

42-18-01.wpd—The “Jesus Prayer”
 prayer, supplication, intercession
 Luke 18:38
 “*Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.*”

INTRODUCTION:

–[In the early church, people participated in the church service. One way they did this was through the spiritual *gift of speaking in tongues*. But if no one there had the *gift of interpreting tongues*, then those who *spoke in tongues* were to do so privately, because *tongues* could still be used as a way of private prayer to help build up the individual believer.] Today, most Christians don’t pray in tongues, but for many centuries, Orthodox monks have practiced something similar to it called the “*Jesus Prayer*”—or the “*prayer of the heart*”—which any believer could learn to use. But before I describe it, let me read where it comes from— Luke 18:35-43. As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” “Lord, I want to see,” he replied. Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God. **V.38** contains the phrase the early Christian monks based their prayer upon: “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*”

I. How Does This Prayer Work Like *Praying in Tongues*?

- A. When a person *prays in tongues* it by-passes the mind, so that human frailty and error cannot enter into the prayer— 1Cor 14:14. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. (We often try to figure out the best solutions for the things we pray for. But there are some things we won’t understanding until we get to heaven. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t pray about the things we don’t understand. It means we must learn to use our spirits instead of depending solely on our minds.)
- B. The prayer that the early monks came to use was: “**Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.**”
1. The central phrase in the prayer is simply “have mercy on me.”
 It’s such a general request and covers so much territory that the

mind can’t take it all in.

2. The *mind* has to take back-seat and let our *spirit* communicate through that phrase to God who, in His infinite wisdom, will connect that general request to the specific answer that we need.

TRANS: I read about some Orthodox monks who learned from some Pentecostal believers that *speaking in tongues* was being used as a prayer language that by-passed the mind. When they heard that, they immediately recognized how the Jesus Prayer they had practiced for most of their lives was doing the same thing. If you have the gift of tongues, you can use it as a prayer language, but my experience has been the most Christians don’t have it. But anyone can learn to use the Jesus prayer: “*Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.*”

II. What Makes the Jesus Prayer an Effective Way to Pray?

- A. **First**, it is very simple—only 7 words, and very familiar words.
1. We say the *creed* and we study *doctrine*, but the main focus of our *faith* is on a Person: the **Lord Jesus Christ**. (That’s the *first part of the prayer*...)
 2. Throughout both the OT and NT, one of the most common requests on the lips of people, whether directed toward God or toward other persons who have power, is “**have mercy on me.**” (That’s the *last part*...)
- B. **Second**, it is very thorough—it appeals to the highest authority and it covers every situation that can exist. (Look at the words....)
1. The first three words are a *Trinitarian invocation*:
 - a. “**Lord**” - God the Father has given all authority over all creation to His Son— Mat 28:18. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”
 - b. “**Jesus**” - God the Son became the Son of man, not just to relate to us humanly, but to bring salvation to us personally as the name “Jesus” means [Jehovah *saves... heals... delivers*]
 - c. “**Christ**” - God the Spirit came upon Jesus as a man, turning Him into the “*Anointed One*,” “*the Christ*,” “*the Messiah*” (the *hope of all creation* is wrapped up in this Human Ambassador from the Trinitarian Godhead: the “**Lord Jesus Christ!**”)
 2. The next four words are a *general petition*:
 - a. “**have mercy**” - It asks for God to graciously intervene with

His help in our condition of need (whether it's *physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, or relational.*)

- b. **“on me”** - This is how we begin praying the prayer, but as God meets our needs, we should be asking for that same **“mercy on”** *others* (not just our *family, friends, and neighbors*, but on our *enemies* and the *strangers* we meet every day.

CONCLUSION:

–The reason the monks called the Jesus Prayer “the prayer of the heart” was because they tried to learn to pray it all the time, even in their dreams while asleep. It was repeated like *breathing out* (“Lord Jesus Christ,”) and *breathing in* (“have mercy on me.”) It became to them as rhythmic as their heartbeat... in fact, their goal was to make it their heartbeat.... to *pray it without ceasing*.

–My goal is to try to get you to use it throughout your day, not only for yourself, but for others around you and for loved ones that might be far away. (Practice it now, x3)

– And if you forget the exact words, my hope is that you will always remember to call upon that one name in the prayer, “Jesus”, “for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, shall be healed, shall be delivered.

Luke 18:35-43 (NIV)

35As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.36When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening.

37They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”

38He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

39Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

40Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him,

41“What do you want me to do for you?”“Lord, I want to see,” he replied.

42Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”

43Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.