

The Jesus Prayer

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Did you read all those with the same tone and emphasis? Oftentimes, when we read repeating statements, our hearing turns towards different parts of the sentence. With this sentence in particular, we can repeatedly read this statement and always extract a different feeling or thought. This prayer is known as the Jesus Prayer.

This is a very simple prayer in which even children can understand and participate in. But for us as adults, this prayer can be a way for us to focus our lives and our attention on what matters the most; understanding whose we are (God's) and that no matter what else may be happening in the world, God is merciful.

The Jesus Prayer is a confession, a supplication, and a thanksgiving prayer. It is something that we can focus on when we have no other words and when we have too many words. We acknowledge that as sinners we are shown mercy by Jesus who is the incarnate son of God. This acknowledgment is the simplest form of faithfulness and carries the weight of our salvation. Also, it transfers the power of the divine to be in God's hands and not our own. The simplest of prayer holds so much theology and commitment while offering us peace and grace.

So, what feelings crop up when you read this prayer? Does it make you feel guilt or regret? Does it give you a calming feeling or are you suddenly aware of Christ's atonement as the most beautiful eternal gift? There are so many ways that your heart, mind, and ears can be drawn towards yet the words of the statement never change.

And when you read this prayer is important. Is it after a stressful day or is it when you just arose to see the sun peaking through your blinds? Were you recently given a heart-wrenching diagnosis or just landed a new client at work? It is important to consider where your heart is and why you are going to God in prayer. Whether conscious or unconscious we encounter the divine Creator when we utter these words and God uses this time to speak to our hearts.

You can read it once, twice, forty times, or however you are led. Use it as an opening to your daily prayer or as a closing statement to your mealtime thanksgiving prayer. I encourage you to try it in various places and times of your day. Ultimately, allow this prayer to build peace in your heart and allow it to grant yourself forgiveness because God's love is eternal and everlasting through the grace of Jesus Christ, God's incarnate presence in our world that was crucified for our sins. Be at peace and know that God is in control.