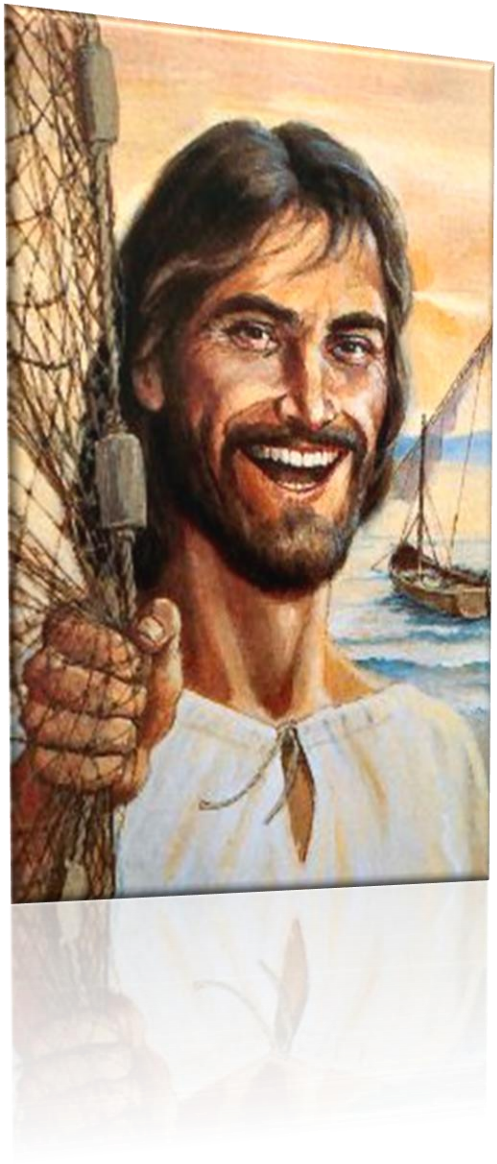
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Ways to Pray



The Jesus Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me, a sinner

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The Jesus Prayer

More than any other prayer, the Jesus Prayer aims at bringing us to stand in God's presence with no other thought but the miracle of our standing there and God with us, because in the use of the Jesus Prayer there is nothing and no one except God and us." [From "The Jesus Prayer" by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom]

- Incredibly Simple
- Incredibly Difficult
- Incredibly Powerful

St Paul said: "*Pray without ceasing*." What does this mean for us today?

Our prayer session on the Jesus Prayer begins with a story - taken from "The Way of the Pilgrim". Nobody knows who was the writer of this enchanting book. It is by a nameless Russian pilgrim who recounts his experiences as he wandered from one holy place to another in Russia and Serbia during the years preceding the liberation of serfs in 1861. His search for the secret of St. Paul's dictum "*Pray without ceasing*" was rewarded by the discovery of the power of the Jesus Prayer which is the real subject of this book. The pilgrim's manuscript was discovered in the late 1800s in possession of one of the monks at Mount Athos - a Greek monastery.

The Jesus Prayer has two major functions. First, the content and meaning of the prayer, "*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner*", is a profound revelation of the Gospel itself. It is as if a genius has distilled the whole breadth and mystery of the Scriptures into one simple aphorism. Second, and supremely, the author shows us that the Jesus Prayer is a diligent yet direct means of encounter with the living Christ. It is a prayer so simple, yet so rich and totally God-absorbing that some Christians have made it their spiritual path literally to pray unceasingly the Jesus Prayer.

The Jesus Prayer has one aim and one aim only - to endow the person who says it with Christ-consciousness. The Fathers of the early Church encourage us to not only pray the Jesus Prayer but to live it so that it becomes the Prayer of the Heart.

Three Stages of Prayer

1. Oral prayer or prayer of the lips.
2. Mental prayer - prayer said silently in the mind.
3. Prayer of the heart - prayer is no longer something you do, but something you are. You are connected with the divine energies of God, and know that God dwells in the depths of your heart.

One spiritual writer has said: "*One doesn't choose the Jesus Prayer, one is called to it by God.*" Whatever prayer we are called to, that is the best of us. So, we invite you only to open yourself to the Jesus Prayer. As it comes to you, receive it and let the Lord lead you and show you what He wants.

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The Jesus Prayer

Power in the Name
Lord, Jesus Christ. There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Saint Peter - Acts 4:12

Praying the Jesus Prayer
I invite you now to participate in praying the Jesus Prayer. First we will pray it aloud and together. Then we will continue to pray this prayer in silence ……

We pray this prayer in rhythm with our breathing
"Lord Jesus Christ Son of the Living God" on the IN breath
"Have mercy on me a sinner" on the OUT breath.

Become aware of your breathing ……
Aware of your breathing in and out …….
Continue to do this for some moments …….

Now begin to pray the Jesus Prayer silently and continue to pray for ten minutes. Relax, let the prayer breathe itself within.

As you are ready let the Jesus Prayer cease ..... . Rest in the silence …...

Praying Jesus Name
To conclude: Let us spend time praying the name of Jesus over ourselves, our family and friends. His name is power …… strength …… healing.

The words of scripture say: "*His name is as oil poured forth*" Oil is used in blessing - Let us consciously bless each part of ourselves by praying the name of Jesus over each part of us, our mind ... our heart ... our eyes … our mouth … our ears … let Him deeply bless us.

Now pray the name of Jesus over each person here.... your friends or family whose name comes to mind....

We pray with the faith of the woman who said - if only I can touch his cloak. Reach out in faith now as you pray His Name ..... .

Gently conclude your prayer …… And be present to this room … … …

NOTE: A SUGGESTED WAY TO PRAY THE JESUS PRAYER IS TO DO SO 33 TIMES – ONCE FOR EACH YEAR OF JESUS' LIFE ON THIS EARTH.

