

[Introduction]

Before I came to Australia, I completely rejected Christianity.

I'm going to tell you what happened to me and how I've decided to come to be baptised.

When I was working and living as a web developer in Japan, I completely denied the existence of God.

I'd lived my life by solving everything on my own.

At the time, I thought that by being a good person, I could make more money. That was my initial reason for starting to read the Bible.

One day while living in Japan, I decided to make a big decision in my life.

Throwing away everything, such as my job position, career, and relationship, then going to Australia.

This is my favourite English phrase, No pain, no gain.

I believed that something really good would come from this pain.

Last September when I arrived in Australia.

I decided to go to church, because I knew there was lots of wisdom which I could learn from the Bible and because the Bible had a significant impact on world culture.

The first two churches I went to were not particularly attractive and I never went there again.

CrossCulture was the third church that I tried.

I found a good way to learn English and the Bible in CrossCulture's English Corner and the Life Group.

I made friends there and started attending every week.

I remember being confused because I didn't understand why people I met there were so kind to me.

In Japan, some religions required people to donate money to become a member.

I was not a customer in this Church and I didn't need to donate it. Even then they were still kind to me. I felt that there was something fundamentally different compared to the way I felt among my friends in Japan.

Then, after the English corner Life Group bible study, I went to the Evening service at the church.

But I felt puzzled during the service.

It felt like I was listening to an unknown language.

One day, after the evening service, someone invited me to go to Step.

So I decided to join the next week.

When I first joined, I was confused because I didn't know any of the people.

Jacob was the first to speak to me and as a result, I became friends with the people in Step.

Then, I went to Easter camp to meet more people in Step and gained new insights in Christianity.

Specifically, listening to Jesse's sessions allowed me to grow closer to Jesus.

It has definitively changed my perspective of the difference between typical Japanese morals and Christian morals.

[Last change and trigger for belief]

So far I have been touched by the kindness of Christians and I have developed a desire to be like them in my own life. In Japanese, there is this phrase called 浮き彫り, and it basically describes how a piece of wood can be carved from nothing into art. In that sense, the wood represents the mentality of Japanese people, including myself. The carving was Christianity. The art is my new way to express my kindness from my mind.

One day the pastor encouraged me to pray.

A few days after I started praying in Japanese I understood the true meaning of prayer. Before, when I heard the prayers, they only sounded like requests to a shrine. It felt like I was whispering to nothing.

Now, I feel like there is a possibility for my voice and thoughts to reach God, even if it's not guaranteed. This made me want to believe in God.

In Japan, people buy amulets to gain luck, but since I had never believed in Gods, amulets were just pieces of fabric and paper to me.

I didn't understand the meaning and concept of faith in God, so I wanted to define my faith before following what is written in the Bible so I would not be reading it like a textbook. My reason for pursuing this faith was because of the kindness that Christians showed me.

Compared to last year, I can see that I am a very different person now.

Now I feel that the Bible is not just a story or a textbook, but it is the undeniable reason I have been remade.

Even though I kept rejecting God and turning my back on him, he never gave up on me and kept waiting for me to come back one day. And my dead relationship with God has now been restored. All of this leads me to believe that Jesus Christ overcame death itself by dying for our sins himself and rising again.