

Sunday, February 20, 2022—Questions About Romans 10:9-10 & The Sinner’s Prayer

Introduction: What is the Sinner’s Prayer

- Romans 10:9-10—these verses are commonly used by Evangelical Christianity as a model for how one is saved. Please note the following two aspects set forth in these verses:
 - Confess with thy mouth—with the mouth confession is made unto salvation
 - Believe in thine heart—believeth unto righteousness
- Confession with the mouth unto salvation is where the idea comes from that one must say/pray something specific in order to be saved. In other words, if there is no audible confession/profession of faith, i.e., what is being believed in the heart than one is not saved. This is where the notion of the “sinner’s prayer” finds its origin.
- 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 his Son Jesus Christ. It is a popular phenomenon in Protestant circles, and has been called "a hallmark of evangelical conversionism." It also may be prayed as an act of "re-commitment" for those who are already believers in the faith. Often, at the end of a worship service, a minister or other worship leader will invite those desiring to receive Christ (thus becoming Christians) to repeat with him or her the words of some form of a sinner's prayer. It also is frequently found on printed gospel tracts, urging people to “repeat these words from the bottom of your heart.”
- The “Sinner’s Prayer” takes various forms, all of which have the same general thrust.^[3] Since it is considered a matter of one's personal will, it can be prayed silently, aloud, read from a suggested model, or repeated after someone modeling the prayer role. There is no formula of specific words considered essential, although it usually contains an admission of sin and a petition asking that Jesus enter into the person's heart (that is to say, the center of their life). The use of the sinner's prayer is common within many Protestant churches such as Baptists, evangelicals, fundamentalists, Pentecostals, and charismatics. It is sometimes uttered by Christians seeking redemption or reaffirming their faith in Christ during a crisis or disaster, when death may be imminent.
- One of the first known occurrences of the “Sinner’s Prayer” can be found in John Bunyan’s 1678 publication *Pilgrim’s Progress*.
 - **Hopeful:** He bid me go to him and see. Then I said it was presumption. He said, No; for I was invited to come. Then he gave me a book of Jesus’ inditing, to encourage me the more freely to come; and he said concerning that book, that every jot and tittle thereof stood firmer than heaven and earth. Then I asked him what I must do when I came; and he told me I must entreat upon my knees, with all my heart and soul, the Father to reveal him to me. Then I asked him further, how I must make my supplications to him; and he

said, Go, and thou shalt find him upon a mercy-seat, where he sits all the year long to give pardon and forgiveness to them that come. I told him, that I knew not what to say when I came; and he bid say to this effect.

God be merciful to me a sinner, and make me to know and believe in Jesus Christ; for I see, that if his righteousness had not been, or I have not faith in that righteousness, I am utterly cast away. Lord, I have heard that thou art a merciful God, and hast ordained that thy Son Jesus Christ should be the Savior of the world; and moreover, that thou art willing to bestow him upon such a poor sinner as I am—and I am a sinner indeed. Lord, take therefore this opportunity, and magnify thy grace in the salvation of my soul, through thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen

- Billy Graham
 - Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name. Amen.
- Campus Crusade for Christ
 - Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.
- In 2012 the Southern Baptist Convention reaffirmed the use of the Sinner's Prayer with the following statement.
 - We affirm that repentance and faith involve a crying out for mercy and a calling on the Lord (Rom. 10:13), often identified as a "Sinner's Prayer", as a biblical expression of repentance and faith. A "Sinner's Prayer" is not an incantation that results in salvation merely by its recitation and should never be manipulatively employed or utilized apart from a clear articulation of the gospel (Matt. 6:7, 15:7–9)

Problems With the Sinner's Prayer

- The major problem with the Sinner's Prayer is that it creates the idea that one must do something or say something in order to be saved.

- In both the Billy Graham and Campus Crusade for Christ examples the lines are blurred as to what actually brings about the justification of the sinner before God.
- Ephesians 2:1—Graham talks about turning from sin and inviting Jesus to come into one’s life and heart. The problem here is that one cannot turn from what they are dead in. What mankind needs is a redeemer to buy/purchase him out of his sins.
- I Corinthians 15:3-4—while Graham mentions the resurrection of Christ he still ties the salvation of the sinner to a turning away of one’s sins. Meanwhile the Campus Crusade for Christ prayer does not even mention the fact that one must believe in the resurrection in order to be saved.
- I have found that any professing Christian will say that they believe I Cor. 15:3-4. They will all say that Jesus died on the cross and rose again. The problem is that they are not trusting/relying exclusively in what Christ did for them as the only total and complete payment for their sins. It is always Christ plus something they can do.
- Recently my wife and I went to see God Is Not Dead. The movie was a mixed bag. The classroom scenes where the student was arguing with the professor for the existence of God were great. However, the movie was woefully inadequate in terms of a clear gospel. Mainstream Evangelical Christianity is great in the area of Apologetics and defense of faith but woefully misses the mark in terms of presenting the gospel clearly.
- Romans 4:25—one must believe in and personally trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ because each competent accomplished something different in terms of our eternal salvation.
 - Death—Christ paid for all our sins
 - Burial—proved that Christ had in fact died and made satisfaction for our sins
 - Resurrection—is the basis upon which we are justified and given the very righteous of God.
- Ephesians 2:8-9—we are saved by grace through faith apart from works.
 - Titus 3:5
- Colossians 4:12—Epaphras was “laboring fervently” in prayer for the Colossians. This indicates that prayer is a work.

- I Corinthians 9:25—the phrase “that striveth for the mastery” comes from same Greek word as “laboring fervently” in Colossians 4:12. The athlete training for the games must “workout.”
- Epaphras was spiritually working out by laboring in prayer for the Colossians. Can a lost man bring forth any work that God will accept? No! So telling someone at the point of decision when sharing the gospel that they need to pray and receive salvation accomplishes nothing in terms of their justification because prayer is a work.
- If one must pray in order to be saved they are adding something to finished work of Christ.
- We need to be careful here.