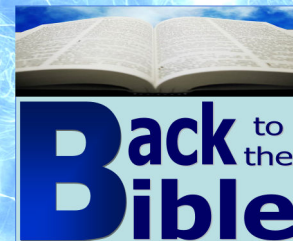


"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	23
Sunday AM Worship	39
Sunday PM Worship	18
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Offering	\$1531



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Minister:

Tim Canup
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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 WSKK
93.5 FM

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

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

Roger D. Campbell

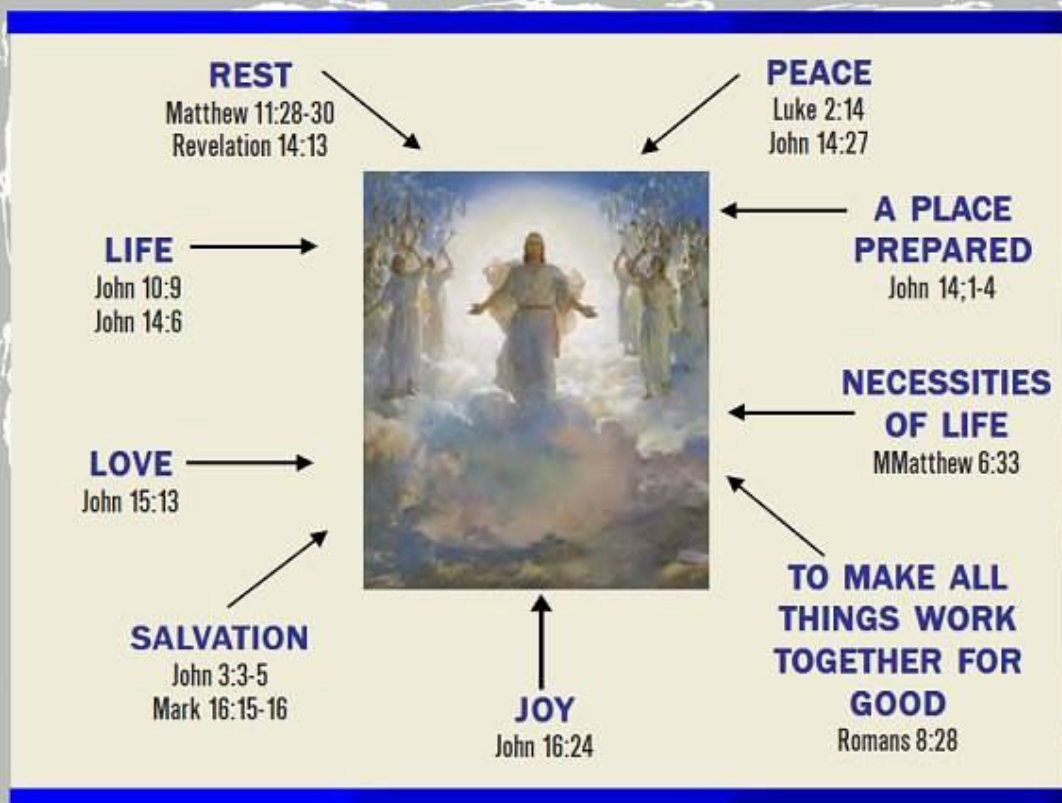
More than once, people came to Jesus and asked Him, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25; 18:18). We further read in the Book of Acts of those who asked what they must do to be saved (Acts 2:37; 16:30; 22:10). It is a wonderful thing when people sincerely want to know what they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

[Continued Inside]

What Christ Offers



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.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I Corinthians 15:1-8).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Nov 27 – Prayer Service
- Dec 4 – Men's Bus. Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class after Evening Worship
- Dec 11 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 Worship & Congregational Meeting following
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell