

Richard Wozniak was baptized Sunday, December 9 2001 at the *New Hyde Park Baptist Church NY* by Pastor Gary Scott

The following were his words of testimony before being baptized

My friends,

As I stand here before you today allow me to give all the glory to Jesus Christ, to the One who is my whole basis of Christian life, to Jesus Christ, the One Who said, *"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"*. To my Rock, my fortress, and my deliverer." To Jesus Christ who said; *"I am the way, the truth and the life: No man cometh to the Father, but by me"*. And let me say that no human tradition can deny anyone grace, for God spoke through the apostle Paul when He told us *"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith; and this not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, so that no one can boast."* A gift of God, God's grace has been poured unto me. And I stand here today to give you testimony of this grace and to give glory *"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."* That One is Jesus Christ, my Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

I was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church in 1963. Like some of you here today and so many of our friends and loved ones I was taught to believe that salvation was not sufficient through Jesus Christ only but came only through the church of Rome, it's traditions, and my own efforts to do good works also. I taught the catechism for 5 years to 5th grade children while in my late 20's. My goal was to try and make up for any of the past sins that I had committed. It was a commendable goal but an impossible task because what I did not know then was the doctrine of saving grace and that *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men, by which we must be saved."*

In the spring of 2000 my wife and I were blessed with the good news of the coming birth of our child. I could not have been happier yet there was an unrest in my heart that began to grow daily some time after. At first I thought it may have been the daily stress of working in the stock market. Coming from a broken home, as a child I always promised God that if one day I had children I would be the best father there could be and the daily roller coaster ride in my attitude that seemed to go up and down with the Dow Jones average didn't fit into that promise so I left my career behind and called it quits. It fit into my schedule well at the time as we had just purchased a new home and I now had some time to get some work done on it. These were my plans but unknown to me was the fact that our Sovereign God had other plans, not just for the 3 months that I stayed home, but also for my life. Yes, God had it all mapped out just the way He planned and grace has shown me this truth in Jeremiah when God tells us *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart;*

As the days off grew so did the unrest. I tried to keep myself as busy as possible and started by ripping up my entire backyard with only a shovel, but the anxiety became too much to bear and I found myself scared and confused without reason. After weeks of feeling this way and shutting myself out from everyone but my wife, I saw a strength in her that I could not ignore. I saw God shining through her as she comforted me while working and carrying our child. I wanted to gain back the strength she saw in me, the strength that she knew would not be re-gained through medication. One day I went to the locksmith to make extra keys and while I waited I walked across the street to the Olive Branch Christian store. I was never a book reader but thought it might help ease my mind. I purchased *"In His Steps"* by Charles Sheldon. It was a tale of people who made a vow for one year to ask themselves before they made any decision whatsoever *"What Would Jesus Do."* I read how their lives were drastically changed by faith in Christ and how they became persecuted by many and separated from the world all in the name of Christ. It was while reading this book and so many others that my anxieties were fading. I asked myself what Jesus would do and I determined that I would go to Mass everyday. I prayed for countless hours. I knelt before numerous statues of Saints every morning and paid homage to them with money even though I didn't know whom half of them were or did. I then bought a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and studied the thousands of man-made doctrines. Life seemed great. All my plans were fitting into place again. But then I did something that I never did before. I began to read the Bible.

I realized that I really didn't know Jesus. I never heard these words before. I didn't know that He was the *"light that shines in the darkness."* I didn't know that He was the Word. No one told me that He was *"the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him"*. It wouldn't take long though. In my own self-efforts to get closer to the Roman Church, God's plan for my salvation was far greater than any plan the traditions of men or I could ever come up. At this point it was the Bible that took hold of my every thought. Verses stuck in my head like *"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man"*. I now knew what this meant. Everything seemed to get much clearer and make so much sense. Then I was blown away when the Lord revealed to me... *"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* And *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* This was God's plan of salvation. This is the salvation that comes by grace through faith. It could not come from any plan that I had. His grace is a free gift and it was given to me so that He would be glorified, so that I could stand here today to respond in obedience to the call and demands of Christ my Savior.

Last week I went back to the site of where two great towers once stood. I was finally able to get a look at the building that I was in when the 1st tower collapsed. How humbled I felt knowing that I stood against a pillar made of stone in the lobby of this building when the tower collapsed against it and how blessed I felt when I saw how the first 14 floors were ripped open and the offices were left fully exposed and the lobby was completely covered with debris. God held me tight in the palm of His hand that day and I speak of it for two reasons. What difference in my life would it have been if I walked out of that building unscratched but yet unsaved by the blood of my Savior Jesus Christ? Physically, I would be alive and unhurt, but spiritually, I would be dead. Of what value would my life had been to me then? *“What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?”*

My second reason is to bring glory to the only One who saves sinners. By God’s grace, my testimony is one of a believer and of one who has been saved. It is time to give the Lord all the praise that only He deserves. The Lord has convicted me of my sins and my need of a Savior and by His grace I am saved through faith. I realize that what has been a radical supernatural change and saving grace in my life that can only come from the blood of the cross, must now be expressed as an outward picture that glorifies my Lord. This is my acknowledgement and my picture to you of this free gift that only He can bestow on us. But this is not the end. It is only the beginning. God did not give me this gift of salvation and truth to be put on a shelf as if it were a trophy to be adored in the confines of my home. On the contrary *“I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth”*. I will do this until I leave this world and when I enter into His kingdom I will lay down every honor that He has given to me at His feet and continue to glorify Him.

I baptized my child in a Catholic Church in January of 2001. One month later while driving to Church I stopped my car at a local Baptist Church. I lived in this same town all my life and was curious to see what went on inside this Church that until then I used simply as a parking spot while visiting the park across the street. My friends, I’ve been here since.

God has always given to me the resources so that I can grow in knowledge and in fellowship. Two weeks later I found out that my best friend’s brother, Brian McLaughlin had been coming here for a few years before me, and this old acquaintance and I have since developed a bond in Christ that only God in His Sovereign grace could have put together. God shines through you Brian, though some may not see, I do. Never be discouraged but instead remember that *“He was in the world and though the world was made through Him, the world did not know Him.”* We must continue to plant seeds in His name.

To this congregation that has accepted my family and myself with so much warmth and love I ask that you *“continue to sing to the Lord, you saints of His, and praise His holy name.”* To Pastor Gary and Pastor Dan *“We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Richard Bennett was a Dominican priest in the Roman Church for 22 years and in 1985 at the age of 48 he left the Church of Rome and by God’s grace through faith, he accepted Jesus Christ and His Word in the Bible as all sufficient and was baptized a believer. He now shares that truth so that others can know of God’s way of salvation and not man’s. Richard is a friend and an inspiration and to him I will quote a verse that became the cry of his heart while a priest: *“that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection.”*

And, finally to wife and child, you are my gifts from God. I see Him everyday through you both. You define love. Your patience, understanding and caring are only a fraction of the beauty that the Lord has blessed you with. Your devotion is a testimony of your love and for this I will forever be by your side.

My friends, do you believe in the great love that God has towards man in Christ Jesus? Do you believe that *“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* If you can believe that our Father desires us to come to Him and calls us through the blood of His Son and that in Christ only there is forgiveness of sins and you trust Him to save you then the work of God’s salvation has begun as far as the Spirit is concerned but it is finished so far as Christ’s work is concerned. Lay hold of Jesus Christ. He is the Rock of our salvation. If you build a foundation on this Rock the storms of life will never shake it. Never compromise the Gospel of Christ. Never compromise one single ounce of the all-sufficient blood that saves sinners. Praise Him always. He is your example. Confess His name and shout it out loudly. Jesus Christ is our Lord of Lords and King of Kings!

I pray that I have glorified you today my Lord. If by my testimony any seeds were dropped here in this church today I pray that you would pour your living water over them so that they may grow in You as I have. *“You turned my wailing into dancing; You have removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.”* Through your Son and my Savior Jesus Christ I now glorify you in Baptism. Amen.

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