

Prayer Challenge: Week 3

When we pray, most of us are able to take our problems to Christ, but what about our sin?

The prophet Isaiah wrote, “The Lord has put on him the punishment for all the evil we have done” (53:6 NCV). Isaiah did not know the name of God’s sin bearer. But we do. Jesus Christ. He came to “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26). He “was offered once to bear the sins of many” (v. 28).

If you are in Christ, your sin is gone. It was last seen on the back of your Sin Bearer as he headed out to Death Valley. When Jesus cried on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46 NIV), he entered the wilderness on your behalf. He carried your sin away.

Jesus did his part. Now do yours.

Give God your guilt. Pray the Pocket Prayer. *Father, you are good. I need help. Forgive me . . .* Tell Jesus what you did. Place your guilt on the back of your Sin Bearer. Give it to Jesus with this request: “Will you take this away?” Do this as often as needed. One time, two times, ten times a day? By all means! Hold nothing back. No sin is too ancient or recent, too evil or insignificant. Be abundant in your confession, and . . .

Be concrete in your confession. Go into as much detail as you can. You’re tempted to say, *Lord, forgive me. I am a louse.* But that doesn’t work. For one thing you are not a louse; you are God’s chosen child, and he loves you. For another, healing happens when the wound is exposed to the atmosphere of grace.

Exactly what is it that you need forgiveness for? For being a bad person? That is too general. For losing your patience in the business meeting and calling your coworker a creep? There, you can confess that.

Confession, you see, is not a punishment for sin; it is an isolation of sin so it can be exposed and extracted.

Be firm in this prayer. Satan traffics in guilt and will not give up an addict without a fight. Exercise your authority as a child of God. Tell guilt where to get off. Speak to it in the name of Jesus. “I left you at the foot of the cross, you evil spirit. Stay there!”

The time has come for a clean start, a fresh slate. God does not see the marks of your past. Instead, he sees this: “See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands” (Isa. 49:16). God has written your name where he can see it.