

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE.

What's the most beautiful place you've ever seen? Close your eyes. Picture it in your mind...what makes this place so beautiful to you?

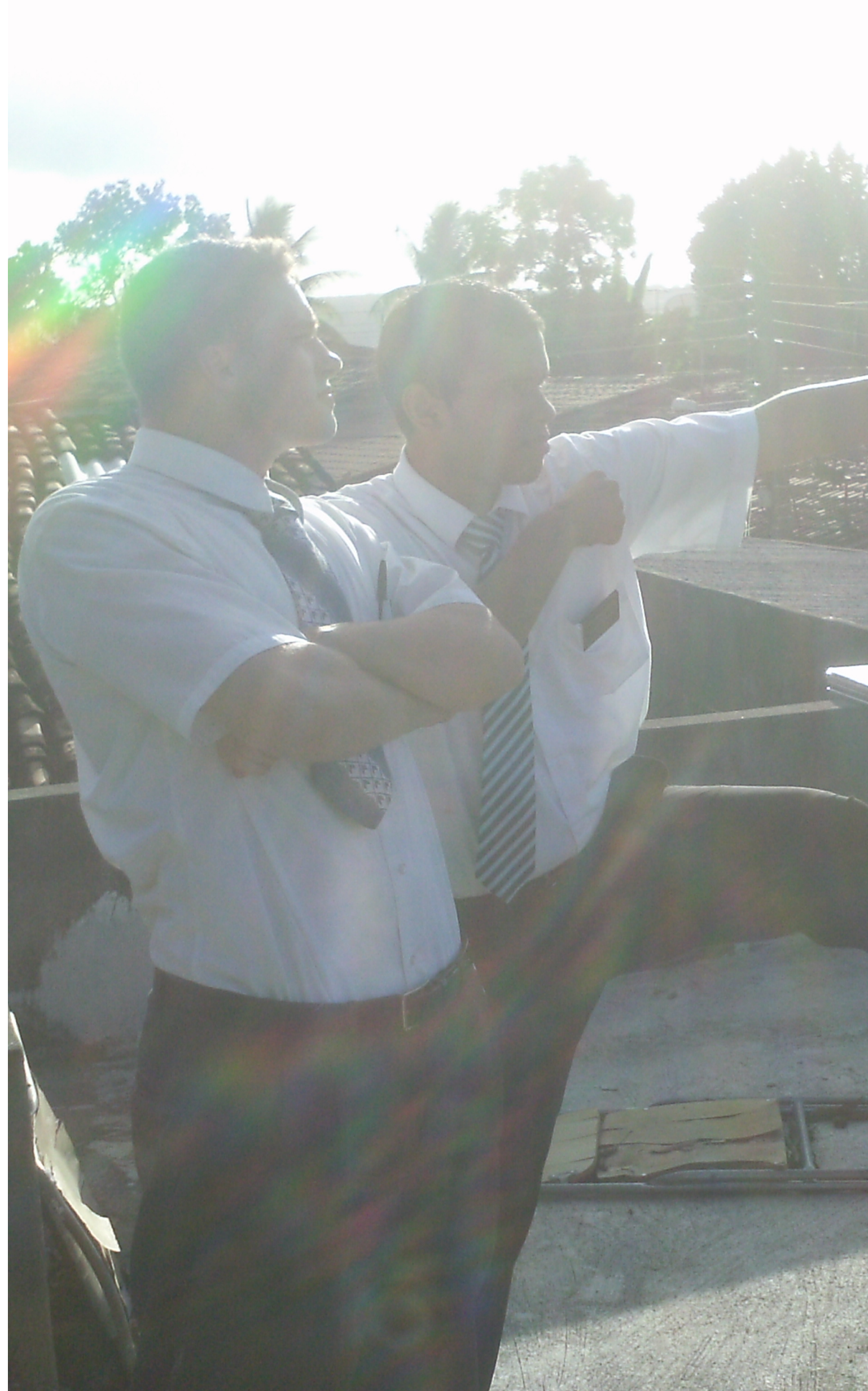
That's what Heaven is like. But Heaven is even better! Our mortal imaginations cannot fathom the perfection that is Heaven, but God gives us experiences in this life that prepare us for the beauty we will experience there.

The thing is, Heaven is perfect. And for a place to remain perfect, every new thing that enters in must also be perfect. It's like pure water in a glass. Just one spec of dust, and the water is no longer clean.

But what about us? How can we, who are so imperfect, enter into this perfect place? That is why we need to be baptized. (John 3:5)

When we are baptized, every bad thing we've ever done is washed away. But after baptism, will we still make mistakes? Of course. And that's why we must take the sacrament. Every week that we take the bread and water, our imperfections are blasted away by the power of Jesus Christ, emanating from that holy ordinance.

But who can baptize you? Technically, the only person who should baptize anyone is the master of perfection himself, Jesus Christ. He's the one that paid the price. And that gives him the power to take away the sins of others. But like the perfect person He is, He doesn't hold all the power to himself. He shares it...with us.



WALKING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS.

As a missionary, you will be a representative of Jesus Christ. For 2 years, or a year and a half, you will represent Him. You will share in His joy, His sorrow, and His power. "Whether by Mine own voice, or the voice of My servants, it is the same." (D&C 1:38)

In our day, you have been asked to take a measure of this responsibility now. A prophet of the Lord has invited you to join the Lord's "Youth Battalion." This is your chance to stand for truth, build God's Kingdom here on Earth, and walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Walking in His footsteps means that we do what He would do, we live the way He would have us live. Part of that means that we must be righteous ourselves to be a good example, and part of that is the responsibility to invite others to walk with you on this journey.

When you read about the life of Christ, it is clear that he wastes no time in inviting others to follow Him. Within moments of meeting Peter, James, and John, he invites them to "leave their nets and follow me."

After less than a 5-minute conversation, Jesus Christ invites the Young Rich Man to do the same, "Sell all you have to the poor, and follow me."

Why does Jesus Christ ask so much of these people so soon? That is something we should all ponder as we walk in His footsteps, and do as he does, boldly inviting our friends to follow Him.



WILL YOU FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST, AND BE BAPTIZED?

As a missionary, I was taught to invite people , by the spirit, to set a goal with God for an exact day to be baptized on the very first visit. This didn't make sense to me, but as I trusted in God and not my own understanding, I began to see a pattern.

When we taught a lesson, people were polite, and nodded along but they weren't really internalizing our message. As soon as we invited them to get baptized, things got personal. That's when they opened up to us, they told us what was holding them back, and why it was hard for them to follow Jesus Christ now. In that moment, we stopped teaching the lesson, and started teaching the person.

There will be people you teach that accept right away. As soon as you invite, they say "Yes." And the only way you will know, is if you invite.

There are others whom you will teach that have a desire to follow Jesus Christ, but they are a little unsure. The reasons people hesitate in following Christ are universal. As I have served the Lord after my mission in New York, Dallas, Seattle, and Los Angeles, I have heard the exact same concerns I faced in Brazil.

Every response you are about to read has been used in real life to help someone get baptized, somewhere in the world. These responses are sacred to me. As you read these words, I would invite you to imagine yourself as a missionary, responding to this person. What would you say differently? How would you help them set a goal with God, for a specific day to be baptized?



“I don’t think I’m ready...”

My Response:

Well, that’s why we’re here. We are representative of Jesus Christ, ordained of him to prepare you. We’re like your “Spiritual Trainers.” We offer a 3-week preparation that will get you in tip top spiritual shape. Ready to follow the Lord.

During this process we will fortify your body, your mind, and your eternal soul. Just like a physical trainer would expect, you have to do your part.

You need to do spiritual crunches, in the form of scripture reading. You’ll need to go to church, and pray. As you do these things, and we help you with your spiritual diet (Word of Wisdom) the Lord will help you reach this goal.

But it all starts when you put your trust in Him. Do you believe that He has the power to move mountains? Did he part the sea so the Children of Israel could walk on dry ground? Then do you believe he can prepare you for the 29th of September? Perfect. Let’s get to work!



“I’ll get baptized, just not right now...”

My Response:

Right now you feel the weight of responsibility, but when you set the date you’re putting that responsibility in God’s hands.

Because before you set the date, you hold all the responsibility. But when you accept the date, you share that responsibility with us, and with God. And your burden will be lighter. Because we will all carry this together.

Because right now if you’re not ready for baptism that’s your fault. Once you set the date, your baptism becomes my responsibility, and God’s responsibility. If you get to this date, and you do everything God asks of you and you still don’t feel ready. That’s on us. You and me, and my companion.

But I promise you, if you make this leap of faith, Heavenly Father will help you.

This is just like sky diving. Or cliff jumping. You feel really nervous, but if you just jump, just make that leap of faith, and let Gravity do the rest. But the best part is, this isn’t a scenario where you fall. This leap of faith will help you fly.

So, what do you say? Are you ready to fly?



“I don’t know if this is true...”

My Response:

Do you want to receive an answer from God?
An answer from God is a miracle. But miracles require faith. God acts by Power, but his power usually comes in response to Faith. So how can you show your faith? Set a date.

Let’s set a date, not just with me, but with God. Tell him, “If you give me an answer before the 29th of September, I’ll get baptized.” Then we’ll begin teaching you. Just plant that seed, and I promise you that if you do what the Lord asks of you, if you pray to know if you should be baptized on that date, read scriptures, come to church, Heavenly Father will reveal it to you. You just have to trust Him.

So let’s set the date. If you get to that date, and you don’t feel excited to be baptized, then at least you KNOW this isn’t true. Right now you just think that, but you don’t know until you hear all that we’ve been sent by God to tell you.



“I’m worried I will join the church, then fall away...”

My Response:

What if I told you there was a race for a BILLION dollars, and all you had to do was finish the race. Would you sign up?

Heaven is worth a lot more than a Billion dollars. It’s a perfect place. Nothing you’ve experienced here on earth can compare to the beauty and powerful nature of Heaven. You can’t buy that, not even with a Billion dollars.

But if you’re not baptized YOU’RE NOT IN THE RACE. Baptism isn’t the end, it’s the starting point. Once you get baptized, you reach checkpoints every week at church where you rejuvenate your spirit and get the energy to keep going.

But the best part of this race, is that we don’t do it alone. We’re here for you. Everybody at church is going to help you run this race. We’ll do everything we can to keep you going. And most importantly, we serve an almighty God of miracles. Don’t you believe He has the power to help you succeed? (1 Nephi 3:7)



“It’s too soon...”

My Response:

Do you believe in miracles? For we serve a God of miracles. Heavenly Father built the world in 7 days. Do you believe he has the power to change your heart in 4x that amount of time? Then let’s set the date. Show Him your faith, and then let Him do the rest.

And it’s not like you’re getting baptized tomorrow! You’ve got time. We offer a holistic preparation that will fortify your body, your mind, and your eternal soul.

As you continue with this preparation, with faith in God almighty, you will not only be ready for baptism. But you will be excited for it. And you will allow the power of God to enter your life. And with that power, you are unstoppable.

Your days of fear are behind you. It’s time for some faith.



“I’ve already been baptized.”

My Response:

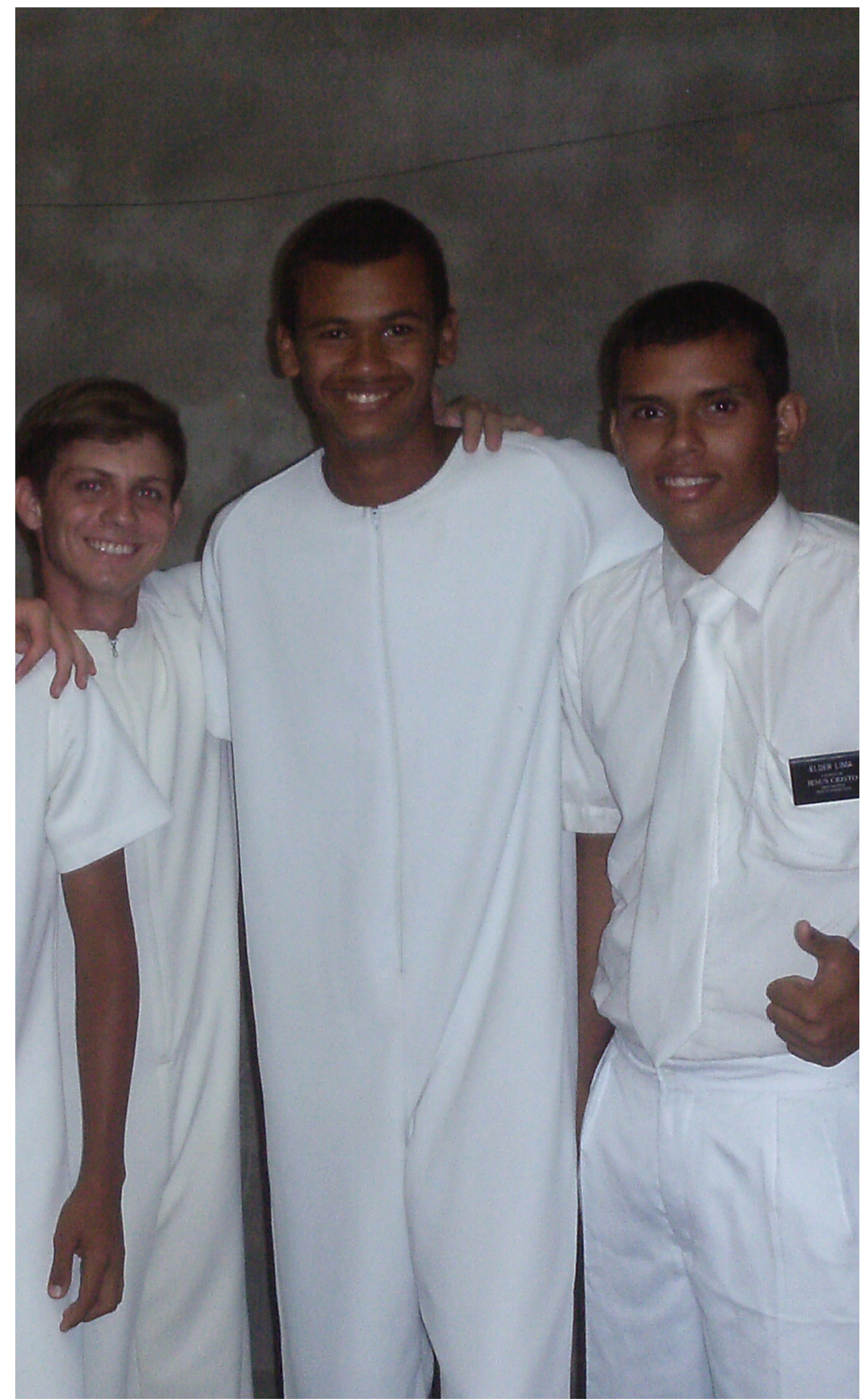
Were you baptized the way Jesus Christ was? When Jesus was baptized, his baptism had 3 very important elements:

1. He was 30 years old, he was old enough to make that choice for himself.
2. He was fully immersed under the water.
3. Jesus was baptized by the proper authority of God...

Do you think any person off the street can baptize you? Why not? Technically, the only person who should baptize you, is Jesus Christ. He paid the price for your sins.

But Jesus Christ shares his power with others. His power is physical., and so it must be passed on in a physical way, by the “laying on of hands.” (Deuteronomy 34:9)

I testify to you that we hold this power today. This is your opportunity to set a goal with God for an exact day, when you can be baptized, just like He was.



“I like you guys, but I won’t ever get baptized.”

My Response:

If Jesus walked into that door right now and asked you to be baptized, would you do it?

REALLY. If your savior told you, I will give you the key to the kingdom of Heaven, here’s my spiritual Ferrari, take it on a spin through the clouds. What would you say? That’s what I thought.

Well, Elder _____ and I are representatives of Jesus Christ. And as he has spoken, “Whether by mine own voice, or the voice of my servants, it is the same.”

When we ask you to follow the example of Jesus Christ and be baptized, it’s not just us who are asking, it is your Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

He has the power to give you everything you’ve ever wanted. You want to live your dream? He can do that. You want to find a wife? Have a child? Get a great job? He has the power to give you all those things. But it’s a lot harder for Him to help you, if you don’t do what He says.

So..what do you really want?

The best way to do that, is by keeping His commandments. I promise that as you seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, all these things will be added unto you. (Mathew 6:33)



“I’m worried my family will disown me.”

My Response:

When you get baptized, one of two things will happen:

- Your family will accept your decision, and they will support you.
- Your family will fight you at first, but as the years go by and they see how happy you are, they will want that happiness for themselves.

...If your family is one of the rare group of people that are so bitter and so cruel that they would rather that you listen to them and be unhappy than follow Jesus Christ and finding eternal joy, perhaps this excerpt from the Bible will comfort you:

Mark 10:29

“29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s,

30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”

“I’m part of another church.”

My Response:

There was a very wise prophet by the name of Gordon B. Hinckley, to paraphrase what he said, “We are not asking you to forsake all you’ve learned in another community. We’re just inviting you to come and join us. Let us add to what you already know. Let us help you as you come closer to God.”

I would echo this statement by saying that I am so grateful for the experiences you have had in your old church. They will always be a part of your story, and if you’re ready, we have new things we’d like to show you. It’s up to you, but I promise that if you take this step, you will experience the gospel beyond anything I could ever describe.

Just set the goal today, and we’ll start working towards this goal. If at any time baptisms doesn’t feel like the right thing, you are free to choose for yourself. We are here for you, every step of the way.

And if you do find joy in this journey, we hope you will invite your friends as well! Ask them to come and see, come and help, come and belong.

“I’ve read a lot of bad stuff about your church online...”

My Response:

We live in what many people call, “The Information Age,” where there is an overabundance of information on any given topic. But who can verify what is true?

There is a lot of information out there that is simply inaccurate, or as some in the media say, “Fake News.” Many of the negative information about our church are lies, or “twisted truths.”

In times like these, it is difficult to know who you can trust. But I promise you that you can always trust in God. He has all the answers.

So, I would invite you, as we continue in this process towards baptism, to pray every day. Ask God if this is the right choice, if this truly is His church, and be very open and honest with us about your doubts and fears.

I KNOW that God will help us work through these things in time, but for now, let’s put this goal in God’s hands. Trust in Him.

I know if it were me, I’d rather put my fate in the hands of God, than some random person on the internet...

“I just don’t believe in myself.”

My Response:

You know, I understand how you feel. It’s very easy to believe in God, He is all powerful. But sometimes it is a little harder to believe in ourselves.

There’s a story about this in the Bible. Jesus Christ is walking on the water, and Peter, one of His disciples loved Jesus, and wanted to join Him on the water.

In that moment, Jesus invited Peter to come, and for a few steps, Peter actually walked on water! But then, he lost sight of the savior, he started focusing on the wind and the waves, and he almost fell into the water. But in his moment of difficulty, Jesus saved him.

Setting a goal for baptism is much like walking on water. It looks impossible. But if you just put one foot in front of the other, and you keep your eyes fixed on the savior, I promise you, that anything is possible.

And if you do fall through, Jesus Christ will be there to catch you. As long as you are following the savior, you are safe. Just set the goal, and put one foot in front of the other. You’ll be walking on water in no time...