

The Jesus Prayer is a very old prayer used by Christians to keep God in mind and keep themselves aware of His presence. It is very short, having a pretty much fixed content for centuries. The prayer is essentially a prayer for mercy but includes acknowledgement of Jesus's relationship with God and the Christian, and acknowledgement of the Christian's dependence on mercy as a sinner.

Worded variously, an Orthodox version reads "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Worded or thought in this form, the prayer is easy to say and can be used to focus us on our mission and place in God's plan. In the middle of chaos or around distractions, this short prayer can serve a useful purpose.

During periods of more extended quiet, the prayer can be expanded by reflecting on its words. The following is an example of using the prayer in this manner.

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

"Lord, master, king. I don't know the complexities of those words, but I am prepared and I want to surrender my life to You. What matters is not what I want, but what you want."

"Jesus, the name above all names. Truly Emmanuel, you have graced the world with your presence and your children with your continuing abiding with us. Thank You for living in us, and giving us Your strengthening Spirit."

"Christ, Messiah, the chosen and perfect of God. Thank You for submitting to God's purpose, for faithfully revealing Him to us. As His anointed, thank You for dying for us, for rising to life, and preparing us to receive and to live in our God."

"Son, image, revelation. Divine and precious as a son. Representative and executor of our God's will and grace. As Son, You have declared the Father's will and have opened the way home."

"God, creator, and sustainer of our lives and world. No one else can take your place because You are so great, and powerful, and yet Your love is steadfast, good, and refreshing. Keep us in Your power safe and with You."

"Have mercy as an outpouring of Your grace and love. Overlook our faults and accept us as You do Your Son. We appeal to You for forbearance and patience in our weakness."

"On me, a creature. Frail, often times arrogant and prideful, having eyes and yet failing to see, ears to have heard but not hearing. Accept me in my rebellion and failures, and humble me and draw me back to you."

"A sinner; one who follows his own way; corrupt and hollow. I am nothing without you. Thank you for your grace and mercy. Accept the sacrifice of your Son as my atonement. Restore me to You and keep me safe."

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

The prayer can be used in a variety of ways and in many situations - while stuck in traffic, waiting in line, in an elevator, or simply as a final appeal and reflection prior to sleep or immediately upon waking. Repeating the prayer is not intended as simply something to take up time or as an unthinking activity. Rather, repetition must be done with our full attention to the words and import of the prayer. It can serve as an entrance to greater prayer, awareness of God's presence, and resting in Him.

Try it, you will come to appreciate this very old and yet still appropriate prayer.