

# Seeking Truth: My Journey from Tradition to Biblical Understanding

By: David Burruss

Before I begin this long post, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who took the time to comment or send me a direct message. I truly appreciate it. My intention in asking the question about the “sinner’s prayer” was never to spark arguments. Those who know me understand that I strive to love and respect everyone, regardless of their lifestyle or choices. However, I also remain committed to upholding God's standards. My goal is always to share the truth of God's Word.

When I posed the question, I already anticipated the range of responses I would receive. This is a topic I have personally studied for years, beginning at the age of 15. My purpose here is to shed light on some of the many false teachings that exist in the world today. This particular issue is just one among many, and my hope is that through Facebook, other social media platforms, or one on one bible studies, I can continue sharing the truth of God's Word with you.

As I mentioned earlier, I began seriously studying the Bible around the age of 15. Those who truly know me understand that I went through some difficult and traumatic experiences at an early age. During those times, I naturally turned to the Bible because, as a young child and teenager, I had always heard that if you need anything, you should turn to God and His Word. So, I began reading and studying the Bible for myself.

To give a little background, I grew up in the Baptist denomination. My grandparents were deeply involved in the church, and because I spent a lot of time with them, I was exposed to their beliefs and teachings. However, as I read and studied Scripture, I started noticing things that I had never been taught. More importantly, I began seeing teachings in the Bible that directly contradicted what I had been told, particularly regarding salvation.

For example, I didn’t find anything in Scripture about saying a “sinner’s prayer” or “asking Jesus into my heart” in order to be saved. Yet, that’s exactly what I had been told when I was around 11 years old, and I had followed that teaching at the time. But as I continued reading, I realized that what I had been taught didn’t align with what the Bible actually said about salvation.

Naturally, I went to my preacher to ask about these discrepancies. I even showed him multiple passages from Scripture that contradicted what I had been taught. His response is something I will never forget. Instead of addressing my concerns with Scripture, he told me, *“You’re going to go crazy reading the Bible. Just do what we say, and you’ll be fine.”*

That response deeply unsettled me. I had been taught that the Bible is the Word of God, that God is truth, that He cannot lie, and that His Word is inspired and God-breathed. And yet, here was a preacher telling me to ignore what the Bible said and simply follow what *they* taught. That made no sense to me. If the Bible is truly God's Word, why would I be discouraged from reading and obeying it?

That moment left such a bad taste in my mouth that I completely shut down when it came to Christianity. For several years, I wanted nothing to do with it. However, fast forward about eight years, and I met my wife. At the time, I wasn’t really interested in Christianity or attending worship services, but she was a committed Christian and invited me to church. Naturally, when you start dating someone you care about, you want to do things that make them happy, so I agreed to go with her.

I’ll never forget that first worship service. As I sat there, the preacher started preaching on the very questions that had troubled me eight years earlier. I was completely amazed. It was as if everything I had struggled with as a teenager was finally being addressed. That moment set me on a path of discovery, leading me to the answers I had long sought when I was 15. Ultimately, it was through this experience that I came to truly understand the truth of

God's Word and made the decision to become a Christian several years later. I hope my story encourages you to seek and find the one true, narrow path, the way that, as the Bible says, only a few will discover.

Now that we've established some background from my life, before we dive deeper into the question of the sinner's prayer, there are a few important things we need to clarify.

First, the Bible is very clear in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. This means that God's Word is our ultimate authority. Secondly, Psalm 119:160 tells us that the entirety of God's Word is truth. It's not just some of it, it's all of it. Every word matters, and we cannot pick and choose what we want to believe. Finally, as Christians, we are called to defend the truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 instructs us to rightly handle the word of truth, which means we must diligently study and present God's Word accurately.

With these foundational truths in mind, let's continue exploring the question of the sinner's prayer or the idea of simply asking Jesus into your heart for salvation. The Bible is like a puzzle, each piece must fit together for the full picture to emerge. As we diligently study Scripture, we begin to see its consistency and clarity. However, many people unintentionally misrepresent biblical teaching, either by opposing what the Bible actually endorses or by advocating for things Scripture never commands.

When it comes to the concept of the sinner's prayer or the idea that one is saved by simply saying a prayer, we must ask: Does the Bible actually teach this? The answer is clear. Yet, when you ask people how they were saved, many will say, "I said the sinner's prayer." If you point out that this practice is not found in Scripture, they often turn to Romans 10:9-13, citing verses that speak about confessing Jesus and calling upon His name to be saved.

However, context is crucial. We cannot cherry-pick isolated verses to support a belief without considering the full biblical teaching on salvation. If we did that, we could construct any doctrine we wanted, regardless of whether it aligns with the full message of Scripture.

To understand Romans 10, we must start with Romans 10:1, where Paul addresses his audience. He begins by saying, "Brethren," which means he is speaking to Christians, those who have already obeyed the gospel. These are the same people he addressed in Romans 6, where he speaks of them as baptized believers who had already come into contact with Christ through baptism. This is critical because Paul is not addressing non-believers who have yet to be saved, he is writing to those who have already obeyed the gospel.

Romans 10 must also be understood in the broader context of Paul's discussion on Israel's rejection of Christ. In this chapter, Paul is emphasizing righteousness by faith in contrast to righteousness by the law. The Jews were trying to return to the old Mosaic system, but Paul was making it clear that salvation comes through faith in Christ, not by works of the law. This emphasis on faith is often mistaken as a complete plan of salvation, but Paul is not outlining every step one must take, he is making a point about faith being necessary for salvation, not the only requirement.

Some argue that Romans 10:9-13 proves that salvation comes solely by confessing Jesus, pointing out that the passage does not mention baptism. However, we must remember that Romans 6 already explained baptism as the means by which believers unite with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. If Romans 10 were presenting a different plan of salvation, it would contradict Romans 6 and other passages, which would imply that God's Word is inconsistent, which it is not.

This brings us to Romans 10:13, which speaks of calling on the name of the Lord. What does this phrase actually mean? Many assume it refers to simply praying for salvation, but Scripture defines it differently. To call on the name of the Lord means to appeal to God on His terms, to submit to His will in obedience.

We see this phrase used throughout Scripture. The first mention is in Genesis 4:25-26, and it appears repeatedly in both the Old and New Testaments. In Joel 2:28-32, it is prophesied that those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved, a prophecy fulfilled in Acts 2:21-26 on the day of Pentecost. But when Peter preaches this in Acts 2, he

does not tell the crowd to say a prayer; instead, he tells them in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

Consider Saul's conversion in Acts 9. For those who believe that a prayer alone brings salvation, after his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, what was Saul doing? He was praying for three days (Acts 9:9-11). If prayer alone could save, then Saul would have been saved during that time. However, that is not what happened. Despite his prayers, Saul remained in his sins until he obeyed God's command.

The clearest explanation of what it means to call on the name of the Lord is found in Acts 22:16, where Ananias tells Saul (later known as Paul), "And now why do you wait? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Here, calling on the Lord's name is directly linked to baptism, it is the act of obedience through which we appeal to God for salvation.

Believe me, I completely understand that for many reading this, it may be shocking, it challenges everything you've believed and everything you've been taught. I know this because I've been there. From personal experience, I can tell you that even after I started hearing the truth, it took me years to fully comprehend and accept what the Bible actually teaches.

For a long time, I sincerely believed I was already saved. I had no reason to question it. But when I truly studied Scripture and allowed God's Word to speak for itself, I couldn't reject His truth.

Now, I know some may respond by bringing up the thief on the cross, saying, "Well, he wasn't baptized, yet Jesus told him he would be in Paradise." This is a common argument, but we have to rightly divide the Word of Truth and understand a few key things:

We know very little about the thief on the cross, we don't even know his name, his background, whether he was married, or, importantly, if he had been baptized by John the Baptist (which is entirely possible).

The thief on the cross is not our example of salvation. Why? Because Jesus was still alive at that time, and the command for baptism as part of salvation had not yet been given. That command came after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16). The thief lived under the Old Covenant, which was still in effect while Jesus was on earth.

The thief had a unique, face-to-face encounter with Jesus. Unlike us, he spoke directly with Christ, and as long as Jesus was on earth, He had full authority to forgive sins as He saw fit (Mark 2:10). He healed people, forgave sins, and performed miracles before the New Covenant was established.

After Jesus' resurrection, He gave a new command for salvation. Under the New Covenant, salvation comes through hearing, believing, confessing, repenting, and being baptized, because it is in baptism that we come into contact with Christ's blood and have our sins washed away (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

We cannot use the thief on the cross as an example of salvation under the New Covenant because he lived and died before Jesus' final command for baptism was given. When Christ established His new covenant, He set forth the plan of salvation for all mankind, and we are saved only when we obey it.

Another argument you might present is that baptism is a "work" and that teaching its necessity for salvation promotes a works-based salvation. My response to that is this: What exactly makes baptism a work? What physical effort are you exerting to earn salvation? How is it any different from hearing and believing, repenting, or confessing, things that many readily accept as part of faith? There is no difference.

In fact, if we are to rely on the Bible for our understanding, Colossians 2:11-12 makes it clear that baptism is not a work of man but a work of God. It is not us doing the work; it is God working in us. As you read and study the Bible, it becomes evident that God has laid out a perfect plan of salvation.

So, when we call on the name of the Lord, we are not merely saying a prayer; we are submitting to God's commands, hearing the gospel, believing in Christ, repenting of sin, confessing Jesus as Lord, and being baptized for the remission of sins. We must follow all of what God commands, not just select portions that fit human traditions.

Salvation is not found in a man-made prayer but in faithful obedience to the gospel as revealed in Scripture. We cannot cherry-pick how one is saved, we must submit fully to God's will.

Friends, I know this is a lot to take in, I've been there myself. But please understand that none of this is based on my opinion; everything I've shared comes directly from God's Word.

I love each and every one of you, and my greatest desire is to do the will of our Father in heaven, to help guide others toward the path of salvation. If you have any questions, any concerns, or any spiritual needs, please know that I am here, not to judge, argue, or stir up conflict, but to sincerely and genuinely help in any way I can.

My deepest hope is that everyone has the opportunity to make it to heaven. There is nothing more important in this life than the salvation of souls, and I am committed to doing all I can to share God's truth in love.