

## The Jesus Prayer -- Prayer of the Heart

### ***"Lord Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on me (a sinner)"***

Scriptural Foundation for Prayer in the Name of Jesus:

Phil 2:9-10: Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him **the name** which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Acts 4:12: And there is salvation in no one else, for there is **no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved

Luke 10:17: The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in **your name!**"

John 16:23-24: "In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you **in my name**. 24 Hitherto you have asked nothing **in my name**; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

Luke 18:38 (see also Mark 10:47): And he cried, "**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!**"

Luke 18:13: But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, '**God, be merciful to me a sinner!**'

In the Jesus prayer worship and compunction are combined. These signify everything that is divine and everything that is human, at the point where human and divine are most separate in the order of being and most united in the order of love. The Jesus Prayer helps us to focus our mind exclusively on God with no other thought occupying our mind but the thought of God. At this moment when our mind is totally concentrated on God, we discover a very personal and direct relationship with Him.

The Jesus Prayer involves three stages of progress in its practice. You begin praying the Jesus Prayer by repeating the words of the prayer out loud or at least moving the lips. This is called verbal prayer. After some time saying of the Jesus Prayer becomes silent or mental and is repeated only in the mind. This is mental prayer. Finally, the Jesus Prayer becomes a continuous prayer in the heart, the inner core of our being. We begin with vocal prayer and do not force the move to mental prayer. This will happen naturally when you are ready. The Prayer can be repeated throughout the day under all circumstances, but is often prayed for specific intervals of time or a given number of repetitions. Use of an Orthodox prayer rope facilitates the repetition of the prayer.

The Jesus Prayer practice is a difficult task and like all ascetic practices it requires commitment of time, patience and perseverance. The aim of the prayer is not to obtain a kind of spiritual experience, and it is not a form of meditation; rather its purpose is communion with God and participation in His grace. In praying the Jesus Prayer as in all Orthodox Prayer we are seeking a relationship with a personal God based on faith and love.

Information partially adapted from <http://www.orthodoxprayer.org/Jesus%20Prayer.html> and from Irene Hausherr, *The Name of Jesus*.