

The Church of Service, Discovering New Dimensions of Faith in God's Authoritative Word

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Pastors Pen

Leave the Past, In the Past

Pastors Pen

Brethren, I do not count myself to have [apprehended]; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3: 13 - 14

As we march into the year 2025, the apostle Paul's words in Philippians 3: 13-14 offer timely wisdom. As we begin a new year, we're presented with a fresh new start, similar to an artist's canvas, awaiting the brushstrokes of our choices and actions. There is nothing that we can do to change the past. To fret and worry about what you could have, or should have done is not beneficial and leaves you stressing over things that you cannot affect. If you have wronged someone, go to them and ask for forgiveness. If there is a broken relationship you want to mend, go to them and reconcile as soon as possible. But to allow those things of the past to carry over into your future doesn't serve you or anyone well.

Paul's exhortation reminds us to release the weights of past regrets, disappointments, and heartaches. Instead, we're to focus on the new horizon of possibilities, straining toward the goals and aspirations that God has set before us. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) But how can we embrace the abundance He desires for us if we keep wallowing in the errors and disappointments of the past. When Paul seemingly couldn't get past that "thorn in his flesh," Jesus told him, "My grace is sufficient for you." That same grace is sufficient for us as well. I've often said that there is no sin that is greater than God's grace.

Finally, some may say that there are some great and beautiful memories to look back on, what about those? It is always great to look back and reflect on the goodness of the Lord. But we must also be careful not to constantly look back on the "good old days," lest we get stuck in the past celebrating what was and fail to move forward creating something new and better. God's message to us is that "I am doing a new thing." (Isaiah 43: 19). So let's leave that past, in the past and let us embrace the "new thing" that God has ordained for us.

Mission Statement: We, of the St. John's Missionary Baptist Church, exist for the purposes of bringing God's lost children to salvation, and exalting the Lord through our worship and our works to edify and equip the saints in His Word.

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Sunday School 9:30 - 10:30 am

Worship Service 10:45 am

Wed. Teen Bible Study 5:00 - 5:45 pm

Wed. Prayer 5:30 pm

Wed. Adult Bible Study 6:00 pm

W. O. W. 3rd Wed. Monthly Mid-Week Church Service 6:00 pm

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2025

Happy New Year

**In This Issue of
St. John's of Lawton Herald**

Published Monthly

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Notice to Our Readers

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**Monthly Featured Couple
Brother James and Sister Teresa Johnson
53 Years of Marriage**



“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24 NKJV)

Sister Teresa Laverne Gibson Johnson is the daughter of Harding and Fayzell Gipson. She is a native of Waurika, OK, where she grew up with her 3 brothers. Brother James Earl Johnson is the son of Ben and Elizabeth Johnson. He is a native of Graham, TX, where he was raised with 4 sisters.

Sister Teresa graduated from Waurika High where she played basketball, softball, and ran track. She states, “I was fast, too.” She attended Cameron College, but before she graduated, Cameron College became a four year institution. Sister Johnson shared that it was during her freshman year, where she met



the late Rev. Jesse L. Davenport. Little did she know at that time that he would become her pastor years later? Her continued education consists of a Bachelor of Science Degree and a Masters in Elementary Education. She is also a certified Reading Specialist. After retiring as an educator, she decided to continue teaching as an accelerated teacher. She has been teaching for over 40 years and states, “I love it!” Brother James graduated high school, where he excelled in football and baseball. He attended Midwestern University in Wichita Falls, TX and it was there, where they met. James retired as a Trucker.



Sister Johnson states, “I was with my cousins at a drive up store and James pulled up behind us. He got out of his car and asked us to a party that night. I was in the back seat trying to hide because my hair was in rollers. My cousin gave him her address and he picked us up for the party. James hung out with me at the party and took us back to our apartment because it was late. We told James that he did not have to walk us to the door, but when we ran to the door, James followed anyway. My uncle met James at the door and asked him why he kept us out so late? My cousins and I ran to the back of the room and started laughing. The rest is their history that has led up to their 53 years of marriage.

As babes, James and Teresa were married in 1971 after Teresa finished college. The completion of their marriage came with the heart beat of two lovely daughters, Tamara and Temesa. Tamara of Lawton, OK is a veteran, a musician, and is currently a Pardon and Parole Officer Level III. Temesa of Little Elm, TX is a Middle School Counselor and she also counsels privately.

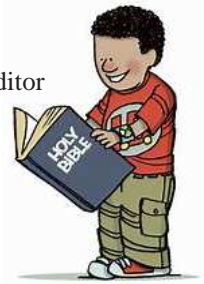


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Teaching the Bible in Schools

Conversational Article Only from the Desk of the Editor



Christian nationalism is a form of religious nationalism or supremacy that focuses on promoting its Christian views to be prominent or dominant in political and social life. Some believers in Christian nationalist ideas are more likely to support political violence and other anti-democratic ideas.

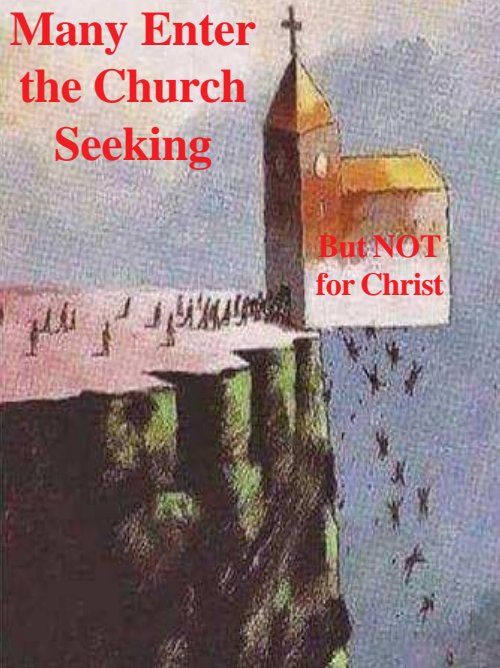
Danyell Reed
LeBron Copeland
Angie Crumpton
Reginald Ramey
Sharline Campbell
Randy King



“Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom”(Psalm 90:12 KJV)

Many Enter the Church Seeking

But NOT for Christ



Whether you support or deny the proposed mandate of the Bible being taught in schools may become irrelevant either way. Should this issue become a voting issue? We can thank the Christian Nationalist for pushing their ideas on the Oklahoma political establishment.

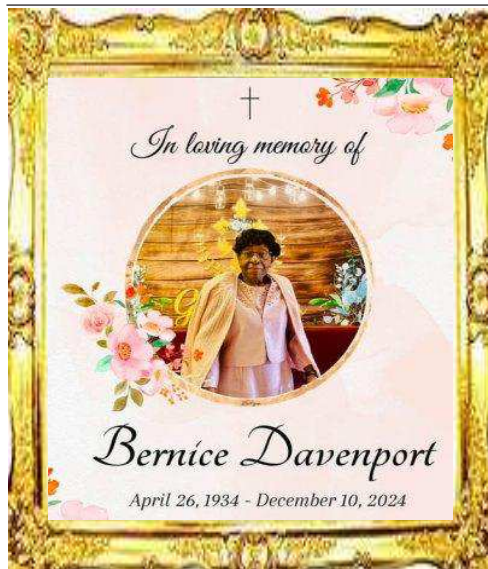
I suspect that few if any of these politicians or Nationalist have read the Bible. None may actually know the conflicts that will arise from within. The thought of an unskilled, biased, or an atheist teaching the Word of God will produce unwanted consequences. My believe is that these false teaching of the Word will cause us to return to a past that was never meant for us to relive. Due to biased teaching of the Bible, there will be some children in some classroom of every school becoming critical thinkers against the true Word of God.

Christian Nationalists expresses their love of Jesus as an agenda to make Him what they need Him to be. These nationalist are less than a third of the world’s population. So, I ask, “How can and do they make and invoke decisions on our behalf. My Brothers and Sisters in Christ is it not time to become “Woke?” The world as we know it today is different form the days when Rome and the Catholic Church dictated everyone’s culture and religion. Can you now see the similarities? Remember the Palestinians? Do we not now live in a democracy where the people have a vote! -SJMBC Herald L.C.

The Word of God is a rule and guide given by God through his writers for His believers to live by. His Word is meant to assure our love for Him, ourselves, neighbors, and enemies.



Sister Barbara Branch



First Lady Davenport



Bro. Micheal Trice



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Please keep the following families in prayer: Sis. Bailey-Harris, Sis. D. Acosta, Sis. E. Elliott, Sis. M. Thomas, Sis. D. Hill, Sis.S. Wallace, Bro. J. Brown, Sis. M. Bowen, Sis. L. Smith, Deacon R. Cole, Sis. B. King, Bro.V. & Sis. S.Campbell, Sis. L. Pierce, Sis. R. Rouse, Bro. J. Williams, Bro. C. Branch, Bro. H. Williams, Sis. D. Persinger, and Sis. V. Sawyer.

Remember All the Lord Has Done

“Take care lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Deuteronomy 6:12 KJV).

Christians are enjoined to never forget what their Lord has done for them. New Years’ in Christianity is not just about welcoming a new calendar year but also celebrating new beginnings, transformation, and spiritual growth. For Christians, New Years’ represents a fresh start to walk on the path of righteousness and follow Jesus throughout the upcoming year.

A Christian who obtains his greatest joy from the Lord sees January 1 as a time to remember the goodness of God as it has unfolded across the past year. Sometimes the details of God’s intervention are only obvious when one surveys His goodness over time.

We can never remember the Lord’s grace and mercy and love towards us too often. Remembering Christ is essential; the more we do this the better.

At the start of a New Year, one might reassess which direction to go with regard to career or a relationship, what his or her cross might be, and to either change course or stick with God.

If this has been a difficult season, go back to Hebrews 4:15 KJV, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Recall that Christ knows the temptations you face, the suffering you endure. He is able to sympathize, so turn to him without fear



Faith... But What About Works?

James 2:14-26 NKJV



14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? **15** If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? **17** Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. **18** But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. **19** You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe and tremble! **20** But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? **21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? **22** Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? **23** And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. **24** You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. **25** Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? **26** For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Inspirational Verses

Scriptures to remind us about God’s promises and how to face this new year with hope! Our Lord wants us to seek out His will for our lives and to live life fully alive. Stop Satan’s goal of making you feel defeated and overcome. Start this New Year renewed! -SJMBC Herald

2025

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

(2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV)

2025

“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:18-19)

2025

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

2025

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

2025

And He who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also He said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” (Revelation 21:5)



SJMBC DANIEL FAST AND PRAYER FOCUS 2025

21-Day Prayer Focus and Scripture Reading Schedule for the SJMBC Daniel Fast
May this Daniel Fast bring spiritual growth, renewal and a deeper connection with God.

Remember to consult with a healthcare professional or spiritual leader before starting any fasting regimen.

January 6 -26, 2025

Day 1-3: Preparation and Surrender

***Day 1** (Jan 6)*: Prayer Focus - Surrender to God

Scripture: Matthew 4:4, Daniel 1:8-16

Prayer Points: Ask God to prepare your heart, surrender your will, and seek His guidance.

***Day 2** (Jan 7)*: Prayer Focus - Renewal of Mind

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:22-24

Prayer Points: Pray for renewed minds, pure thoughts, and a desire for spiritual growth.

***Day 3** (Jan 8)*: Prayer Focus - Humility and Obedience

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6, James 4:6-10

Prayer Points: Ask for humility, obedience to God's Word, and a willingness to serve.

Day 7-9: Relationships and Community

***Day 7** (Jan 12)*: Prayer Focus - Family and Relationships

Scripture: Ephesians 5:22-33, Matthew 19:19

Prayer Points: Pray for strengthened family bonds, healthy relationships, and love.

***Day 8** (Jan 13)*: Prayer Focus - Church Unity

Scripture: Psalm 133:1, Ephesians 4:1-6

Prayer Points: Ask for unity, love, and harmony within the church.

***Day 9** (Jan 14)*: Prayer Focus - Community Outreach

Scripture: Matthew 25:31-46, Galatians 6:2

Prayer Points: Pray for opportunities to serve, compassion for the lost, and community transformation.

Day 13-15: Spiritual Warfare and Perseverance

***Day 13** (Jan 18)*: Prayer Focus - Spiritual Warfare

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-18, 1 Peter 5:8-9

Prayer Points: Pray for protection, strength, and victory in spiritual battles.

***Day 14** (Jan 19)*: Prayer Focus - Perseverance and Endurance

Scripture: James 1:2-4, Hebrews 12:1-3

Prayer Points: Ask for perseverance, endurance, and faithfulness amidst challenges.

***Day 15** (Jan 20)*

Prayer Focus: Courage and Boldness*Scripture*: Joshua 1:9, Ephesians 6:19-20

Prayer Points: Pray for courage, boldness and confidence in sharing God's Word.

Day 4-6: Spiritual Growth

***Day 4** (Jan 9)*: Prayer Focus - Spiritual Hunger

Scripture: Matthew 5:6 Psalm 42:1-2

Prayer Points: Pray for a deeper hunger for God's Word and spiritual growth.

***Day 5** (Jan 10)*: Prayer Focus - Faith and Trust

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1, 6, Psalm 37:3-5

Prayer Points: Ask for increased faith; trust in God's promises, and courage.

***Day 6** (Jan 11)*: Prayer Focus - Holiness and Purity

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, Psalm 51:10-12

Prayer Points: Pray for a desire for holiness, purity of heart, and righteous living.

Day 10-12: Personal Freedom and Healing

***Day 10** (Jan 15)*: Prayer Focus - Freedom from Strongholds

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Romans 8:37

Prayer Points: Ask for freedom from spiritual strongholds, addiction, and fear.

***Day 11** (Jan 16)*: Prayer Focus - Physical and Emotional Healing

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, Psalm 103:2-3

Prayer Points: Pray for physical, emotional, and mental healing.

***Day 12** (Jan 17)*: Prayer Focus - Forgiveness and Restoration

Scripture: Matthew 6:14-15, Ephesians 4:32

Prayer Points: Ask for forgiveness, restoration of relationships, and peace.

Day 16 - 18

***Day 16** (Jan 21)*

Prayer Focus: Wisdom and Discernment

Scripture: James 1:5, Proverbs 9:10

Prayer Points: Ask for wisdom, discernment and insight in decision-making.

***Day 17** (Jan 22)*

Prayer Focus: Gratitude and Thanksgiving

Scripture: Psalm 100:4-5, 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Prayer Points: Pray with gratitude, thanking God for blessings and provisions.

***Day 18** (Jan 23)*

Prayer Focus: Mercy and Compassion

Scripture: Matthew 5:7, Luke 6:36

Prayer Points: Ask for mercy, compassion and love towards others.

Continued on page 7



We are looking forward to praying with you.

Please List Your Request

Please Pray For: _____



DATE _____

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

St. John's Missionary Baptist Church Of Lawton
Rev. Davison A. Virgil, Pastor
1504 SW N.H. Jones Avenue
Lawton, OK 73501
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2625
Lawton, OK 73502-2625



Prayer Request Cards: Prayer is essential in the life of a Christian. There is great power in prayer and we endeavor as a church family to stay in prayer for one another. In both Matthew 6:5-15 (KJV), and Luke 11:1-13 (KJV), Jesus teaches His disciples to pray. Even today He is teaching us to pray, and James 5: 16 (KJV) teaches us to "...pray one for another." As a church family, it is important that we use prayer as a means to bless one another. Our prayer card helps to ensure that we know each other's prayer needs and afford us the opportunity to pray for each other for specific needs. Please complete the pledge card and mail it in or email your request to the church secretary at secretary.sjmbclawton@gmail.com.



Happy Anniversary



God sketched his original plan for marriage in Genesis 2:24 (ESV), when one man (Adam) and one woman (Eve) united together to become one flesh: Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24, ESV). Marriage goes beyond the earthly covenant also, as a divine picture of the relationship between Christ and his Bride, the Church. It is a spiritual representation of our relationship with God. In Malachi 2:14 (ESV), marriage is described as a holy covenant before God. Both singleness and marriage are a gift from God. (1 Corinthians 7:6-7, Matthew 19:11-12 ESV). We live in a fallen world and Christians also often struggle in their marriages. But despite all the difficulties, both partners in a Christian marriage are called to portray Christ in their marriage. God will give us the grace to do so, when we ask him (Hebrews 4:14-16 ESV)! Celebrating anniversaries during the month of January is Brother Vernon & Sis Sharline Campbell.



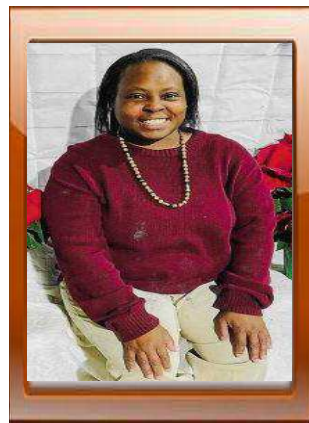
The Campbells'


The Johnsons'

Continued from page 2

She is married with a son, Tre. The Johnson's state with love, "Tre is their everything!"

The Johnson's have been members of SJMBC for 40 plus years. They say, "We are not counting anymore." Brother James is currently a member of the SJMBC Usher Board, Voices of Praise, and his favorite, a Sunday School teacher. Sister Johnson is currently a member of the SJMBC WMU chorus and the Greeter's ministry. Her past ministries include the SJMBC Children's Church ministry teacher, Sunday School teacher, nursery worker, and a member of the Usher's ministry.




*He who finds a wife
finds what is good
and receives favor
from the Lord.
-Proverbs 18:22*



Remember to consult with a healthcare professional or spiritual leader before starting any fasting regimen.

Day 19 - 21: Dedication and Growth

Day 19 (Jan 24)

***Prayer Focus*:** Faithfulness and Loyalty

***Scripture*:** Psalm 101:2-4, Ruth 3:10

***Prayer Points*:** Pray for faithfulness, loyalty and commitment to God and others.

Day 20 (Jan 25)

***Prayer Focus*:** Victory and Triumph

***Scripture*:** 1 Corinthians 15:57, Psalm 20:7

***Prayer Points*:** Ask for victory, triumph and celebration in spiritual battles.

Day 21 (Jan 26)

***Prayer Focus*:** Reflection and Renewal

***Scripture*:** Psalm 119:1-8, 2 Corinthians 4:16



Prayer Points

Reflect on the fast, renew your commitment to God and pray for continued growth. Journal your prayers and insights. Share your experiences with a prayer partner or group. Seek guidance from church leaders or mentors.

Foods to Avoid

- Meat and Poultry, Dairy Products
- Refined Sugars, Processed Foods
- Fried Foods, Caffeine, and Alcohol

Additional Guidelines

Choose organic and non-GMO options when possible. Avoid foods with additives and preservatives. Drink plenty of water throughout the day.

Comprehensive list of foods allowed during the Daniel Fast

Fruits

- Fresh fruits (e.g., apples, bananas, berries)
- Dried fruits (e.g., dates, apricots, prunes)
- Canned fruits (in juice or water)

Healthy Fats

- Olive oil
- Avocado
- Nuts and seeds

Proteins

- Legumes (e.g., lentils, chickpeas, black beans)
- Nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts)
- Seeds (e.g., sunflower, pumpkin)

Vegetables

- Leafy greens (e.g., spinach, kale, lettuce)
- Cruciferous vegetables (e.g., broccoli, cauliflower)
- Root vegetables (e.g., carrots, sweet potatoes)

Whole Grains

- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Whole wheat bread
- Whole grain pasta
- Oats

Beverages

- Water
- Fresh vegetable juice
- Fresh fruit juice (without added sugars)
- Herbal teas

From the Desk of Davison A. Virgil, Pastor SJMBC of Lawton

“Blessings for the New Year”

BLESSED WITH A NEW YEAR

We thank God for His goodness and all the great things He did for us last year. Now that we’re faced with a new year, we as Christians eagerly anticipate what blessings God has in store for us and we give thanks for all we hold dear. Our Lord and Savior, our health, our family, and our friends. Let us live each day in the most loving ways, the God conscious way. Lastly we thank God for making all things new and for giving us the grace of fresh starts and new beginnings. Wishing everyone a blessed, cheerful, and Happy New Year! -Sis. Sherrell Wallace

W. O. W. “Worship on Wednesday” & Teen Bible Study

SJMBC of Lawton, 1504 N.H. JONES AVENUE, LAWTON, OK 73501

If your spiritual cup becomes low during the week; then join SJMBC of Lawton for W. O. W. “Worship on Wednesday” mid-month worship every third Wednesday monthly at 6:00 PM (unless an announced cancellation) for a refill, during our mid-month worship. We welcome your teen to join our Teen Bible Study, every Wednesday from 5:00 pm to 5:45 pm. For more information contact the church secretary at secretary.sjmbclawton@gmail.net for Zoom ID or call (580) 357-3542.



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Knowledge is intended to be our friend, but it may also be made our enemy. -Dr. J. L. Davenport



How Can I Be Saved?

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

(Matt. 16:26 KJV))

I. The Meaning: In the original language, the word "saved," in its simplest form, means to be made whole; it also carries the connotation of being rescued. So then, when we at St. John's speak of being saved, we speak of being rescued by God from the deprivation, the clutches, and the consequences of sin; we speak of being restored, made whole or complete again by coming to a right relationship with God.

II. The Price: Do not be dismayed. The price of being saved is neither costly nor complicated. But you must admit that you are a sinner. Romans 3:23 (KJV) state: "**All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God.**" But what is sin? Sin is an act of disobedience to the will of God for your life. It could be a lie or lust, sin is sin.

You must realize that sin has a punishment. Romans 6:23 (KJV) state: "**The wages of sin is death.**" The word "wages" literally means the result or the product of sin is death. Death is separation from God, both in this world and in the world to come.

And you must be assured of God's love. Romans 5:8 (KJV) state: "**While we were yet sinners, God demonstrated His love toward us, in that Christ died for us.**" The amazing message here is that while we were behaving as God's enemy, sinning against Him, His love was so merciful and gracious that He sent His only begotten Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved.

Finally, to be saved, you must confess and believe. Romans 10:9 (KJV) state: "**That if thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in your heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shall be saved.**" If you believe that God raised Jesus of Nazareth up from the grave and can confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, you shall, not maybe, be saved.

III. The Prayer: If you desire to be saved, would you pray the following prayer: "Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. And I know that Jesus died for my sins. I believe You raised Jesus from the dead, and I want Him to be my Lord and Savior. Jesus, come into my heart and save me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen."

The Bible says that when you pray that prayer, it immediately resulted in your salvation. Should you ever doubt whether or not you are saved, read I John 5:12 (KJV) that states emphatically: "**He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.**" If you have Jesus living within you, you have eternal life.

If you do not have a church home, then find a Bible believing church and get involved in the Bible Study program of that church. Talk to the pastor or one of the leaders about baptism and determine in your heart and mind to walk with Jesus all the days of your life. Should you need help in finding a church, call St. John's at (AC-580) 357-3542; we will be glad to assist you. May God bless and keep you.