



Today's Sermons
 Morning: Mark Bass
 Afternoon: Mark Bass

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	27
Sunday AM Worship	36
Sunday PM Worship	n/a
Wed. Bible Study	21
Offering	\$1554

You Are Cordially Invited to Our 8th Annual
Old-Fashioned Gospel Tent Meeting

With Guest Speaker:
Mark Bass
Aug 6-11, 2017

WEST JEFFERSON CHURCH OF CHRIST
 130 Robert Street; West Jefferson, NC 28694

SUNDAY: 10:00AM, 11:00AM & 1:30 PM
MONDAY-FRIDAY: 7:00 PM

NOTE: No Collection Will Be Taken Monday-Friday!
For More Information: (336) 846-5615 or wjchurchofchrist.org



A Weekly Publication of the
West Jefferson Church of Christ
 130 Robert Street
 West Jefferson NC 28694
 Phone: (336) 846-5615 | Email: info@wjchurchofchrist.org
 Volume X August 6, 2017 Number 32

Minister:

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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:.... 10:00am
 AM Worship:..11:00am
 PM Worship:....6:00pm
 2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am
 "Back to the Bible"
 AM 580 WSKS
 93.5 FM

**We Extend A
 Warm & Cordial
 Welcome
 To All Our
 Visitors!**

**CAN SINNERS BE FORGIVEN
 BY PRAYING TO GOD?**

Roger D. Campbell

More than once, people came to Jesus and asked Him, "*Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" (Luke 10:25; 18:18). We further read in the Book of Acts of those who asked what they must do to be saved (Acts 2:37; 16:30; 22:10). It is a wonderful thing when people sincerely want to know what they must do in order to be in the right relationship with the Lord.

"Sinners Jesus Will Receive" is an old-time spiritual hymn that many of us have sung numerous times. Is it true? Is it true that Jesus receives sinners? Jesus said, "*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*" (Luke 5:32). If He call sinners and invites them to come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28), then it surely is the case that He receives sinners.

But which sinners does the Master receive? Stated another way, which sinners can have their past sins forgiven? Answer: Those that come to Jesus on His terms, that is, those who meet the conditions that He has set forth in the gospel. According to Hebrews 5:9, Jesus is "*the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*" Any attempt to be saved that bypasses obedience to Jesus will not work!

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Suppose a person has committed sin in the past, but has never had his sins forgiven. Can he be saved simply by praying to God? He can IF that is God's plan. It is true that he can be saved by prayer IF that is what the New Testament teaches. Many religious people are convinced that lost people are saved via prayer. I was once given a tract entitled "Eternity," in which the following message is addressed specifically to lost people who have never been saved: "Will you pray right now and ask God to save you from your sin? Why not pray this prayer?" Here is the suggested prayer found in the tract:

"Lord Jesus, I am a sinner and I need a Savior. Right now I turn from my sin and accept You as my Lord and Savior. I am trusting You and You alone for my salvation, believing that You died and rose again from the grave. I thank You for saving me"
[Thomas E. Ward, © 1992 by *Partners in Ministry*; distributed by "Shenandoah Baptist Church," 138 Osment Road, Cleveland, TN 37323].

Such a prayer or a variation of it often is identified as "The Sinner's Prayer." Note that in the above tract, here is the order of events that the author of the tract presents to sinners: (1) You are lost; (2) You pray for forgiveness; (3) After praying for forgiveness, you are saved. All of that may sound well and good to one unfamiliar with the Bible, but when one reads the New Testament from beginning to end, he never finds a verse which teaches that a-never-been-saved-before sinner can have his sins remitted by praying to God. Again, in the Book of Acts we read a few instances where those that were lost outside of the Christ asked, "What must I/we do?" NEVER do we read that they were told to pray for forgiveness. Compare "The Sinner's Prayer" with the inspired answer of Acts 2:38 (repent and be baptized for the remission of sins). God's answer is a lot different from man's, huh?

"But, if God does not hear the prayer of a sinner, then how can a Christian that sins ever be forgiven, because when a Christian prays for forgiveness, he is admitting that he is in sin? Why else would he pray to be forgiven?" That is a fair question. Be careful, though, that you see the clear distinction in two categories of people. In the previous paragraphs, we have been talking about whether or not prayer can save a non-Christian. To ask about *Christians* being forgiven is a whole new line of questioning—Christians are in a different category. As the children of the living God, saints can address Him in prayer as Father (Colossians 1:2,12). And, as His children, they have the privilege to ask for forgiveness.

When a member of the Lord's church has left the truth and then later is converted/turned back to the Lord, the Bible says that the soul of "the sinner" has been saved (James 5:19,20). What is required of the sinning Christian in order for him to receive forgiveness of his sins? The Book of 1 John was addressed to Christians (1 John 2:12). In that epistle, Christians are instructed, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive*

us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). We further read that when a child of God is in sin, he must repent and pray to get back in favor with God (Acts 8:22). So, for a child of God that violates His will, the way to be reconciled to the Father is by repentance and confession of sin in prayer.

"He that turneth his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9). When one turns his ear from hearing God's word, God gives him a deaf ear. On the other hand, when a child of God becomes entangled in sin, such a sinner can "come home" by sincere repentance and confession of wrong. Thank the Lord for His bountiful love that provides such a blessing.

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"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Galatians 3:24-4:7)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Aug 6 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 Worship
- Aug 6-11 – 8th Annual Old-Fashioned Tent Meeting with Mark Bass
- Aug 13 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Class
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell