

Salvation By Faith Only?

By Joe R Wheeler

Introduction:

In this day and age, we see religious teachers on our televisions, or hear them on our radios, or read articles written by them, proclaiming the way to become a Christian. They tell us that we can say a simple prayer, telling Jesus we want to accept Him into our heart, and that makes us become a Christian (this is also referred to as the "sinner's prayer"). But, is that really all that it takes?

In point of fact, the Bible teaches us that there is actually more required of us if we wish to become a Christian. The "sinner's prayer" so widely taught as the way to salvation, is actually a man-made prayer that God never authorized. That's right! It doesn't make anyone who says it a Christian!

The "sinners prayer" is nothing more than another example of the truth of God's Word being twisted slightly by Satan in order to deceive those who follow what seems right to them, instead of the teachings of scripture. It is based in part on Joel 2:32, John 3:16, Romans 10: 9-10,19, and other verses telling us of the need to turn to the Lord if we want to be saved. But calling on the name of the Lord is only one aspect of our salvation. The "sinners prayer" is a lie to keep those who trust in it from TRULY coming to the Lord.

I. Salvation Requires More Than Faith..

In Acts 9, Saul was on the road to Damascus when He encountered a great light that blinded him (verse 3). He was told to enter into the city and after that he would be told what to do (verse 6). He spent three days there waiting and PRAYING (verse 11). This is an important point to see!

Paul prayed for three whole days, and we know he believed at this point...but all that prayer didn't make him a Christian. Verse 18 tells us what he was required to do...he was baptized into Christ!

The other examples of conversion in the Book of Acts also show us the other aspects of salvation: All believed, repentance is widely shown, confession is shown by the example of the Ethiopian eunuch (chapter 8), baptism by immersion in the eunuch's account and throughout the rest of the examples of conversion.

The reasoning we need to use is this...Does every account of salvation require every one of the requirements to be mentioned in order for them to be truly binding? If you read of the jailer in Acts 16, it never states that he repented, or actually confessed Jesus, it says he believed (verse 30), and was baptized (verse 33), but does that require us to believe that he didn't actually repent or confess?

Does the fact that not every baptism recorded in the Book of Acts mention that the believer confessed Jesus as the Son of God, show that they didn't...and thereby relieve us of having to do it?

The problem with using only the verses that mention one or two of the requirements to teach on salvation, is that you must ignore other verses that teach the rest of the requirements, those requirements being:

1. You must hear the Word of Salvation.
2. You must believe the Word to be true.
3. You must repent from your way of life (true repentance requires that you no longer remain in your former state).
4. You must confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Son of God (this is verbal confession, not simply believing in your heart).
5. You must be baptized into His death (this is done by total immersion, as a symbolic burial of the body of sin).

These requirements are taught throughout the Book of Acts (the best book for examples on how those who believed became Christians), as well as mentioned in most every other Book of the New Testament as well.

In fact, the various requirements are so frequently mentioned, it is beyond the scope of this article to actually discuss them all.

II. So, What Does Save Us?

There are many things involved in our salvation. First of all, we must remember that salvation is God's Will for us, therefore He is the source of it, and He makes the conditions for it.

The conditions that men may teach as also being acceptable, are not acceptable to God. We must take His Word for the truth and ignore the protests of men claiming that there are other ways.

The "sinner's prayer" is at the same time an addition to the Word of God and a subtraction as well.

The "sinner's prayer" is an addition because it is not in the Bible, therefore it is not a commandment of God. It was added by those who wished to promote a doctrine contrary to the one God gave us. This makes it an

addition, a "new way" to salvation that man has devised.

The "sinner's prayer" is at the same time a subtraction from the Word of God because it teaches that God's plan of salvation is more than what is truly necessary to be saved.

The doctrine of "faith only" salvation of which the "sinner's prayer" is a part, sets aside the truth, and takes salvation away from those who follow it. God requires that sinners believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. The "sinner's prayer" teaching makes faith the only requirement.

Saying the "sinner's prayer" does not save us. What saves us is obedience to God's plan of salvation.

III. There are several things that save us...

God has made salvation available to man. Faith is but one part of us being saved. We are saved by these as well:

1. We are saved by grace...

Matthew 11:28-30 *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Titus 2:11-14 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

2. We are saved by faith...

Romans 5:1-2 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Romans 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

3. We are saved by blood...

Romans 5:9-10 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

4. We are saved by hope...

Romans 8:24 *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

5. We are saved by the gospel...

Romans 1:16-17 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written. The just shall live by faith.*

1Corinthians 15:1-4 *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures:*

6. We are saved by mercy...

Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

7. We are saved by works...

James 2:17-25 *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a*

man is justified, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

8. We are saved by water...

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

1Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Conclusion There is an element of truth in the teaching that faith saves us. But there is also a lie involved in the way it can be twisted as well. True faith leads us to obey. That is true and in line with the teaching of the Bible. Abraham believed God and acted by that faith when he left Haran and traveled and dwelt in the promised land (Acts 7). Noah believed God as well, his faith in God's warning led him to obey God, he acted on his faith and showed obedience (Hebrews 11:7, 1Peter 3:20, 2Peter 2:5).

We must follow their examples if we also want to have salvation. Like them we must listen to God, not man.