

**The Lie of the Sinner's Prayer:
When Heaven Doesn't Hear
Romans 10:8-17**

Introduction: The Most Dangerous Prayer on Earth

Millions have been told, "Just say this prayer and you're saved." But God never said that. Let me be clear. GOD NEVER SAID TO PRAY TO BE SAVED. Not once does the Bible say that.

I've been with people soul winning before. For example, there's a man in Yakima, Washington that attempts to force people to pray with him when they don't understand and believe the Gospel.

I watched this man try to force a young lady in her early 20's to pray to Jesus and ask him to save her when she is a professed Buddhist. She told him that over and over again and that she didn't believe in Jesus at all. And yet he continued to try to force her to pray.

The phrase "repeat after me" is nowhere in the Bible. The phrase "Sinner's Prayer" is not in the Bible.

""Romans 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.""

I've had a pastor start an argument with me before after church in which he told me that all I needed to do is to get someone to pray and to ask Jesus to save them. I told him to read the next verse. This was 4 to 5 years ago.

Don't Ignore Romans 10:14 As It Doesn't Exist

Yes, Romans 10:13, right there, says: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," but most ignore the very next verse:

""Romans 10:14

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?""

The call must come from faith, not just from fear or emotion or someone commanding someone to pray a prayer with them. Let me be 100% clear: Praying a prayer doesn't save you. Without faith, you cannot call upon the name of the Lord. We call on him by faith IN Jesus Christ.

And yes, the Sinner's Prayer is "THE" most dangerous prayer on earth.

We will talk to people during soul winning that tell us they are saved because they said the Sinner's Prayer. This is not the reason anyone is saved. We are to be Gospel preachers and not Sinner's Prayer leaders.

Point 1: You Can Say the Right Words and Still Be Lost

Proverbs 1:24–28 – The Cry That God Ignores

I want to make sure you see this today.

""Proverbs 1:24-28

Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: ""

Verse 28 says, "Then they shall call upon me, but I will not answer." Some people will argue this isn't talking about the eternal salvation of the soul, but this applies both to physical salvation and to spiritual salvation.

Why are they calling upon the Lord? Fear, desolation, destruction, distress, and anguish. God had already called them. He had already stretched out his hand to them. He counseled them. He reproved them. But they didn't care. They rejected God's call to them.

Why are they calling but God isn't answering? Because they never listened when He called. They rejected God.

And now you see them calling out of panic—not out of belief and not from faith.

They refused His wisdom, scorned His Word, and now they're desperate—but they still don't believe. They only need God's help now because there is no one else to help them. It's so bad that only God could help. But they rejected God and now it's too late.

This is a chilling reality: You can cry out to God, and He won't answer—if you never believed in Him by faith.

They called but God didn't answer. But Romans 10:13 says, "For WHOSOEVER shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." So how do you reconcile Proverbs 1 with Romans 10? It's very simple. False preachers forcing the Sinner's Prayer on people can't understand this. But the answer is in Romans 10:14.

""**Romans 10:14**

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

A person must hear the Gospel. They then must believe in Jesus Christ. It's his Gospel. Then they call upon the name of the Lord as they believe in the Lord. This goes hand in hand. Believing and calling go together. God hears your thoughts.

Biblical Examples Where Calling on the Lord Wasn't Enough

I want to go through some actual examples in the Bible where people are calling on the Lord in unbelief or for other reasons not of faith in God.

Example 1: Esau – Hebrews 12:16-17

""**Hebrews 12:16-17**

Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.""

Esau is held up in Scripture not only as a warning but as a **symbol of those who despise spiritual things** for temporary gain.

He sold his birthright—his place in the spiritual lineage—for a single meal. His hunger in the moment meant more to him than God's promises.

Later, when the blessing was gone, **he wanted it back—but not on God's terms.**

Yes, Esau wept. He pleaded. He cried bitter tears. But **his sorrow was not born of belief—it was born of loss.** He regretted the **consequences**, but not the **heart of the sin.** He wanted the blessing—without repentance, without faith, without submission to God's plan.

He "sought it carefully with tears," but what he *sought* was the **blessing**, not the **blesser**.

This is the danger of modern emotional appeals: People cry. They break down. They're sorry for what sin has cost them. But they still **don't believe.**

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 7:10**:

""**2 Corinthians 7:10**

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.""

Esau had **worldly sorrow**. The sorrow of the world worketh death. He was grieved over what he lost of this world, not what he had done before a holy God.

When someone “calls upon the Lord” in desperation—without belief in who Jesus is, without trusting the Gospel—they are like Esau.

They want out of trouble.
They want peace.
They want to avoid hell.
But they **don’t want Christ**.

Esau shows us the terrifying truth: **Tears can flow from the eyes while unbelief hardens the heart.**

He wasn’t saved by crying, because **he didn’t come by faith**. And neither will anyone today who simply says a sinner’s prayer out of emotion and not out of trust in the finished work of Christ.

Pharaoh – Repeated Cries Without Repentance or Belief in God

Throughout the book of Exodus, Pharaoh gives what **sounds like heartfelt confessions**. He says all the right things:

- **Exodus 9:27** – “I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.”
- **Exodus 10:16–17** – “I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once...”

But Pharaoh’s words were not **faith-filled submission**, they were **fear-driven manipulation**.

Pharaoh only “called upon the Lord” when he was under pressure—when the frogs swarmed, the hail fell, the locusts covered the earth, or the darkness choked Egypt. Each time, he begged for relief, but as soon as the judgment was lifted, **he hardened his heart** again.

He wanted **God’s power**, not **God’s person**. He wanted **relief**, not **righteousness**. He cried out with his mouth—but he **never believed** in his heart. **Psalm 78:34–36** captures this pattern in Israel too:

""**Psalm 78:34-37**

When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. 35
And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. 36
Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.
37 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.""

That's the tragedy of many today who say a sinner's prayer: they don't want Jesus—they want the plagues to stop. Pharaoh serves as a living illustration that you can say all the "right things" with your mouth and still **die in rebellion** if your heart is not broken before God in **true belief**.

Matthew 7:21–23 – The Most Terrifying Words in Scripture

""Matthew 7:21-23

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.""

They are saying Lord, Lord. They are calling on him by name. These are not atheists. They are not devil-worshippers. They are **religious people**—people who say, "Lord, Lord."

They call Him by the right name. They claim Christian works. They seem sincere.

But they **never had a relationship with Him** – none. They **never believed the Gospel**. They **trusted in their works**, their words, and their rituals—but not in **Jesus Christ alone**.

Jesus doesn't say, "I once knew you and now I don't." He says, "**I never knew you.**" **They were never saved. They were never children of God.**

These people called—but Heaven didn't hear. Because belief never happened.

This is where false assurance is born—when people are taught to equate **religious words** with **regenerating faith**.

These examples prove:

- **Esau** cried, but he didn't believe.
- **Pharaoh** repented temporarily, but never believed.
- **False Christians** said "Lord, Lord," but were never known by the Lord.

Calling on the Lord **without believing** is not salvation—it's self-deception.

Point 2: Real Salvation Always Begins and Ends With Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ

It doesn't begin with believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and end once they say the sinner's prayer with you.

Romans 10:14 makes it clear: **"How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?"**

You cannot pray your way into Heaven if you don't believe your way in. The only requirement to be saved is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Calling on the Lord happens as you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A sinner's prayer may be spoken by someone who believes, but the prayer does not save them. The faith does. I say a sinner's prayer with people at the end of the Gospel. I am not against praying to God if someone has believed in Jesus Christ.

So don't try to take my words today and twist them as so many people out there do. People love to misrepresent people constantly. We first make sure they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we pray with them at the end.

Bible Examples of Belief Before Words

Now let's see some examples of people who believe but aren't saying a prayer. Jesus doesn't lead people in prayer to be saved. He hears their call as they believe.

The Thief on the Cross – A Dying Man with Living Faith

""**Luke 23:42-43**

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.""

Two thieves hung beside Jesus. Both were guilty. Both reviled Him at first (Matthew 27:44). But something changed in one of them. As he watched Jesus suffer—without cursing, without hatred, without retaliation—he realized:

This man is different. This man is holy. This man is King.

He didn't have time for a church service. He wasn't baptized. He didn't walk an aisle. He didn't get disciplined. He didn't pray a rehearsed prayer. But he did three critical things that showed his **real belief – only God can see faith**:

1. He confessed Jesus as Lord

“Lord, remember me.” He acknowledged that Jesus wasn't just a man. He believed Jesus had **authority**—even beyond death. That's not empty religion. That's faith.

2. He believed in Christ's Kingdom

“When thou comest into thy kingdom.” Think about this: Jesus is bleeding, gasping, and dying next to him—and the thief still believes Jesus will **reign as King**. That is a bold, Spirit-wrought faith.

3. He asked—not to escape pain—but to be remembered

He didn't say, “Get me off this cross.” He didn't ask to be spared suffering. He asked to be **remembered** by Jesus—he wanted to be with Him. That's salvation.

And Jesus didn't say, “*Repeat after me...*”
He didn't say, “*Now pray this prayer...*”

Jesus saw his faith—and immediately gave him full assurance: “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

The thief proves that:

- **Salvation is by faith alone.**
- **Salvation can happen in an instant.**
- **Salvation does not require a prayer—just belief.**

He couldn't join a church. He couldn't clean up his life. He couldn't do anything **but believe**—and that was **all God required**.

No one led him in a prayer. No one coaxed him to “close his eyes and raise his hand.” There was no sinner's prayer—only a **believing heart and a crucified Savior**.

Two men on crosses—one died **in sin**, mocking the Lord. One died **to sin**, believing the Lord. And Jesus died **for sin**, saving the one who simply believed.

The Ethiopian Eunuch – Instant Salvation Through Belief

"" **Acts 8:35-37**

Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.""

The eunuch was reading Isaiah 53, confused about who it spoke of. Philip preached Jesus—not a system, not a church, not a prayer—but **the person of Jesus Christ**. We preach Jesus Christ. We don't preach a Sinner's Prayer that isn't in the Bible AT ALL.

And when the eunuch understood, believed the Gospel, and was already saved THEN **he initiated the next step**: “See, here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?”

Notice—Philip **doesn't lead him in a prayer**. He doesn't say, “Bow your head and repeat after me.” He says, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”

The eunuch gives the clearest, purest profession of faith: “**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**” And that was enough. In today's world, we have all these people out here judging unrighteously. They would accuse Philip of not doing good enough. They would accuse Jesus of not doing good enough.

A physically large man but mentally small man, Little A, recently said and I quote: "Josh Tapp preaches a Gospel presentation without asking people to trust in Christ at the end of it." Everyone here knows that's a lie. He says, "Why not add that on the end?" He's talking about the Sinner's Prayer.

Hey Peter, why not add that on the end? Hey Philip, why not add that on the end? Hey Paul, why not add the Sinner's Prayer on the end? Hey Jesus, why not add that on the end once you've preached the Gospel? Little A says, "Wouldn't you just add it on the end anyway? ~~~"

Why didn't all THE EXAMPLES that God gave us ADD THE SINNER'S PRAYER ON THE END? Why not? Peter, in Acts 2, 3000 saved, why didn't you add it on the end? Tell Peter, Little A. Rebuke Peter. Jesus to Martha in John 11, why didn't you add the Sinner's Prayer on the end. Tell Jesus, Little A. You go ahead and rebuke Jesus and see how that turns out for you.

The truth is there is no emotion-driven altar call. No sinner's prayer in the Bible at all. **Just the Word preached, the heart believing, and salvation received.**

The Philippian Jailer – A Direct Question, A Clear Answer

"" Acts 16:30-31

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.""

This man had just witnessed a supernatural earthquake, prison doors flung open, and Paul and Silas singing hymns in the middle of suffering. The jailer had almost killed himself. Overwhelmed and trembling, he runs to them and asks life's most important question:

“What must I do to be saved?” This was the perfect moment—if there were ever a time to lead someone in a sinner's prayer, **this was it**. But Paul didn't say:

- “Repeat after me.”
- “Say this prayer and mean it.”
- “Invite Jesus into your heart.”

He simply said, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”** One command. One requirement. One clear message. There is **no mention of prayer**, no emotional manipulation, no ritual—just the pure Gospel call to **believe**.

And the result? The jailer believed—and **rejoiced, believing in God with all his house** (Acts 16:34).

His salvation came through **faith**, not through repeating words. His joy wasn't rooted in what he said, but in **whom he had believed**.

The modern church has complicated what Paul made simple. We've replaced the clarity of **“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”** with religious scripts, altar calls, and emotional experiences. The Sinner's Prayer doesn't save. Believing in Jesus saves.

But the jailer didn't get a script. He got **the truth**—and he **believed it**, right there, in that moment. And that's what saved him.

Point 3: Confessing With the Mouth

We say a prayer at the very end of the Gospel presentation AFTER someone has told us they believe every point that we are preaching during the Gospel. We're all sinners. Do you believe that? "Yes." Our penalty for sin is death and hell. If we died and had to pay our own penalty for sin, where would we go? Hell."

But God loves you so he sent Jesus to pay your penalty of death and hell. Jesus died on the cross with all 100% of your sin. His body was buried. His soul was not left in hell. He fully paid your penalty. He arose from the dead. His body came out of the tomb and his soul came out of hell. Death and hell was conquered by Jesus Christ. That penalty you owe, he paid it. Do you believe Jesus died, was buried, and arose from the dead to pay for all your sins? "Yes, I believe."

The one thing you have to be saved is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put all your trust in him and him alone. It's not what you do. It's what Jesus already did for you. Everything needed for you to get to heaven is finished. He offers you the free gift right now. Do you believe that Jesus Christ can save you right now from all your sins and take you to heaven when you die? "Yes, I believe in Jesus."

Then we explain everlasting life. We ask them if they believe they could ever lose everlasting life? They say, "No, nothing. He paid for all my sins." What are they doing this entire time?

""**Romans 10:9-11**

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.""

As we preach the Gospel, people are listening. In the video I have, titled: "How To Make It To Heaven," I preach the Gospel in great detail.

When someone is listening to anything in this world, they are always thinking: "Do I believe what this man is saying?" In their head, they are believing or not believing. Jesus knows their thoughts. As they believe, they think it within their head. They are saved the moment they believe in Jesus Christ. They aren't saved later when they repeat a prayer with me.

In person, we preach the Gospel and they tell us with their mouth if they are believing and that's why we continue to the next point and the next point and the next point. Then, at the end, after they have believed, I say a prayer with them. If they haven't yet believed, even though they tell me that have, they can be saved during that prayer if they BELIEVE during the prayer. So, I will keep praying with people after a detailed and thorough Gospel is preached.

But the Sinner's Prayer doesn't save anyone. It's the believing that saves. Jesus says, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Don't call Jesus Christ a liar. They believe and call on him to save them at the same time from within as they believe.

Point 4: The Modern Sinner's Prayer Can Be a Trap

- It often replaces belief with emotion.

- It teaches people to trust a moment, not the Messiah.
- It creates false converts who believe they're saved because they said some words.

You must be very careful with leading someone in a prayer who hasn't believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. This is why I spend the most time explaining what Jesus did for them and telling them what it means to believe in Jesus. "If I think I have to be baptized to get to heaven, is that me believing in something I am doing or something that Jesus did?"

We can't believe in works that we do. We must believe "IN" the Lord Jesus Christ. It's his death, his burial, and his resurrection. He paid for all your sins. What you do in your life doesn't pay for your sins. You are in debt and can't pay for them. Jesus paid for all your sins.

""Isaiah 29:13

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:""

God doesn't want your lips. He wants your heart. He wants you to fully trust in Jesus Christ alone.

Point 5: What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Romans 5:1 – "Therefore being justified by faith..."

Ephesians 2:8–9 – "By grace are ye saved through faith..."

John 6:47 – "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

If you believe the Gospel:

- That Jesus died for your sins – ALL OF THEM
- Was buried
- Rose again
- And you trust Him fully to save you from ALL your sins

You are saved. Instantly. Eternally.

The Bible tells us hundreds of times that we are saved by believing in Christ, trusting in Christ, and putting faith in Christ.

The Bible NEVER once says to repeat a prayer to be saved. There's not one example of a Gospel preacher in the Bible leading someone in a prayer after they've heard the Gospel to be saved. You have big body, little mind preachers out there talking trash because someone didn't say the Sinner's Prayer at the end of a video that gave the Gospel in detail.

And then he warns his small group of people to beware of people like me who preach the Gospel in a video and don't add a Sinner's Prayer at the end. Imagine that. Jesus didn't do that either.

Are you going to warn them to beware of Jesus too? You would if it profited YOU. Don't be deceived out there. Little A cares for Little A. If you're in his church, he doesn't care for you. He's proved it over and over again. How many examples do you need to see? Imagine using the name of Jesus for your own profit. There will be consequences. You will give an account.

Conclusion: Don't Lead Them to a Prayer—Lead Them to Jesus

The Gospel isn't "repeat after me." It's "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Next time someone says, "I want to be saved"—Don't give them a prayer script. Give them the truth.

Let them hear the full Gospel. Ask, "Do you believe this?" If they say yes, fully believing in Christ, that is salvation. In our Gospel presentation, they speak and confess at least five times. When I go over a summary of the Gospel before I pray with them, they continue speaking with their mouth and confessing to me. That confessing to me doesn't save them.

They speak to God. He hears them. He knows if they are believing. He knows what they are thinking as we preach the Gospel. If they believe, they are saved in that moment.

"Heaven hears faith— not formulas or scripts. You can cry, scream, or whisper—but without belief, God won't listen."

I don't have to add a Sinner's Prayer for someone to be saved. I add a prayer at the end to help that person to remember. We always say and ask repeatedly, "What's the one thing someone must do to be saved?" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. When you say, "Now say this prayer so you'll be saved." That's confusing, wrong, and a lie straight from the pits of hell.

We pray because praying is a good thing. And it's another chance for someone to be saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it teaches them how they can pray.

Let's pray.