

In the 1990s, the phrase *“What would Jesus do?”* became popular. This line of thinking has its roots in Evangelical Christianity, dating back to John Wesley and the “Christian perfection” movement in the mid-1700s.

At the end of the 19th century, Congregationalist minister Charles Sheldon’s book *“In His Steps”* was subtitled *“What would Jesus do?”*

It’s revival in the 1990s, in Holland, Michigan, returned the phrase to the forefront. It has now been made into a movie, parodied, and twisted in all sorts of ways over the past two decades.

A difficulty with the thinking around the W.W.J.D movement, is that it is often used to embrace a sort of Christian entitlement. Sort of a *“been there, done that, got the t-shirt”* or maybe the bracelet or neck charm. The individual becomes the arbitrator of what Jesus would do. It centers on personal supremacy, and a sort of individual triumphalism.

Much older, by 15 or more centuries, is the *“Jesus Prayer.”* Dating from the Desert Fathers in 5th century Egypt, and mentioned by St. John Chrysostom in his *“Letter to an Abbot,”* the Jesus Prayer comes to us through the Christian East.

The roots of the Jesus Prayer are in St. Paul’s Letter in 1 Thes 5:17 where we are admonished to *“pray without ceasing.”* In this context, the Jesus Prayer becomes a constant mental, and hopefully spiritual companion ... being repeated over and over either in the foreground or background of our consciousness.

In this way, it becomes what is called *“The Prayer of the Heart.”*

The text of the Jesus Prayer is

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

and is very similar in form to the prayer of the tax collector heard in today's Gospel saying:

*'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'*

As Christians, we cannot be content to be part of a passing fad. It is more important that we embrace the reality of who we are in relation to God, and as such engage the graces of salvation given to us through the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ; let us pray for the humility to know ourselves in relationship to God. And in realizing our nature as sinners, realize our own need for a Savior ... and the grace, mercy, and love that flow from the Cross ... and from this Sacrifice.

May we be transformed by the graces of this Liturgy ... from who we are ... into the people that God has created us to become.