

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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## A SINNER'S PRAYER?

By Owen D. Olbricht

If God does not hear a sinner's prayer, He hears no prayer's because we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23). The question is not, "Will God hear a sinner's prayer, but will He hear every prayer of all sinners?"

The Bible answer is a resounding, "No," He will not hear the prayers of all sinners whether Christian or non-Christian. We must hasten to define what is meant by "hear." Nothing goes unnoticed by God, based on the fact that He hears and knows everything (Heb. 4:13; 1 John 3:20).

### MEANING OF "HEAR"

"Hear" at times is used to mean, "listen in order to respond positively to a request." Parents are familiar with this usage of "hear." They may say to a child making a request, "I cannot hear you!" meaning, "I know what you are asking but I will not listen favorably to your request."

This is how the blind man used the word, "hear." "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him" (John 9:31). Of course the blind man was not inspired, but his confidence in his assertion could have been based on Scriptures such as:

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psa. 66:18).

"Set a wicked man over him, and let an accuser stand at his right hand. When he is judged, let him be found guilty, and let his prayer become sin" (Psa. 109:6,7).

"One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are

open to their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12, quoted from Psa. 34:15,16).

In order to receive what we request, we must: (1) be God's people who are called by His name (2 Chron. 7:14); (2) ask in Jesus' name (John 14:13); (3) ask in faith (James 1:6,7); (4) not ask for wrong things (James 4:3); (5) keep God's commandments and do those things pleasing in His sight (1 John 3:22); and (6) ask according to His will (1 John 5:14).

### GOD HEARS ALL PEOPLE

God hears all people but He does not "hear", meaning respond positively to, all requests made by non-Christians and Christians. Christians who defiantly reject God's will and choose not to repent cannot expect God to grant their requests for forgiveness (Heb. 6:5-6; 10:26-29) or requests for any other blessings. Christians who walk in the light are those who are assured that they can confess their sins and be forgiven (1 John 1:7-9; Acts 8:22).

God hears the prayers of non-Christians as can be seen by the fact that He heard the prayer of Cornelius (Acts 10:31). This does not mean that he became a Christian simply through asking for forgiveness.

No non-Christians in this Christian age were ever told to pray for anything, much less told to pray to be saved, forgiven of their sins.

### BIBLE EXAMPLES

Sinners on the day of Pentecost were not told to pray to be forgiven. Peter (Acts 2:21) quoted an Old Testament passage (Joel 2:32) that is a favorite of those who believe all one has to do to be saved (forgiven) is to "call" on God in prayer. "Call"

comes from the Greek *epikaleo* which means to be given a name (Acts 1:23) or to make an appeal (Acts 7:59; 25:11,12; 26:32; 28:19). Those who simply **call**, "Lord, Lord," will not be saved, but must do the will of the Father (Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46)

When asked of the Jews, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37), Peter missed a great opportunity to tell them that all they needed to do was pray, if prayer is what is meant by "call" (Acts 2:21; quoted from Joel 2:32). Instead Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ in order to be forgiven (Acts 2:38). When Paul was found praying (Acts 9:11) he was told to be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16). His appeal to be forgiven was to be made when he was being baptized. Cornelius, whose prayer had been heard, was commanded to be baptized (Acts 10:48)

No non-Christians were ever told to pray to be forgiven of their sins. In spite of this truth, many religious groups instruct the lost to say the sinner's prayer.

### THE SINNER'S PRAYER

Almost all denominational groups close their writings or preaching by telling people if they sincerely repeat the sinner's prayer, they are assured they will be forgiven. This prayer differs from group to group. It seems like if this is a requirement of God then: (1) It would be the same prayer. (2) It would have been included in Scripture by command or example.

A little booklet by Jack T. Chick, "This Was Your Life," (Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1972), gives this prayer for a sinner:

"Dear God, I am a sinner and need forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ shed His **precious blood** and died for my sin. I am willing to turn from sin. I now

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invite Christ to come into my heart and life as my personal Savior." Following this is the statement, "If you trusted Jesus as your Savior, you have just begun a wonderful new life with Him." The person is instructed to: (1) Read the Bible; (2) Pray to God each day; (3) Be baptized and join a church; (4) Tell others about Jesus.

*The Book of Hope* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1998) author not given, p. 53, gives this prayer: "God, I'm sorry for my sins. Right now, I turn from my sins and ask you to forgive me. Thank you for sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross for my sins. Jesus, I ask you to come into my life and be my Lord, Savior, and Friend. Thank you for forgiving me and giving me eternal life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."

Following this the statement is made, "If you prayed this prayer and meant it, you can be sure God has forgiven you and received you into his family."

**These prayers and the teaching concerning them are not found in the Bible!**

**CONCLUSION**

Prayer is important in our relationship with God. We should realize that only those prayers are heard that are according to God's will. Perhaps non-Christians' prayers are heard when they ask for many things but no where are they given instruction or assurance that their sins can be forgiven simply by saying a concocted "sinner's prayer." Salvation for the lost comes to those who hear God's word (Acts 11:14), believe, repent, confess and are baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10).

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**[Editor's Note:** This is an excellent article by brother Olbricht on an extremely vital topic! While denominational "Christianity" is guilty of many false teachings, likely this error about how one is saved will damn more souls than any other. **Please study this article and the Scripture references given prayerfully!** You may also request a three part series on this same subject published back in 1995. The title of that series is, "You Cannot Become A Christian By Praying To God Or Christ!" Simply write and request these articles if you wish to study this matter in greater depth.]

**"NEVER GIVE UP"**

Revised 10-10-02

Sir Winston Churchill, the former Prime Minister of Great Britain, was a great voice during World War II. His eloquence stirred Europe when facing capture by Hitler and the Nazi forces of Germany. Churchill's voice throughout that darkest period was a calming, stabilizing, and same voice to the troubled people of his day. His perseverance and resolve were reassuring when things looked their gloomiest. Following the victory over Germany, Harrow Preparatory School invited their famous alumnus, Winston Churchill, to speak before the open assembly of his former school. The headmaster

instructed the assembly to take notes of the former Prime Minister, "who was one of the greatest leaders during World War II." Churchill stood before the huge audience and said, "Never, never, never give up," and abruptly sat down. What meaning in the words of Churchill, and how stunned the headmaster must have been when the great leader took his seat! Yet, those students would never forget those five concise words. Who better than Sir Winston Churchill to utter those majestic words of perseverance? No one could have accomplished it like one of the greatest leaders of the twentieth century.

"Never Give Up" is the equivalent of perseverance, endurance, and persistence by incorporating these virtues that will facilitate progress. Great Biblical characters like Abraham, Moses, and Job were synonymous of patience and endurance. Therefore, we would all do well to emulate their example. The Hebrew writer wrote, "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." (Heb. 12:1.) Note the following.

1. Babe Ruth struck our 1,333 times, but we always remember the Babe for hitting the 714 home runs during his illustrious career. Babe Ruth never gave up following a strikeout, but kept his resolve, and continued hitting home runs. Baseball's greatest hitter was a tremendous example of endurance.
2. Cy Young, one of the greatest pitchers of all time, won 511 games during his career. Yet, forget the number he lost. Even the most successful player will face adversity during his lifetime. How he copes with disappointment and failure will determine his success.
3. Abraham Lincoln was badly beaten when he ran for the

legislature. He then failed in business and spent seventeen years to eliminate the debt. Lincoln failed trying to get appointed to the U.S. Land Office. They defeated him in his bid for the U.S. Senate, while his effort to be elected Vice President met with defeat. Stephen Douglas defeated the "rail-splitter," from Illinois in a competitive contest. The man from Illinois suffered one setback, defeat, and upsetting drubbing after the other. Yet, through perseverance and his "never give up" attitude became President of the United States. Lincoln possessed stickability and a never say die attitude that eventually brought him to the pinnacle of his political career. Quit was not in Lincoln's vocabulary, and we would do well to emulate his example (Phil. 3:13-14).

Some Christians "believe for a while, but in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). These lacking a root could not persevere, but gave up and subsequently lost their souls. Similarly, Israel often replaced God with idols (Jer. 2:32). When things are well with us, we are on top of the world, but adversity causes many to give up. Remember the words from Holy Writ, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Success comes when we throw off disappointment and "never, never, never give up."

Author unknown  
to the Editor

**THOUGHTS FOR  
BETTER LIVING**  
by Robert L. Moss

God wants all men to have the best life possible. Some seek to find the good life by pursuing this world and it's pleasures, yet they

fall far short of their desires. If man would only turn to God's Word, he would find all things suitable for making a good life. The following is a list of a few things that are found in God's Word that will help us in achieving the best life possible.

- 1) A realization of the value of the soul (Matt. 10:28; 16:26).
- 2) Going about conscious of the fact that we must give an account of our words on the day of Judgment (Rev. 20:12) (2 Cor. 5:10).
- 3) Living each day as if it were the last (James 4:13,14).
- 4) Being conscious of the fact that we must spend eternity in either heaven or hell (Matt. 25:46).
- 5) Live with a greater degree of faith.
  - a. Peter lacked this (Matt. 14:28-30).
  - b. Lack of faith causes us to depart from God (Heb. 3:12).
- 6) Encouraging words help us to keep on doing right (Matt. 8:5-10).
- 7) Having our sins rebuked helps us to live better (2 Tim. 4:12)
- 8) The fact that we are an example and are helping to lead others in the ways of the

Lord (1 Tim. 4:12) (Phil. 1:20).

- 9) Taking inventory of self (Matt. 7:3-5).
- 10) Remembering God's love for us (John 3:16).

These are but a few of the many helps that are found in God's Word that we can use to keep our lives as God would have them. Let us always be aware of and use the help that God alone blesses us with.

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**PRACTICE THE  
GOLDEN RULE**  
by David Macy

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." **Luke 6:31**. The golden rule is the practical application of the second great commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves. These words from the lips of the Master teacher have glittered like diamonds for nearly two thousand years and all who have formed their plans with this principal uppermost in their minds have been blessed in numerous ways.

The golden rule simply tells us to treat others like we want to be treated. You should never do or say anything to others you would not want done or said to you. But if you do things for others you would like done for you, the eternal returns will be absolutely astounding. Only a person whose heart is filled with love for God and man can consistently live by this rule. All others will miserably fall somewhere along the road, no matter how hard they might outwardly try. You cannot continuously treat others like you want to be treated if you do not love them as you love yourself. If you really love self more than either God or men, you will find yourself falling short of the shining standard set by Jesus time and time again, and you may be among the number who wonders, "Why, why, why!"

When the glorious day comes

*We are thankful to God  
and to you for all your  
prayers and financial  
support this past year.  
May God bless you all  
with a wonderful holiday  
season and a healthy  
and prosperous new  
year! You are special  
to us all!*

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that you love God with all your heart, soul and mind, and your neighbor as yourself, obeying the golden rule on a daily basis will be as natural as putting on your clothes in the morning. The golden rule is an outstanding principle to live by because the way we treat others is exactly the way we will be treated in the long run. As we do unto others, it shall be done unto us! No bones about it!

One thing is crystal clear. We sure can help ourselves each day by cheerfully practicing the golden rule from the heart. You know what I am finding out, more and more, folks, by experience. The more I give to others, the more I do receive. Really! Boy Scout Honor! "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye meet withal it shall be measured to you again." **Luke 6:38.** Please, please, please try this starting right now, and you will like it too! Give, give, give and you will live, live, live! It never fails!

**GOD GETS BOOTED AGAIN**  
by Eddy Gilpin

Not long ago a federal appeals court ruled the Ohio state motto to be unconstitutional. What made the motto (which has stood for decades) unconstitutional? The statement reads: "With God all things are possible." The court concluded that this statement amounts to a government endorsement of Christianity.

I guess this should come as no surprise to us. After all, God has been expelled from our schools, voted out of our government and declared inappropriate for our society. For a country who demonstrates it believes less and less in God, why should a motto declare that all things are possible through Him in whom we have no belief and place no trust?

Slowly, every vestige of God and all things righteous are being removed from every aspect of our society. God isn't popular in our nation any more. He isn't

politically correct. He isn't one in whom we should place our trust. He isn't one through whom "all things are possible." He isn't constitutional. How long before He is removed from our money ("In God We Trust")? How long before some sanitized government document arrives demanding that God be removed from every avenue of the church? How far must America go before the God of the Universe declares her morally bankrupt and requires her to pay the price? How steeped in ungodliness must she get before godly people stand up and say, "Enough!" and take this country back? May God grant us time to muster our courage, develop our backbones and gather our forces. Pray for this country.

Remember, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD." (Ps. 33:12).

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**GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP**  
- COLOSSIANS 3:17

- LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16:1-2).
- PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
- SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
- GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
- PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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