
THE TRUTH ABOUT THAT TRADITION

Repeating the Sinner's Prayer For Salvation



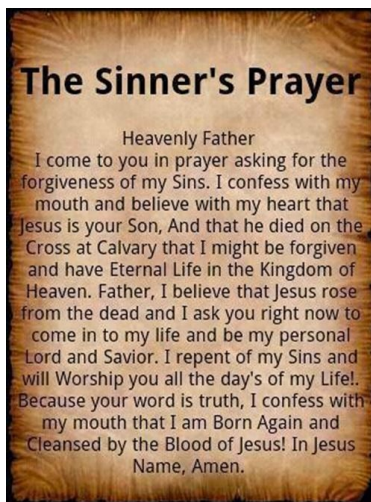
“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

John 3:5

Have you ever heard a minister announce (at the end of service alter call), “The doors of the church are open”? Perhaps you were even as naïve as some who turned around, looking back to see if it actually was open! The fact is, it has become a tradition for many Protestant church leaders to extend the invitation to join their organization, by declaring, “the doors are open!” What generally happens next is, those who decide that they want to join their group would come up to the front of the congregation and be instructed to repeat “The Sinner’s Prayer” for salvation.

The Sinner's Prayer

The Sinner’s Prayer” is a prayer of repentance used by those in Western Christianity who acknowledge that they are sinners seeking salvation; (it is also called The Consecration Prayer and The Salvation Prayer).



(One example of The Sinner’s Prayer) *“Heavenly Father, I confess that I am a sinner, and ask you to forgive me of my sins. I confess with my mouth that I believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and I accept Him as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank you Father, for I am now born again, in Jesus’ name. Amen”*

Is The Sinner’s Prayer Scriptural?

Even though reciting The Sinner’s Prayer has become a common practice among many groups, the fact is, there is no such prayer of conversion found in the Bible. In the Book of John, chapter 3, Jesus explains precisely what He means about being “born again”... “Jesus answered and said unto him (Nicodemus), *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” (John 3:3-5).

Have You Been Born of the Water and of the Spirit?

From John chapter 3 and Hebrews 6:2, we learn that being born again involves two baptisms... *water baptism* (submersion in water, in the name of Jesus Christ) AND the *spirit baptism* (receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost); examples of these two baptisms experienced in the early church can be found in the following texts: *Acts 2:1-4, 38, 8:12-17, 10:44-48, and 19:1-6*. Furthermore, nowhere in the Scriptures does it mention that we are to “accept the Lord as our Savior”. John 1:12 states, *“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God”*. And how do we receive Him? *We receive Christ when we receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost!*



So now that we understand that repeating The Sinner’s Prayer is not the scriptural way to be born again, the issue of “joining the church” must also be examined. First, one must determine what the term *church* refers to. “Church” is a term used in the New Testament, in reference to a *congregation* who gathered for worship, referred to also as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:11-12); but it was not associated with the building or any religious institution.

In the Scriptures, it is clearly stated that the LORD baptizes us with the Holy Ghost (Matthew. 3:11), and He decides who will be added to the church (*Acts 2:46- 47, "...and the LORD added to the church daily such as should be saved"*).

Examples of How the Word "Church" Is Used in the Scriptures

In the Bible, the Church is mentioned more than 100 times in the New Testament, with the original definition being taken from the Greek text, meaning, "an assembly" or "the called out ones"; because they were believers called out from the world, to live as people of God under the authority of Jesus Christ. In the Book of Revelation, we see examples of how the word "church" is used. It is actually used to identify the people of a particular city or location where the saints of God met. For example, the church of Ephesus (Revelation 2:1) referred to the saints in the city of Ephesus. Likewise, the churches in Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, all referred to the people of God in those cities (Revelation, chapters 2 and 3); not the buildings of worship. Romans 16:3-5 mentions the church that met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila.



Other examples of how the word "church" is used in the Bible can be found in Philippians 3:6, Acts 5:11, and Ephesians 5:29. These all provide further proof that "the church" refers to the people of God; and as previously stated, the disciples of Jesus Christ became part of the kingdom of God, not by repeating The Sinner's Prayer, but by being obedient to the Scriptures. They were all "born again", having been baptized in water, in the name of Jesus Christ, and by receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost. And after they had fulfilled their obedience, we are told in Acts 2:46-47, that *the LORD added them to the church, not man!*