

Darcie Frost I Have Decided

Over the school holidays, our youth team of staff and interns flew down to Wellington for our annual Elim Youth Pastors Gathering. While we were there, a rugby game was on – not just any rugby game... no, this was a game that Frosty had to be at. Why? Because his team was playing. He is a Hurricanes supporter through and through. He's been cheering on that team since he was a young boy, and he wanted to go cheer on his team as they whipped the Crusaders that night.

So, we organized for a group of 14 of us to go to this game, and Frosty, of course, is proudly wearing his Hurricanes jersey. BUT we had some people with us that simply didn't know which team to cheer on. So, Nathan, just to spite Frosty, decided that he was going to cheer on the Crusaders. And for the first part of the game, this was working well for him. Nathan had no clue what was going on, but when the Crusader fans clapped and cheered, so did he. The Crusaders were ahead, so Nathan was happy.

BUT THEN, the Hurricanes started to pull through. And as it became clearer and clearer that the Hurricanes had the game in the bag, all of a sudden Nathan was cheering for the Hurricanes! Now that they were ahead in the game, he so easily jumped the fence and stood with the team that was winning in the moment.

Nathan couldn't name a single player for either team, he just wanted to be in the crowd and cheer on the winners of the moment. But Frosty stuck with his team even when they were points down in the first half. Frosty wore the jersey. Frosty knew the names of all his players. Frosty knew who he was standing with, and moments of emotion weren't going to sway his allegiance.

There are two types of people in the rugby stadium – The Frosty's and the Nathan's – the people that know who they stand with and are proud of it and the people that like to be in the crowd, like to experience the atmosphere of the stadium, like to cheer when someone is winning, BUT they are never willing to commit to a team.

I think there are also two types of Christians – those that know the God they stand with despite what others may think of their faith and then those that sway with the emotion of the crowd, unwilling to make a public commitment of their faith.

Church, today I want to talk to you about what it means to publically declare your faith. I want to talk to you about what it means to stand WITH God. I want to talk to you about what it means to die to your *old self* and make a commitment to the *new you* created in Christ. I want to talk about baptism.

Luke 22:54-62 (ESV)

⁵⁴Then they seized [Jesus] and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. ⁵⁵And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. ⁵⁶Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." ⁵⁷But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." ⁵⁸And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." ⁵⁹And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." ⁶⁰But Peter said, "Man, I

do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly.

Peter is having a bad day. At the Last Supper, Peter had said to Jesus, “Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you and to death.” But Jesus doesn’t reply to him saying, “Aww, that’s really sweet Peter. So glad you’re going to stand by my side.” No! Jesus tells Peter that he knows he will deny even knowing him 3 times before the rooster crows.

Peter declares with his mouth that he will stand with Jesus not just now – but he will stand with him in prison and he will stand with him in his death. Then Jesus calls his bluff! He knows he is the Nathan of the rugby stadium. He’s like, “Peter, I love you but I know that you’re only wearing my jersey when I’m winning. The minute I’m arrested, I can already see you taking my jersey off and sitting in the crowd with the others.”

And that’s what happened. 3 times Peter denied having ever stood with Jesus. He denied having known Jesus. He denied having stood with the other disciples of Jesus. Let me ask you church... how often do we read this story about Peter and think, “Peter, how could you!? You were with him! You are his disciple that said you would go with him even to death!” We think, “Peter, how could you?”

But how often do we actually behave like Peter did on this day. I crumbled like Peter did all throughout my late teens and early twenties. People would see me behave at uni in a certain way and then say to me, “But Darcie, aren’t you a Christian?” And like Peter, I crumbled under their questions because I just wanted to blend in with the crowd. I wasn’t willing to stand out and stand up for my faith. I didn’t stand with Jesus.

In fact, in uni I took that Christian jersey off and got lost in the crowd. Church, it is one thing to say you are Christian – to say that you will stand for Jesus no matter what – but it is another thing to live that out publically. I look back at my uni years, and I think, “Darcie, how could you?”

I think there are a lot of Peters in the church today. There are a lot of people that put on the jersey while they’re at church or when they’re at life group, but the minute they get around their non-Christian mates they take off that jersey and start trying to blend in with the crowd. It’s one thing to say you are a believer, but it’s another thing to show that you are a believer.

Its one thing to say you are married, but it’s another thing to show that you are married, right? When someone tells you they are married, you look for the ring right? All the single people out there, you know what I’m talking about! You know that when you’re kinda keen, you first check that left hand to see if they are taken!

And for all those that have ever gotten engaged, you know that it’s all about that ring! It’s about the girl saying yes.... But then it’s about that Instagram post of the ring! How many posts have you seen on Facebook and Instagram of girls being like, “I said yes!!! I said yes to forever! Can you see this ring he got me? Can you see it??” They want people to know! They are showing their ring off every chance they get!

Imagine we were that excited to tell the world that we said yes to God! That we said yes to salvation! That we said yes not just to forever in this earthly life but to eternity!

Frosty somehow lost his wedding ring a month after we got married but because he didn't have a wedding ring for the next 5 months of our marriage did that mean he was no longer married to me? Of course not. He said his "I do's" and signed his life away to me on the 19th of March, 2015. The ring was a symbol of the commitment we had already made to each other. The ring was the public declaration of a commitment he made in his heart. He was still married to me with or without the ring.

Church, baptism is the wedding ring to your salvation. To get baptized is to publically declare to the world that you are committed to Jesus Christ. Your baptism is the physical representation of the spiritual commitment you made at the moment of your salvation. With or without baptism, your salvation still stands. But just like Frosty wanted me to wear an engagement ring so that the world knew I belonged to him and I want him to never take his wedding ring off again so that the world knows he belongs to me, don't you think that God wants you to show the world that you belong to Him? When you get baptised, you are putting the ring on your relationship with God.

Did God still love me even when I was a screw-up, even when I denied knowing him in uni? Yeah, he still loved me and wanted a relationship with me. He still knew that one day I would make it right. One day I would publically declare my love for him. He knew that one day, I would devote my life's work to him.

Did God still love Peter even when he denied his allegiance to Jesus? Yeah, he still loved him and he still used him in the future. In Acts 2:14 and 41, we read:
[14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: \(Y'all, Peter eventually STOOD UP for Jesus, and God used him to preach!\) 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.](#)

Now days, we overthink certain things. And to be honest with y'all, I think a lot of people overthink baptism. In Peter's day, the believers asked a simple question. They said, "What shall we do?" and Peter told them, "Repent and be baptized." And you know what? They didn't say, "Oh let me think about it. I just need to see if it's the right thing for me right now. You know what I mean? Like it just isn't the right moment. I think I need to pray about it."

If you have ever thought those thoughts before, here's how your conversation with God would go:

God should I be baptized?

Well, do you love me?

Yes.

Do you declare that I am the Lord and Saviour of your life?

Yes, of course.

Do you plan to keep me as the Lord and Saviour of your life?

Haha, yes God. What kind of question is that?

Then, repent and be baptized.

But God, I'm waiting for the right moment...

Right moment?

Yeah, you know, when I get all the feels and the warm fuzzies. The moment when the lights hit me just right and I hear your voice boom down from heaven saying, "Darcie, you are now good enough to be baptized."

I love you. You are enough. Just commit and let me work on the rest.

But God... what if I mess up again after I'm baptized?

You probably will, and you know what, the baptism waters won't make you perfect. Metaphorically and symbolically, you are washed of your old life and made new in His image. However, when you get baptised, you are saying to the world that you will give God your absolute best. It's saying that you will try to become more and more like Him. It's saying you're ready to commit to new life in Him. It's saying you're ready to stand with Him and allow the Holy Spirit to do some open heart surgery. It's saying that you've decided to follow Jesus and you're not turning back.

This isn't just my personal opinion or the opinion of Elim. Getting baptized is backed up throughout scripture. Let me show you: **In Mark 1:9, "At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan River."** You should get baptized to follow the example set by Christ. Jesus got baptized and he was perfect! If you don't think you need to get baptized, do you think you're better than Jesus? Jesus modelled the way for us, but he also commanded us to be baptized.

Matthew 28:19-20 – "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." So not only did he model the way for us; he also commanded us to be baptized. And if we obey his commands, then it shows the world that we truly are believers. **1 John 2:3 – "We know that we have come to know Him, if we obey His commands."**

So, Jesus was baptised, but let's now ask *how* was he baptised? That's important, right? Because so many churches like to differ on this very matter. Some denominations of faith believe they can baptize by just sprinkling some water. Baptism represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Do you bury someone by sprinkling some dirt in their face? No, you fully immerse that body in the ground.

Baptise is from the Greek word "baptizo" which means to immerse or submerge, to wash or make clean with water, or to overwhelm. Jesus himself was fully immersed underneath the water in his baptism, and when we are fully immersed underneath the water, we are joining with Christ in his death and burial. When we rise out of the waters, we rise with him in his resurrection.

Colossians 2:12 says, "For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead."

Not only does baptism publically show our commitment to Christ, it also symbolically shows that we are laying down our past life, our past sins, our past mistakes, and our old habits. The old life is now dead – finished. When we rise from the baptism waters, it represents us raising into new life with Christ.

The resurrecting King is resurrecting me. Our baptism represents what he did for us on the cross when he was overwhelmed with our sins, when he died a brutal death, when he was buried and immersed in the grave, but most importantly when on the 3rd day, he rose again into new life.

Every baptism in the New Testament was done by immersion. Also, just to clarify another differing stance between denominations of faith, there are no recorded infant baptisms in the bible. Some churches believe they can baptize infants via the sprinkling or pouring method.

At Elim, we have child dedications, because that is simply what it is – parents deciding to raise their child with Christian values. When that kid grows up, he/she can make that decision themselves.

So, let me just address a few of the common questions we hear:

1. If I was baptised as a baby, then I don't need to do it again, right?
 - a. That wasn't your baptism if it wasn't your decision.
2. Do I need to get my life sorted out first?
 - a. Do you clean yourself before you take a shower? God recognizes that you have sin in your life and that's why he asks us to repent and turn from those ways. Getting baptized doesn't mean we have it all together, but it shows that we are committed to standing with the one who does.
3. Why do I have to do it in a church in front of a lot of people?
 - a. You don't have to be baptised in a church. I was baptised in the ocean, but that didn't make it any more significant. Let me ask you this: *Why not* get baptised in a church? We are here to celebrate with you! This is a moment to publically declare, so doing it publically actually makes a whole lot of sense. Also, your public declaration could inspire those around you.
4. But I want to wait until all of my family can be here...
 - a. It's awesome that you want them to be here to witness your baptism, but if I had waited until all of my family was present, then I would have been waiting a long time. Our church is filled with so many immigrants and nationalities and the reality is our immediate family isn't always available. But your church family is here, and we record all of our baptisms and you could send that video to your family or share a photo online with them.
5. I've been a Christian for years and everyone knows I'm a Christian, so does it really matter if I get baptised?
 - a. The reason I wear a wedding ring is not just because it's shiny and pretty and traditional to wear one if you're married. I wear it because it honours and respects the relationship I have with Frosty. Even if you've been a Christian for decades, putting the ring on your salvation now will not only honour God, it will also please him. Why? Because you're obeying his command.

So if you are ready to publically declare your faith and go through the waters of baptism would you stand up for your faith? Would you say, "I have decided to follow Jesus" and stand up for the one who is standing up for you? Be willing to stand for Jesus to inspire your parents, your children, your friends, your colleagues, and your neighbours and follow Jesus through the waters of baptism.