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Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study9:45 AM
Worship10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service 2:30 PM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class.10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

James Thomas

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
House to House, Heart to Heart
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
The Truth in Love
World Bible School

The Sinner's Prayer Is (Finally) Dying

A major shift has been developing in the religious world over the last few years, and it's a truly exciting trend. The sinner's prayer – the 20th century's primary prescribed method for conversion to Christ – is falling out of favor. Millions of people were led to believe that they were saved by praying a prayer to "ask Jesus into their hearts" by men like Billy Graham, whether in their homes as they watched on TV or in massive stadium crusades, and the trickle-down effect made this prayer the standard practice for many of America's churches.

Thankfully, that's finally changing. As we'll discuss in this article, a number of prominent names in the evangelical world are rejecting the sinner's prayer. And though they haven't all embraced a biblical view of salvation, they're moving in the right direction. Best of all, they're rejecting the concept of the sinner's prayer for the right reasons.

It's cheap

As Ray Comfort (of Living Waters Publications) puts it, we would place no value on an apology from an adulterous man if he had to repeat it word for word from someone else feeding it to him. For the same reason, the rote repetition of the sinner's prayer shows very little sorrow, repentance, faith, and commitment. John MacArthur shared similar thoughts, contrasting the typically recited prayer with the "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner" prayer prayed by the tax collector in Luke 18. When you consider the two, the difference is night and day. The sinner's prayer is almost always a cheap substitute for the true feelings of a life changing repentance and faith that lead to full obedience.

It gives a false sense of safety

Because it is cheap, it opens the door for belief in salvation without repentance, obedience, and fruit bearing. Sadly, this country is filled with at least one generation of people who have this false sense of safety. You know, the type who live lives that are anything but Christian but still claim to be on their way to heaven because they were "saved" 20 years ago by repeating a prayer. For this reason, Paul Washer refers to the prayer as a flu shot, something people get one time and go on living as though they don't have to worry about anything anymore because it was all taken care of in the past. "That sinner's prayer has sent more people to hell than anything on the face of the earth," Washer said in another sermon.

It's biblically inaccurate

Most importantly, the sinner's prayer simply doesn't exist in the Bible. The more I researched for this article, the more I kept coming across articles, videos, and sermons by denominational leaders that proclaimed this truth, and it's a thrilling thing to see. Though many tracts have tried to base the concept in Revelation 3:20,

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"Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." **Psalm 24:3-5**

Let us know if you want to study the Bible to know more about Christ and His Church.



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where Jesus said “Behold, I stand at the door and knock” – leading to the idea that we must ask Him in – the context shows us that He was talking to an unrepentant church that had shut Him out. It has nothing to do with inviting Him in to give us salvation.

If the sinner’s prayer were a biblical method of being saved, you would think that at least one of the many conversions we see in the book of Acts would have made use of it. Or that it would have surfaced somewhere in Jesus’ teachings or in Paul’s writings. But it doesn’t. It’s simply not in the Bible. As bestselling author Francis Chan asked in a YouTube video, could a person really sit down and read the Bible and come to the belief that they needed to say a prayer to be saved? Or would they believe that they need to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit as Acts 2:38 says?

Of course, these truths about the sinner’s prayer aren’t true because John MacArthur, Francis Chan, or anyone else said them. They’re true because they’re what the Bible teaches. Sadly, most of the men quoted here have yet to embrace the true biblical teaching of salvation and becoming one with the blood of Christ. But they have opened a door of opportunity for us. With the most commonly taught method of finding salvation in Jesus being dismantled, a vacuum is being left. The opportunity is ripe for a new, more biblical teaching to take its place.

Watch some of the videos linked in this article and you’ll see that some of these men don’t have an answer for the moment when a person is saved. But the Bible does, and that’s where we come in. We can capitalize on the disfavor being cast on the sinner’s prayer by showing people that the Bible truly does show us the way to be united with Christ in the likeness of His death (Romans 6:3-4 and that we *can know* when we’re saved. As David Platt, head of the Southern Baptist Convention’s International Mission Board preached: “Based on what the New Testament teaches, I want to say tonight as clearly, and in some senses, as bluntly as possible: If you are a follower of Christ, and you have not been bap-

tized, you are living contrary to the New Testament.”

We’re being given a priceless opportunity. The false sense of hope that millions received by repeating an unbiblical prayer is being shaken by the very institutions that gave them that hope, and I can’t help but be excited by that. Let’s use this chance to help people understand biblical truth about one of the most damaging lies the Christian faith has ever faced.

Jack Wilkie (www.focuspress.org)

Fourteen Suggestions for Building Your Devotional Life

Maybe you have resolved repeatedly to become a better, more faithful Bible student, person of prayer, or simply one who truly desires to build a closer relationship with God. While a lot of that will be personal and peculiar to you as an individual, you may lack direction about how to get started or give yourself the best chance to succeed in that goal. Perhaps these few suggestions can prove helpful to strengthening your daily connection with your Creator.

- **Adjust your wake up time.** 15 to 30 minutes head start will prove the most vital moments of your day.
- **Find a quiet, solitary place.** Distraction can equal de-traction.
- **Study and pray with pen and paper or computer nearby.** This will aid specificity and memory.
- **Do not rush.** Better a paragraph or chapter pored over than ten chapters glossed over.
- **Take advantage of the commute.** Pray through it or play the Bible on audio, if you can.
- **Pick a book or topic of interest and drill down.** Pick it for its relevance to your weakness, need, ignorance, or curiosity. Drink it in deliberately and carefully.
- **Be specific and transparent in your prayers.** In the solitude of prayer, drop all pretense, denial, and pride. He knows it all anyway.

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Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)

Sunday @ 7:00am on KTAB

In Search of the Lord’s Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:30am on KTAB

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

God’s Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)

Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Reading Schedule

Dec. 11 Philemon—Hebrews 1

Dec. 12 Hebrews 2-4

Dec. 13 Hebrews 5-7

Dec. 14 Hebrews 8-10

Dec. 15 Hebrews 11-13

Dec. 16 James 1-3

Dec. 17 James 4—1 Peter 1

Dec. 18 1 Peter 2-5

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

(2 Timothy 2:15)



Visitation Meeting

- ◆ Each Sunday night immediately before the evening worship. Last week **47 contacts** were made.

Announcements

- ◆ Ladies, see Cindy McCaghren for your new “Digging Deeper” study sheets.
- ◆ We will be beginning a new lesson in the adult class on Wednesday evening, “**After Baptism, Then What?**” All are encouraged to attend.

Upcoming Special Events at 4th & Stewart

- ◆ March 26-29—Spring Gospel Meeting with Russell Bell.

Other Opportunities to Learn and Grow

- ◆ March 5-8—Gospel Meeting at Rising Star w/ Mike Bonner.
- ◆ March 12-19—Young Men’s Development Conference at Bryan/ College Station.
- ◆ April 2-5—Gospel Meeting at Hamilton w/ Denny Wilson.
- ◆ April 9-12—Gospel Meeting at 9th & Main (San Angelo) w/ Jason Rollo.
- ◆ April 16-19—Gospel Meeting at Bangs w/ Ronnie Hayes.
- ◆ April 30-May 3—Gospel Meeting at Gordon w/ Jessie Dickison.

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- **Always seek application in the Bible text you are reading.** This is not a history lesson or academic exercise. This is spiritual food, armor, and survival.
- **Create a list of ways you can enact the principles you read from Scripture.** See yourself in the text of Scripture, and challenge yourself to think, say, do, and be what God desires of you.
- **Ask questions of the text.** Don’t pass over what you don’t understand. Don’t skim the surface. Mine for meaning.
- **Build a prayer list.** Challenge yourself and add people that many others may overlook in your local circle—widows, little children, new Christians, struggling folks, those facing an anniversary of loss, leadership, missionaries, non-Christians where you work and play, the poor, etc. This ever-expanding prayer list will bless lives in ways you won’t know here on earth.
- **Mean what you say.** When you tell someone you’ll pray for them, have integrity. Make an honest effort (write it down, put it in your phone) and honor your word. Ask the people you encounter how you might pray for them, then do it.
- **Review.** Revisit prayer lists or notes from Bible study periodically. Make it live on through reflection.
- **Pray for what to study and study prayer.** You will find that these two spiritual strength-building exercises are interconnected. This is about relationship with God. Spare no exertion.

Consider these “jump starters.” You will come up with more and far better ways to help yourself to a closer walk with God. These days, we’re being pulled in every direction and most lead away from Him. You will have to be deliberate to swim against the tide. May God bless you as you let Him bless you through a vibrant devotional life!

Neal Pollard (preacherpollard.com)

Celebrate

“Rejoice with those who rejoice...” (Romans 12:15)

December Birthdays: Estelle Guthrie (7), Laverne Thomas (13), Kaci Churchwell (18), Linda Griffith (20), Mia Stroope (22), John McCaghren (27).

December Anniversaries: Allen & Linda Griffith (20), David & Glenda Milam (20), Ken & Jo Maninger (25).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	Nov. 27, 2016	Dec. 4, 2016
Bible Class	54	42
AM Worship	70	73
PM Worship	49	48
Wednesday PM	43	44
Contribution	\$1,883	\$2,018

Privileged To Serve

"...be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1)

This Week: 12/11/16		Next Week: 12/18/16		December 2016 Make Announcements: Gene Bannister Prepare Communion: John Barnum Family Clean Building: Huckaby / Bland January 2017 Make Announcements: John Barnum Prepare Communion: McCaghren Family Clean Building: McCaghren Family
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Joe Dennis		
Greeters	Maninger Family	Fuller Family		
Opening Prayer	James Fuller	John Barnum		
Communion	John Barnum*, Allen Bland Tom Wilcox, Randy Huckaby	Allen Griffith*, Larry Petty Ryan Rudloff, Jack Turner		
Closing Prayer	Allen Griffith	Don Smith		
Attendance Cards	Jaceten Evetts	Ian Barnum		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: Ken Maninger	Song Leader: Joe Dennis		
Opening Prayer	Mike Bannister	Tom Wilcox		
Scripture Reading	Don Smith	James Fuller		
Communion	John Barnum	Allen Griffith		
Closing Prayer	Gene Bannister	Ken Maninger		
Wednesday Devotionals:	December 14 Don Smith	December 21 Joe Dennis	December 28 Allen Griffith	January 4 Prayer Night

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of December 11, 2016

Sunday Class **Romans 3:23ff**
 Wed. Class **After Baptism, Then What?**

Who Is Jesus – His Teaching – The Beatitudes

Text: Matthew 5:1-12

I. Who Will Be the Citizens of "The Kingdom of Heaven"?

A. Their Character Involves Interrelated Qualities.

1. They Will Possess All of these Graces.
2. These Graces Are Interrelated – It takes all of these qualities, working in conjunction with one another.

B. Their Character Includes Eight Qualities.

1. They Are "Poor in Spirit" (convicted of one's own spiritual poverty).
2. They "Mourn" (in a specific sense – over their spiritual poverty).
3. They Are "Meek".
4. They "Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness".
5. They Are "Merciful".
6. They Are "Pure in Heart".
7. They Are "Peacemakers".
8. They Are "Persecuted For Righteousness' Sake".

II. What Benefits Do the Citizens of the Kingdom Receive? (Is it worth the effort?)

A. Their Benefits Summarized In One Word.

1. That Word Is "Blessed".
2. This Word Involves Great Joy And Gladness.

B. Their Benefits Are Both Present And Future.

1. "Theirs Is The Kingdom Of Heaven" (expressed twice).
2. "They Shall Be Comforted".
3. "They Shall Inherit The Earth".
4. "They Shall Be Filled".
5. "They Shall Obtain Mercy".
6. "They Shall See God".
7. "They Shall Be Called Sons Of God".

Certainly the benefits of the kingdom outweigh anything this world has to offer, or any persecution it might inflict!

But the blessedness of the citizens is only for those who have the characteristics of the citizens.

- Do we have the qualities described in The Beatitudes?
- Don't the blessings described in The Beatitudes encourage us to develop such qualities?

Psalms – The Individual Lament

This particular style is felt to be the most common in the psalms. The individual lament has the following elements or form:

1. An initial calling upon the Lord;
2. A complaint, specifying the occasion giving rise to the lament;
3. A prayer requesting the Lord to hear and respond with respect to the source of the lament;
4. The expression of wishes or desires concerning the fate of friends or enemies;
5. The grounds upon which the appeal to God is based; and
6. A concluding expression of confidence that the appeal will be heard and responded to by God.

Examples: Psalms 13, 17, 51, 73.

Psalm 13 – "When God Is Silent"

This psalm is often thought of as the classic lament psalm.

I. "How Long?" (1-2).

- A. The writer begins with a plea for God to hear his prayers – he prays, "How long, O LORD?"
- B. He pleads – "Will You forget me forever?"
- C. "How long will You hide Your face from me?"
- D. With great emotion the writer asks, if effect, "How long will all of this continue? When will you step in and deal with my trouble? Will my prayers go unheeded?"
 1. "How long shall I take counsel in my soul?"
 2. "How long will my enemy be exalted over me?"

II. "Consider Me!" (3-4).

- A. The psalmist knows where to go to get help.
- B. His situation is so desperate that he sees himself as near the end.
- C. If the psalmist is not delivered, he believes the enemy will seize upon this fact and ridicule the care God has given him.

III. "I Will Trust" (5-6).

- A. After he prays for help, he resolves to trust in God – "But I have trusted in Your mercy."
- B. "My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation" – he will rejoice in the cessation of his misery and the removal of opposition from enemies.
- C. "I will sing to the Lord."