

CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

February, 28, 2016

There is probably no greater falsehood than the so-called "sinners' prayer." Preachers are teaching the sinners of the world to pray a prayer and expect immediate salvation! Preachers teach this doctrine because they think that it comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ.

You probably know that there is a difference in "sinners". Sinners can be deep in sin, and not so deep. Some sinners can be hard to "prick" with the gospel, and other sinners can be easy to "prick" with the gospel. Jesus taught that there are four kinds of sinners! That's right! Jesus talked about the difference in sinners in a parable He spoke. Jesus said, ""A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 8:5-8 ESV)

Jesus interpreted this parable to his disciples, He said, "The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience." (Luke 8:11-15 ESV)

Jesus believed there are four kinds of sinners in the world. Which one are you? Notice that each kind of sinner is characterized by a condition of the heart. These four kinds of heart condition are illustrated by the four kinds of soil. (1) There is the beaten-down hard pathway soil. The seed doesn't have a chance of getting into the soil! These sinners do not receive the salvation that Jesus died for. The

birds come, that is the devil comes and snatches away the seed. These sinners have no interest at all in the Word of God, the good news of their salvation. They are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin and the lies of the Devil. They are deceived into thinking that they have no need of Jesus' salvation.

(2) Then there is the rocky soil. This soil has too many rocks. The seed gets down into the shallow soil and may spring up. These sinners may rejoice to hear of salvation. They receive this great salvation. But they do not let it consume their hearts and their lives. They attend church services occasionally, but their reception of the great salvation has not changed the pattern of their sinful lives. Then comes the test! Trouble comes to these saved sinners. Church-going becomes inconvenient and expensive. The seed dries up within them; it has no moisture. They quit Jesus Christ. They quit God. They quit the Lord's people, the church. They quit salvation.

(3) Then there is the seed that falls among the thorns. This soil has too many weeds, too many thorns, the good news of salvation sounds great. They receive it with joy! But these sinners receive salvation with a grain of salt. They are not sincerely committed to following Jesus Christ. The seed of salvation in them is choked by the world around them. The clutter of daily life chokes them. They continue to pursue the cares, the riches, and the pleasures of life. They bear only a meager harvest.

(4) The fourth kind of sinner-soil that Jesus talked about was the good soil. These sinners also received the good news of salvation by obeying it, but they did not put the light of salvation under the bed (Luke 8:16). They put their light on a stand so everyone could see the salvation of God in them. These people are walking Bibles! They hold the good news of Christ in honest, good hearts, and they bare fruit with patience.

None of these sinners who were saved received Christ's salvation through prayer! That's right! They received it by obeying the good news. You see, the good seed, the good news of Christ, is composed of facts, commands, and promises.

The facts are that Jesus Christ was born of a human virgin, and that when about 30 years old he was baptized by John the baptizer. The facts are that "Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to [the Jewish people of the first century]

by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among [them] through him.... This man was handed over to [the rulers of the Jews] by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and [those rulers], with the help of wicked men, put him [Jesus] to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." (Acts 2:22-24 NIV) Jesus' apostle Paul put these facts this way to the Corinthians, "What I received I passed on to you [Corinthians] as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-- yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." (1 Corinthians 15:2-10 NIV)

The basic underlying fact of this good news is that Jesus died, was buried and was raised from the dead for your sins, and the sins of the world. Jesus' apostle John put it this way, "He [Jesus] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands." (1 John 2:2-3 NIV)

Jesus' commands began with His great charge to His apostles just before He ascended back to His heavenly Father. "Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV) When the apostles received the Holy Spirit they began to preach the facts and the commands of the good news of Jesus Christ. They received the Holy Spirit and began to preach on the Jewish day of Pentecost. When they finished their first sermons, there were some good-soil sinners in the vast audience. They cried out, "Men and Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "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. For the

promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

Friends, Peter did not tell those good-hearted people to "Say the Sinners Prayer." Peter did not say "Repeat after me!" Peter commanded them to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." What have you been told? Peter is commanding you even today! "And with many other words [Peter] bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added [to them] that day about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:37-41 ESV)

Friends, you will never read in the Bible the sinner's prayer. You are not told to pray that Jesus will enter your heart. If the good news has entered your heart then Jesus is calling you through that good news. He is calling you to repent and be baptized in His name for the forgiveness that your desire. When you repent and are baptized in water you are "Calling on the name of the Lord." That's right! I know this is true because of what happened to Saul of Tarsus, the man who was later known as the Apostle Paul.

Saul of Tarsus saw Jesus Christ in His full splendor on a road outside of Damascus, Syria. Jesus' appearance was like looking at the brightness of the sun. Saul was blinded. A voice came from the brightness, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" All he could say was, "Who are you Lord?" "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting!" Saul then said, "What shall I do Lord?" Jesus replied, "Rise and enter the city and you will be told what you are to do." Jesus did not tell Saul to pray, but that's what the blinded man Saul did for three days! Saul did not eat or drink for three days. He just prayed. God gave him a vision. In the vision Saul saw a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands upon him so that he received his sight. Three days later a Christian man named Ananias came in and did exactly that! Saul began to see again. Then Ananias said to Saul, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'" (Acts 22:14-16 ESV)

After praying for three days, Saul still had his sins! That's right! Furthermore, when Ananias commanded him to arise and be baptized and wash away your sins,

Saul was "calling on the name of the Lord" when he obeyed the Lord's command. Friends, calling upon the name of the Lord is NOT a prayer; calling upon the name of the Lord is repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. It is answering the call of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The seed of Christ has within it the facts and the commands of Christ. Will you believe the facts and obey the commands? Visit a church of Christ near you to find someone who can assist you in your obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Visit a church of Christ near you in order to call on the name of the Lord.