

The Sinner's Prayer

Introduction:

1. Denominational teaching concerning the "sinner's prayer"...
2. Billy Graham's version: "*O God, I acknowledge that I have sinned against You. I am sorry for my sins. I am willing to turn from my sins. I openly receive and acknowledge Jesus Christ as my Savior. I confess Him as Lord. From this moment on I want to live for Him and serve Him. In Jesus' name. Amen.*"
3. But, is this teaching - this prayer - biblical?

I. The Wrong Passages

- A. Revelation 3:20
 1. 3:14, 22 - Addressed to the church, not alien sinners.
 2. 3:19 - Members of the church needed to repent.
- B. First John 1:9
 1. 2:1 - Addressed to Christians.
 2. 1:7 - Confession of sins is part of walking in the light.
- C. Acts 8:20-24
 1. 8:5-6, 12-13 - Simon was a Christian! (Cf. Mk. 16:16; Ac. 2:38)
 2. This is God's plan for forgiveness of a Christian who stumbles.
- D. Acts 10:1-4, 31
 1. 10:5-6 - Cornelius needed to hear what he ought to do.
 2. 11:13-14 - Cornelius was not saved by prayer.
 3. 10:47-48 - Obedience resulted in salvation (cf. Mk. 16:16).
- E. Acts 9:11
 1. 9:10-12 - The answer to Saul's prayer was the sending of a preacher
 2. 9:6; 22:10-16 - Saul need to hear what to do to be saved.

II. The Wrong Plan

- A. Under Christ's New Covenant, no alien sinner was ever commanded to pray in order to receive forgiveness of sins.
- B. Instead, a submissive and obedient faith is required...
 1. Hear - *Romans 10:17*
 2. Believe - *John 8:24*
 3. Repent - *Acts 17:30*
 4. Confess Faith - *Romans 10:10*
 5. Be Baptized - *Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21*

III. The Wrong Prayer

- A. Prayed to the wrong party...
 1. Often, when one is encouraged to pray the sinner's prayer he or she is directed to ask Jesus to come into his or her heart.
 2. However, Jesus instructed His followers to pray to the Father - not Him (John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23).
- B. Prayed by the wrong person... (John 9:31; Prov. 15:29; 28:9; 1 Pet. 3:12)