

A GOOD START



Introduction: Commonwealth Games races: a good start is essential to win the prize.

- A good start in our Christian walk helps us to last the distance.

2 Peter 1:3-4 *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires...*

- How you were introduced to Jesus is significant.
- Churches can vary:
 - Some baptise infants by sprinkling, and claim they are now Christians. (RC)
 - Anglican, Uniting, Lutheran and others baptise children or adults by sprinkling or immersion
 - Salvation Army don't baptise anyone.
 - Evangelical and Pentecostals baptise those who confess faith in Christ by immersion.



Acts 2:37-39 *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

- **Four Keys** to the normal Christian Birth

1. Conviction

Acts 2:37 *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”*

- Response: “What shall we do?”
- Many had:
 - heard of Jesus
 - Debated about Jesus
 - Some may have been around when Jesus was crucified
- Message was communicated in a way they understood
 - Holy Spirit brought conviction.

2. Change

Acts 2:38a *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ ...”*

- Repent – change of thinking and direction

ILLUSTRATION: A person learning to parachute.

- When you really change your mind:
 - Changes the way you think about it
 - Changes the way you talk about it
 - Changes the way you feel about it
 - Changes the way you act about it.
- Repentance is more than a mental game
- Repentance is a changed mind that leads to:
 - Changed thinking
 - Changed attitude
 - Changed feelings
 - Leads to a change of values
 - Leads to a change in the way I live.
- The first Christians did not have to change their minds about God, but about Jesus.



3. Confirm

- The way you confirm your faith in Christ is by being baptised.

ILLUSTRATION: Lady in baptistry (US story)



- Does the way we baptise matter?
 - Sprinkling as a form of baptism was only authorised in some circumstances in 1311 with the council of Ravenna.
- “Baptizo” – literally to dip or immerse, to submerge.
 - You are acting out a story.
- Paul’s Testimony:



Acts 22:16 *And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’*

- I’ve been cleansed; Leave the dirt in the pool.

Romans 6:3-4 *Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

- Joined with Christ, not a particular denomination.

Galatians 3:26-28 *So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

- Clothed with Christ
 - You wear the uniform of who you represent
 - Peter describes it as pledge of a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21)

Acts 2:38 *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*

- The forgiveness of sins
 - Forgiveness happened at repentance
 - Baptism seals it.

- All of these can be used in your fight against doubt or confusion.

4. Continue

Acts 2:38c-39 *And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*

- Peter points to what the Holy Spirit has just done
- The normal Christian birth:
 - Response to conviction
 - Repentance
 - Baptism in water
 - Baptism and ongoing filling of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

- Some people repent, and point to the thief on the cross
 - However, the thief only had hours to live
- Some respond and repent, but never get baptised in water
- Some respond and change their thinking, get baptised in water, but not baptised in the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:3-4 *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires...*