Lesson 012 Preached August, 2003; Mesa, AZ Rewritten July, 2003

The Sinner’s Prayer

Text—Rev. 3:20

Intro. Duty as Christians reprove works of Darkness

A.     Trust preachers to tell the truth?

B.     Eph. 5: 6-13

C.     **(**1 Thess. 5: 21 (Prove all things; keep that which is good)

D.     1 John 4:1 (Test the spirits)

E.      Check the scriptures daily (Acts 17:11)

I.                   What is the Sinner’s Prayer?

# A.     Rev. 3: 15-16, 19-20

1.      Standing at the door- Church (vs. 14)

2.      Not unbeliever’s heart

B.     Some examples (overhead chart)

**1) "Jesus, I believe and I need the salvation you have provided. Come into my heart, rule my life today, and show me how to live. Amen" From the tract: "The Plain Gospel"**

**2) "Jesus, I believe that you are the holy Son of God. I believe that you died on the cross for my sins and that you rose from the dead. You are my salvation. Please wash all my sins away and make me a child of God. I give my life to you today. Amen" From the tract: "What Is Meant By Salvation?"**

**3) "Jesus, I need your salvation. I open my heart to you. I confess that you are God's own son, and that you died on the cross to save me from my sin. Help me to turn from my ways and follow you. Make me ready for your return and show me how to live in the days ahead. Amen." From the tract: "Jesus Is Coming Again"**

**4) "Jesus, I am sorry for the things I do and say that are wrong. Make me your child, take care of me and help me from now on to follow you. Amen." From the tract: "Here's A Treat For You And Some Good News."**

C.     Another Example—Romans 10:8-10

1.      v. 8 referenced to Deut. 30: 14

2.      Paul used the OT passage to show both righteousness and faith are not far off.

3.      Confession = Salvation **(Faith only)**

***Jesus said in Matt. 7:21, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.***

4.      Confession different from prayer

5.      Book of Romans towards former Jews who still try to hang onto the Law of Moses.

6.      The Law demanded perfection

**7.** Through Christ saved through forgiveness **(strive for perfection)**

D.     The Living Bible—John 1:11-13

1.      **READ NKJV FIRST**

2.      **Living Bible Translation:**

**“11. Even in his own land and among his own people, the Jews, he was not accepted. Only a few would welcome and receive him. 12. But to all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God. *All they needed to do was to trust him to save them. 13. All those who believe this are reborn!*—not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan—but from the will of God.**

The words in verse 12 have no support at all in the original Greek. They are a blatant insertion placed by the translator, Kenneth Taylor. In defense of Taylor's original motives, the Living Bible was created primarily with children in mind. However, the publishers should have corrected the misleading verse in the 1960s. They somewhat cleared it up in the newer LB in the 1990s, only after the damage has been done.

F.      The Pharisee and the tax collector—Luke 18: 10-14

1.      Publican’s prayer—vs. 13 (same thing)

2.      Both men were in temple—vs. 10

3.      Only Jews were permitted in temple

4.      Both already saved based on Law of Moses

II.                When was the Sinner’s Prayer Established and by whom?

# A.      Mid 1700’s **(A mere 300 years)**

1.      Preachers used Rev. 3:20 in first person

*By using the first-person tense while looking into the sinner's eyes, preachers began to speak for Jesus as they exhorted, "If you would just let me come in and dine with you, I would accept you." Even heathens who had never been baptized responded with the same or even greater sorrow than churchgoers. As a result, more and more preachers of Christendom concluded that baptism was merely an external matter--only an outward sign of an inward grace.*

 **Jesus said in John 3:5,** **“Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!”**

2.     Mourner’s Bench—1741 Eleazar Wheelock

a.      Front bench (pew) for sinners

b.      “Salvation looming over their heads”

c.       Susceptible to anything.

B.     Mid 1800’s—Dwight Moody

1.      “Inquiry Room” (Mourner’s bench redone)

2.      Team of counselors

3.      Questions, study scripture

4.      End with prayer (Sinner’s Prayer)

C.     End of 19th Century—R.A. Torrey

1.      Street Preaching

2.      “On the Spot” Conversion (Receive Christ here and now)

3.      Salvation outside the church?

a.      The body of Christ is the church (Eph. 1:22-23) He is the head.

b.      Christ paid for the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28)

1. c.        The church in Greek is “ekklesia” which means “the called out”

**(Read all three) 1 Peter 2:9; Col. 1:12-14; Romans 1:16**

#### D.     Early 1900’s—Billy Sunday: former baseball player

1.      “Sawdust Trail”

2.      A simple handshake (No Prayer???)

## III.           Why Use the Sinner’s Prayer?

# A.     Time Saver—Billy Graham (Crusade)

1.      Convert hundreds at once

a.      General recite of “prayer”

b.      Simultaneous

2.     Replacement, no need for baptism (want baptism? Choose a church that does it, though already saved.)

3.     False Doctrine 2 John 9-11

B.     Gideons International

1. Statement:      ***The Gideons International serves as an extended missionary arm of the church: Our sole purpose is to win men, women, boys and girls to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ through association for service, personal testimony, and distributing the Bible in the human traffic lanes and streams of everyday life.***

2. **Annually, The Gideons International is placing and distributing more than 59 Million Scriptures worldwide. This averages one million copies of the Word of God placed every seven days, or 112 per minute!**

3.Use of “The Sinner’s Prayer” to bring people to Christ.

4. Another version of The Baptist Doctrine

C.     Need Baptism—(Mark 16:16) Jesus Commanded

1.      Acts 2:38-41

2.     Verse 41—3,000 added (baptized every one!)

3.      EXAMPLES OF CONVERSIONS IN ACTS –(Overhead chart)

**WHAT DID PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE DO TO BECOME CHRISTIANS?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Believe** | **Repent** | **Confess** | **Baptism** | **Saved** |
| Pentecost **2:2-41** |   | **Vs. 37, 38** |   | **Vs. 38-41** | **Vs. 38, 47** |
| Samaria **8:5-13** | **Vs. 12** |   |   | **Vs. 12-13** |   |
| Eunuch **8:35-39** | **Vs. 36-37** |   | **Vs 37** | **Vs. 38** | **Vs. 39** |
| Saul **9:1-19** |   |   |   | **Vs. 18** | **22:16** |
| Cornelius **10:34-46** | **Vs. 43** |   |   | **Vs. 48** | **Vs. 43** |
| Jailor **16:25-34** | **Vs. 31** |   |   | **Vs. 33** |   |
| Lydia **16:11-15** | **Vs. 14** |   |   | **Vs. 15** |   |
| Corinth **18:8** | **Vs. 8** |   |   | **Vs. 8** |   |
| John’s Disciples **19:1-7** | **Vs. 2** |   |   | **Vs. 5** |   |

\*\***Every conversion** mentioned in Acts, ***specifically*** mentions baptism as part of salvation\*\*

## IV.            How many Plans of Salvation?

**1.    Look again at the "prayers" recorded on this page. Notice please that each one is different. Two prayers don't even mention Christ's death on the cross! Two prayers mention faith ("I believe") and two do not.**

**2.    Further, three of the prayers mention something about the person following Christ after being "saved," while one doesn't mention it at all. One prayer mentions being washed from sins, and the other three do not.**

**3.    Each prayer different, therefore many plans.**

**4.    One Plan of Salvation**

D.    Each one heard God's word (Acts 2:22; “Philip”-Acts 8: 5, 35; Rom. 10: 17)

1.      They believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 2: 36, 8: 12, 16: 31, Mk. 16: 16)

2.      Confessed their faith in Christ (***Read***—Matt.10: 32; Acts 8: 37)

3.      Repented of their sins (Lk. 13:3; ***Read***—Acts 17: 30, 2: 38)

4.      Baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2: 38; Mk. 16: 16)

E.  Washing away of sins came **after** one had been baptized (Acts 22:16). Each case of conversion in the Bible is consistent with the other. We cannot say this about these so-called "prayers" men have suggested we say in order to be saved.

### V.               Conclusion

**A.   Matt. 28:18, “All authority…”**

**B.   Jesus calls Sinners (Matt. 11:28, “come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”)**

C.   **Mark 16:16, “He who believes…”**

**D.   Need to follow what Peter said: Acts 2:38, “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”**