All he really wanted was a sandwich.

The newspaper story on the bottom of page E12 read "Man Found Dead Near City Mission."

The day before was a cold and blustery, winter day. A lonely old man found himself standing outside in the cold, dark, world. Wearing tattered clothes, he had nowhere to go. He was very sad, his fingers were aching from the cold, and his feet and back were racked with pain.

"Nobody will help me" he thought in desperation as he wandered about the lonely streets. He was very hungry, very tired, and very sad.

Somewhere in the distance he saw a sign. As he approached it, it read "Never hunger again." He recognized the building as a Christian mission by the prominent cross out front. He had seen such catchy phrases on signs before, but "missions like this are for poor, lost sinners on their way to Hell, not for a religious man like me," he thought. He had heard of the routine. Wait in line, listen to some "preacher type" person, then get some food.

With no place better to go, he hung around outside of the mission, milling about, and then crossed the street. Almost all at once, people begin to appear and form a line out in front of the old mission. He thought "I have lived a good life, never hurt anyone, and up until this sudden turn of events I went to church every Sunday. I have raised a beautiful family. Certainly this mission is no place for me!"

He was starving to death.

"Oh, if I only had a sandwich" he mumbles. Then somehow I could turn things around, pull my life together. But nobody wants to help me." He sat down against an abandoned building across the street from the Mission, mindful of the crowd gathering out front. "Nobody cares about me" he said to himself.

A steady rain began to fall. He began to cry. "Won't somebody help me?"

God sees all of us as sinners. That includes millionaires, homeless people, and religious folks. Why won't religious people like him listen to the Word of God? Why do they let pride carry them through their lives thinking that they are earning their way to heaven? The Bible is clear that this is simply not the case.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: (it is) the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8,9 KJV)

[21] "Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. [22]Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' [23]And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:21,23 NKJV)

We are born spiritually dead, and we remain that way unless we believe and accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord. In the Bible, God spoke "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3 KJV) This foundational belief is key in understanding what steps a person must take to accept the free gift of salvation offered by God through Christ Jesus atoning death on the cross and subsequent resurrection:

1. Recognize and accept that you are a sinner. (Romans 3:23)

2. Be willing to repent of your sins. (Acts 17:30)
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you, was buried, and rose from the dead. (Romans 10:9,10)
4. Believe that Jesus can save you from an eternal life in Hell and accept His finished work on the cross by prayer. (John 14:6, Romans 6:23, Romans 10:13)

How to Pray to Trust Jesus as Savior and Lord:

Dear Lord, I confess that I am a sinner in need of forgiveness and I cannot earn my way to Heaven. I believe that Jesus Christ shed his precious blood on the cross for me and I am willing to repent of my sins. I invite Him into my heart and accept Him as Lord and Savior.

For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." (Romans 10:13 NKJV)