

Origin of the Sinner's Prayer

The "Sinner's Prayer," or "Prayer of Salvation" is used by many denominations, and/or professed undenominational religious organizations. Wikipedia definition is, as follows: "The Sinner's Prayer is an evangelical term referring to any prayer of repentance, prayed by individuals who feel convicted of the presence of sin in their lives and desire to form or renew a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It is a popular phenomenon in Protestant circles, and has been called "a hallmark of evangelical conversionism...It is intended to be an act of initial conversion to Christianity, and the only way to receive salvation according to some Protestants."

The question of our inquiry: is it so?

David Platt, a prominent Southern Baptist pastor in Birmingham, Alabama, has this to say, concerning the "Sinner's Prayer:" "I'm convinced that many people in our churches are simply missing the life of Christ, and a lot of it has to do with what we've sold them as the gospel, i.e. pray this prayer, accept Jesus into your heart, invite Christ into your life. Should it not concern us that there is no such superstitious prayer in the New Testament? Should it not concern us that the Bible never uses the phrase, 'accept Jesus into your heart' or 'invite Christ into your life'? It's not the gospel we see being preached, it's modern evangelism built on sinking sand. And it runs the risk of disillusioning millions of souls" (Speaking at the Verge church leaders' conference).

An early version of what some would consider the Sinners' Prayer is found in the Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan, published in 1678, Ninth Stage, Chapter 18, which was during the Colonial America Era. There are simply no Biblical references to any such prayer. To the contrary, the Apostle Peter's response to the question, "What shall we do?" was answered: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:37-38). While the phrase "unto the remission of sins," "can express aim or purpose," the Holy Spirit affirmed that such is the case when Ananias, as commanded by the Lord, told Saul, "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16).

The Lord has given ample warning, through the Apostle Peter, that as "there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies" (2 Peter 2:1), and also the Apostle John, said, "believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). It would behoove any reader to do their research on this,

and other crucial matters regarding salvation. The Apostle Paul warned that there are, and will be, those who “perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:10): let that not be said of you. Ross Triplett, Sr.