying “Yes!” to Jesus means you’re never alone—God has given us the gift of one another to grow in our faith together.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of your pressing questions about God, the Bible, church and Jesus?

2. What strikes you about how the Ethiopian eunuch says, “Yes!” to Jesus? Do you notice any similarities or differences compared to your life?

3. Think of a few people you know who are farther along in their faith journey than you are currently. If you could ask them anything about growing in relationship with Jesus, what would it be?

NEXT STEP

1:1 Discipleship is a focused, life-on-life relationship where one person helps another grow in spiritual maturity through regular, intentional time together. The goal is to help Christians understand their purpose and identity in the body of Christ, and how to live as ambassadors for Jesus in all areas of life. This process enables them to eventually disciple others, furthering the multiplication of disciples. At Wooddale Church, this aligns with our mission to honor God by making more disciples for Jesus Christ, encouraging followers to commit to spiritual growth and transformation.



Scan the QR code to connect with a discipleship mentor through **1:1 Discipleship**.

A CROWD MEETS JESUS

READ: John 6:1-14 (NIV)

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages[a] to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”

Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

READ: Psalm 139:13-18 (NIV)

*For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.*

Jesus performed many miracles during His time on earth, and today you read about one of the most famous—the feeding of the 5,000. It all began when two people said “Yes!” to Jesus.

The first was Andrew, one of Jesus’ disciples and the brother of Peter. While Peter is widely known as part of Jesus’ inner circle, Andrew was always inviting others to meet Jesus. In fact, it was Andrew who first told Peter about finding the Messiah (John 1:41), and in today’s story, he’s the one who brought a boy with a small lunch to Jesus.

Faced with the challenge of feeding a massive crowd, Jesus asked His disciples how they might provide food for everyone. Philip saw only the impossible, but Andrew saw potential in what God could do. By saying “Yes” to Jesus, Andrew witnessed the miraculous feeding of thousands from just a small offering—an act of faith that reminds us that when we say “Yes” to God, we become part of His solution to the needs around us.

But Andrew wasn’t the only one who said “Yes.” The young boy who offered his lunch also stepped out in faith, giving what little he had and watching as God multiplied it to feed thousands. Can you imagine being that boy? Andrew asks you if Jesus can use your lunch to feed a crowd, and you respond, “Yes, take everything I have—it’s not much, but I believe You can do something incredible with it!”

That’s the power of faith and surrender. God created you with unique gifts, talents and passions, as Psalm 139 reminds us. Even if you think what you have to offer is small, God can use it for great purposes. The question is: Will you say “Yes” to Jesus and allow Him to use your gifts for something amazing?

When you say “Yes” to Jesus, you surrender your abilities to be used for His incredible plans.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How do you think you would have responded had you been one of Jesus' disciples? The boy? In the crowd?

2. Is there anything in your life you might consider to be small and insignificant that could be used by God to reach others with the Good News?

3. What are some of the talents, gifts and abilities God has given to you? What are some of the ways you could use them to serve God and others?

NEXT STEPS

1. Sign up for **Live Your Purpose**.

Are you feeling unfulfilled or searching for something more meaningful? It might be time to discover your true purpose. Live Your Purpose goes beyond finding happiness—it's about uncovering the unique calling God has designed for you and using your gifts to serve in His Kingdom. Everyone has a God-given calling that can bring joy, fulfillment and impact to their lives and others. Live Your Purpose offers insights to help you recognize how God has worked in your life, find inspiration for the future and share your story to inspire others on their journey.



Scan the QR code to learn more about how to **live your purpose**.

2. Sign up to **Serve**.

You can make an impact simply by serving others with the gifts God has already given you.



Scan the QR code to learn more about how to **serve at Wooddale**.

TWO SISTERS MEET JESUS

READ: Luke 10:38-42

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Brian's parents are known for their deep love for Jesus and radical hospitality. Growing up most Sundays, his mom would prepare a huge meal, not just for their family of seven, but with enough to feed 10 extra guests. They rarely knew who those guests would be, but they were always ready.

Every Sunday morning during the church service, Brian's parents would scan the room for new faces. After the service, they would introduce themselves and invite the newcomers over for dinner. It may sound crazy, but over the years, hundreds of families accepted their invitation!

Between church and dinner, Brian and his siblings would rush to clean the house and prepare for their guests. Looking back, some of Brian's closest friendships were formed at those spontaneous meals.

In Luke 10:38-42, Jesus and His 12 disciples were guests at a dinner hosted by Martha, whose siblings were Mary and Lazarus. Martha, likely the oldest, was a type-A personality—driven and hardworking. As the host, she busied herself making sure everyone felt welcome. But as she peeked into the room, she saw her sister Mary sitting with Jesus, and it frustrated her. While Martha was overwhelmed with tasks, Mary was spending time with Jesus! Didn't Mary care about all that needed to be done?

Jesus gently corrected Martha. Martha was doing a good thing, but Mary had chosen the better thing. Instead of being consumed by tasks, Mary prioritized her time with Jesus. Martha believed her priorities were in order, but Jesus pointed out that the most important thing was to be with Him. He is the only true source of peace for her anxious heart.

When Mary said “Yes!” to Jesus, her priorities shifted, placing God first. Martha learned that day that being with Jesus matters more than all the busyness we think is important.

Busyness is one of the trickiest barriers to spiritual growth. We often think we’re doing all the right things, but in the process, we miss the best thing—spending time with God. Saying “Yes!” to Jesus means choosing to put your relationship with Him first, especially when life gets busy. Don’t let busyness keep you from investing in the One who matters most.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. To whom do you relate more, Mary or Martha? Why?

**2. When is the best time of day for you to spend time with God?
How can you make sure this is a priority in your life?**

3. What are some of the things you would like to learn from God’s Word, the Bible, over the coming months? Write them down and share them with a friend for accountability.

NEXT STEP

Get connected with others in a **group**.

Connecting with others at Wooddale will help you grow spiritually, find support and build lasting relationships. Wooddale offers opportunities for all ages to connect through classes, groups and events.



Scan the QR code to learn more about **groups**.

AN OUTCAST MEETS JESUS

READ: John 4:1-42 (NIV)

Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

"I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

The Disciples Rejoin Jesus

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.

They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

Trent joined a little league baseball team full of kids who had played together for years. As the new kid, it was intimidating—especially since he had never played baseball. Things went downhill fast. On Trent’s first day, he got hit by a fastball and became terrified of the ball. He was afraid of the pitcher, the batter’s box, and even catching a ball in the outfield. Trent’s teammates could sense his fear and taunted him endlessly. His batting average was a perfect zero, and he felt like the ultimate outsider on a team of insiders.

Have you ever felt like that?

In John 4:1-42 we see another outsider—a Samaritan woman who met Jesus while doing her daily chores. Jews and Samaritans didn’t associate, and racial tensions had divided them for centuries. Yet, one day, Jesus decided to walk through Samaria with His disciples. Around midday, He arrived at a well, where He encountered a woman drawing water—an unusual sight, since women usually fetched water in the cool of the morning and in groups.

This woman had a reputation. She had been married five times and was now living with a man who wasn’t her husband. Likely an outcast, she came to the well alone to avoid the gossip. Yet, Jesus, a Jewish rabbi, approached her—not with judgment, but grace. Despite her past, He offered her “Living Water,” an opportunity for a restored relationship with God.

But the story doesn’t end there. After her encounter with Jesus, the woman left her water jar and went back to town to tell everyone, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” Her excitement was contagious, and many in the town believed in Jesus because of her testimony.

When Trent first said “Yes!” to Jesus as a kid, he couldn’t wait to share it. He told his mom, his brother and even his neighbors! Like the Samaritan woman, Trent wanted everyone to know about Jesus and the transformation He brought to his life.

God calls each of us to share the hope we’ve found in Him, because changed lives change lives. Just as Jesus welcomed Trent, despite feeling like an outsider on that baseball team, He welcomes everyone, no matter their past or present. The Samaritan woman experienced that same inclusion, and her life was forever changed.

No matter your background or situation, Jesus breaks down barriers and invites you into a relationship with Him. When we say “Yes!” to Jesus, He offers the everlasting satisfaction of a restored relationship with God—Good News worth sharing with the world!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What do you notice about the way Jesus interacts with the woman at the well? Why do you think Jesus treats her so kindly, regardless of her past sins and present circumstances?

2. What do you think a restored relationship with God meant to the Samaritan woman? How do you think that changed her life?

3. Why do you think it's important to tell others about Jesus the Messiah? Who do you want to tell?

NEXT STEP

Learn to share with others about Jesus in the **Share Your Faith Story Class**.

God wants to use your story to help reach a world He loves. In the class, we'll practice telling two stories—our story and God's story.



Scan the QR code to learn about the **Share Your Faith Story Class**.

YOU MEET JESUS

READ: Romans 3:23 (NIV)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

READ: Romans 6:23 (NIV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

READ: Romans 10:9 (NIV)

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.

READ: Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

READ: Psalm 103:12 (NIV)

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

The Bible teaches us that our standing with God isn't about how bad we've been, but about who we are. As humans, we're all born with a tendency to sin. Just look at a 2-year-old throwing a tantrum—or even adults losing their cool. Theologians call this our “sin nature.” Sin has been with us since the beginning, passed down through generations. As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

To sin means falling short of God's perfect standard. Even at the age of 5, Ryan knew he had made wrong choices. He had sinned. And because of Ryan's sin, he owed a debt to his Creator. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Let's break that down: wages, sin and death. Wages are what we earn. Sin is falling short of God's standard, doing what we know is wrong. Death, in this context, is eternal separation from God. That's the consequence of sin—the separation we deserve for living on our own terms. If Romans 6:23 ended there, it would be really bad news.

But it doesn't! The verse turns with one word: “But.” “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Now consider these words: gift, God and life. A gift is freely given, not earned. God is sinless, perfect in every way. And life—eternal life—is the opposite of death. It means being with God forever.

Even though we've all sinned, God made everything right through Jesus. He took the death we deserved and offers us life. When you say "Yes!" to Jesus, God literally saves you. He wipes away your past, transforms your present and secures your future. He forgives every sin. As Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." God sees you as perfect because He sees Jesus in you.

That's Good News! And it's available to anyone who places their trust in Jesus by faith.

Romans 10:9 says, "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."

That's how you say "Yes!" to Jesus—declare Him as Lord, believe in who He is, ask for forgiveness and accept His invitation. Say "Yes!" to His grace, make Him Lord of your life and follow Him.

If you want to say "Yes!" to Jesus, whether for the first time or as a recommitment, you can pray this simple prayer:

"Dear God, I know I've sinned and deserve punishment. But today, I'm saying 'Yes!' to Your forgiveness and grace. I believe that Your Son, Jesus, died in my place and rose from the grave. I receive Your gift of salvation and want a new relationship with You. Today I'm saying 'Yes!' to Jesus and the gift of eternal life. Help me to follow You all the days of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen."

If you just prayed that prayer, all of heaven is celebrating your new life with God—and we celebrate with you too!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When did you say “Yes!” to Jesus? How has your life changed since making that decision?

2. What are some of the examples of God’s grace you see in your life?

3. What does God’s gift of salvation through Jesus mean to you personally?

SOME FISHERMEN MEET JESUS

READ: Matthew 4:18-22 (NIV)

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

READ: Matthew 28:16-20 (NIV)

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

In Jesus’ day, those who dedicated themselves to following a teacher were known as “disciples.” While we don’t use that word often today, it’s important to understand its meaning.

In Matthew 4:19, Jesus called fishermen to leave their old lives and become His disciples, saying, “Follow me, and I will teach you how to fish for people.” These men knew how to catch fish, but Jesus was inviting them to bring people into a restored relationship with God.

A disciple is someone committed to following Jesus, being changed by Him and living on mission for Him. Let's break that down:

Following Jesus means imitating Him in what we think, say and do. We follow Jesus by learning about Him, spending time in the Bible, praying, walking with other believers and serving others with His love.

Being changed by Jesus involves letting Him transform us from the inside out. For some, change happens quickly; for others, it's gradual. Spiritual growth is a journey, but the goal is always the same—to become more like Christ. As C.S. Lewis said in *Mere Christianity*, "Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else."

Living on mission with Jesus means committing to a life with purpose—investing in others and helping them follow, be changed by and live for Jesus. This is the mission Jesus gave His disciples in the Great Commission (Matthew 28), and it continues with us today. God invites us to join in finding more people who will say "Yes!" to Him.

God took ordinary fishermen and used them to change the world. It all started when they said "Yes" to Jesus. But their journey of saying "Yes" didn't stop there—it continued, as shown in the book of Acts. Discipleship is an ongoing journey of growth with Jesus.

If God could transform the world through 12 ordinary fishermen, imagine what He can do through you.

Keep saying "Yes!" to Jesus, because the best is yet to come. When you say "Yes" to Him, you're committing to follow Him, be changed by Him and live on mission for Him.

If you've said "Yes!" to Jesus, heaven is celebrating your new life! We'd love to celebrate with you too. Let us know about your decision by visiting wooddale.org/yes.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Which of the three parts of being a disciple is most exciting for you?
Most challenging?

2. In what ways have you seen yourself become more like Jesus recently?

3. What are some of the ways you'll continue to say "Yes!" to Jesus this week? Month? Year?

NEXT STEP

Decide to get **baptized**.

Baptism is a key part of a Christian's identification with Jesus, following a profession of faith as seen throughout the book of Acts. It symbolizes our love and obedience to Christ and is an outward sign of an inner commitment to follow Him. Baptism represents Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, as well as the believer's transformation into a new life.

At Wooddale Church, we regularly celebrate baptism and encourage all believers to follow Christ's command to be baptized, whether you are new to the faith or have been a believer for some time.



Scan the QR code to learn more about **baptism**.



To honor God by making more disciples for Jesus Christ.

wooddale.org