

Raising The White Flag

There's a surrender that takes place in the heart of one who is saved by the grace of God.

Here's the scriptural evidence you might need when trying to explain how surrender is involved in one's salvation.

Saving Faith Includes Surrender: When God calls someone, that person gets "on his knees" in his soul and willingly turns away from his own ideas about salvation (i.e. his own righteousness), **Lk 18:9-14**, **Php 3:9**, he's repentant about his sin against God, **Lk 13:1-8**, **Lk 14:31-33**, **Ac 20:21**, and his heart turns to Christ instead of himself, **Mt 16:24**, **Ro 10:3,9-11**,... then the Father runs to him, **Lk 15:20**, and he is snatched from the fire, **Zec 3:2**, **Jude 23**, and placed in union with Christ, **1Co 12:13**. He has been changed by the grace of God, **Eze 36:26**, **2Co 5:17**! This willingly humble person has been saved by grace through faith, **Eph 2:8-9**.

You might be familiar with some of these scriptures... for example **Lk 18** for the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector... it's the one who humbled himself before God who went home justified.

And **Lk 13** we've seen in the past, where the Lord told the people unless they repent, they also will perish like those on whom the tower fell.

Luke 13:1-9 *There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."*

And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' 8 And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. 9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Jesus was basically saying that all men needed to repent because all have sinned against God. **Rom 3:10-23**

And hopefully you remember this old friend:

Ac 20:20-21 *how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.***

And **Romans 10** helps us see surrender/submission is involved in saving faith:

Rom 10:3 *For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not **subject themselves** to the righteousness of God.*

Unbelievers, especially religious ones, refuse to submit to God from the heart, even though they might give Him lip service, **Mat 15:7-9**.

Ro 10:9-11 *that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."*

This true believer has been placed in union with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

1 Co 12:13 *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

2 Co 5:17 *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

A person becomes saved, maybe after a lengthy time of seeking, because they finally decide to raise the white flag of surrender towards God.

The Lord wants people to know what true faith looks like.... there's a reason it's called conversion... it's not someone just saying they know the facts about Jesus, but it's someone who

cries out to Him as their Lord and Savior, seeking mercy and forgiveness.

There's a reason Jesus said man *must be born again* to see the kingdom of God. **John 3**

Sinful man needs a totally new birth; not some type of addition to his current life.

And this doesn't happen without someone's willful surrender to God changing them, which only God can affect in them!

The Lord Jesus said in **John 6:44** *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*

What's a major difference between a believer and an unbeliever, even a churchgoer? - An attitude of surrender, due to an acceptance of one's need to be saved from his sins.

Again! - Saving Faith Includes Surrender: When God calls someone, that person gets "on his knees" in his soul and willingly turns away from his own ideas about salvation (i.e. his own righteousness), **Lk 18:9-14**, **Php 3:9**, he's repentant about his sin against God, **Lk 13:1-8**, **Lk 14:31-33**, **Ac 20:21**, and his heart turns to Christ instead of himself, **Mt 16:24**, **Ro 10:3,9-11**,... then the Father runs to him, **Lk 15:20**, and he is snatched from the fire, **Zec 3:2**, **Jude 23**, and placed in union with Christ, **1Co 12:13**. He has been changed by the grace of God, **Eze 36:26**, **2Co 5:17**! This willingly humble person has been saved by grace through faith, **Eph 2:8-9**.

A repentant heart is what God is looking for, all throughout Holy Scripture. (see Psa 51:17, Isa 57:15,66:2, Eze 18:30-32,36:26-27, Mat 3:2,21:32, Act 2:38,3:19,17:30,20:21,26:20, Rom 2:5,10:9-10, Col 3:22, Heb 4:12c)

Rom 2:5-6 *But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:*

Just as the biological heart is at the core of man's body, the spiritual heart is the core of a man's soul.

And the Bible says sinful man needs a new heart, from God.

Prov 23:7 *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.*

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Again, a repentant heart is what God is looking for, all throughout Holy Scripture.

Ezek 18:30-32 *"Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. **Repent!** Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. 31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and **get a new heart and a new spirit.** Why will you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. **Repent and live!***

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The root of the problem for an unbeliever is an unrepentant heart. This is why we need to use the Law in evangelism; to help someone repent and seek the Savior.

We know one can only be saved by grace, **Eph 2:8-9**, and God gives grace to the humble, **Jam 4:6, 1Pe 5:5**.

Therefore, an attitude of humble repentance is needed for one to come to saving faith in Christ,... for one to even know he truly needs Christ in the first place, so that he may receive grace and faith from God for salvation.

Unless someone is repentant about his sinfulness and guilt before God, he will not turn to Christ to save his life. Why would he, truly?

The Bible says God rescues those with broken, contrite hearts (in other words, it's the humble who receive His grace).

Ps 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;*

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Isa 57:15 *For thus says the high and exalted One*

Who lives forever, whose name is Holy,

"I dwell on a high and holy place,

And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit

*In order to revive **the spirit of the lowly***

*And to revive **the heart of the contrite.***

And we also know that God looks at the heart when evaluating man. **1Sam 16:7, Mat 15:8, Act 15:8**

This is an inescapable truth!

1 Sam 16:7 *But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."*

Matt 15:7-9 *"You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:*

8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,

BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.

9 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,

TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"

Acts 15:8-9 *And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, 9 and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.*

It's very clear that God looks at the heart of man. He sees the very motivations of our hearts!

Heb 4:12-13 *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

So how does that relate to salvation?

Unless a man finally buckles under the weight of his own depravity, admitting his guiltiness and the gravity of his sin before a Holy God...

... unless he raises the white flag of surrender before God Almighty, humbling himself under the mighty hand of God...

... unless he comes to that place, then he won't cry out for the Savior, trusting in Christ from the heart, which is what it means to *believe* (Greek - Acts 16:31; to have faith, to entrust) in Christ.

One of Jesus' parables shows the crying out to God that takes place at salvation.

It's this man who receives justification from God, by grace through faith in Christ.

Luke 18:9-14 *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

Again; a repentant heart is what God is looking for, all throughout Holy Scripture. (see Ps 51:17, Is 57:15,66:2, Eze 18:30-32,36:26-27, Mt 3:2,21:32, Ac 2:38,3:19,17:30,20:21,26:20, Ro 2:5,10:9-10, Col 3:22, Heb 4:12c)

Rom 10:10a *for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness.*

Let's visit a few more of these scriptures before moving on.

We see in the books of Acts the apostles' obedience to the Lord's Great Commission in **Luk 24:47**, which includes preaching "repentance... for the forgiveness of sins".

Acts 2:38 *And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 3:19-20 *Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, 20 that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus*

Acts 17:30-31 *The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."*

Acts 20:21 *testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*

Acts 26:19-20 *"Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should **repent** and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.*

In the New Testament, we have at least 3 examples of people coming to salvation who illustrated the "raising of the white flag" before God, or a surrender of their heart to the Lord.

1. Zaccheus the chief tax collector, 2. the thief on the cross, and 3. the Roman jailor.

They are going to help us see what true saving faith looks like.

What I hope you see is their attitude of repentance/a humble heart that accompanied their faith in Christ, through which they were saved by grace (and therefore righteousness was credited to their account, **Rom 4-5**).

This humble attitude may be why these 3 men weren't directly told to "repent", where at other times in Holy Scripture the command to "repent" accompanied the Gospel presentation. **Mar 1:15, Act 2:38, 3:19, 20:21.**

But these 3 men were already repentant, as seen by their speech and their actions. In other words, their soil was already ripe, knowing their fallen state and ready and looking for a Savior.

Here's a passage for our first example, **Zaccheus**:

Luke 19:1-10 *He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. 3 Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature.*

4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. 5 When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6 And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly.

7 When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Zaccheus' actions were evidence of his humble, repentant faith;
AND the Lord was quick to acknowledge it!

**This is one of the few times we see the Lord Jesus openly
declare someone to be saved!**

But just to be clear, Zaccheus wasn't saved BY his actions... he was saved because he humbly turned to Jesus as His Lord and Savior.

Faith alone in Christ alone is what saves a man... and Zaccheus' actions were simply the evidence of his genuine faith in Christ.

Once again, Jesus had gone to be "the guest of a man who is a sinner", in vs 7.

We should all thank God for that! - But WHY did the Lord habitually dine with sinners?? - Because He had hopes of leading them to repentance, **Luk 5:32**.

Luke 5:30-32 *The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?" 31 And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. 32 "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."*

Again, Zaccheus' actions were evidence of his humble, repentant faith; and the Lord was quick to acknowledge it!

His actions simply revealed his surrendered heart.

The thief on the cross is a second example of a man who already had a repentant heart/ripe soil to receive the Lord as his Savior.

Luke 23:39-43 *One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" 40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we*

are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" 43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

We see the thief was "on his knees" in his heart. He was humble and repentant about his sin against God, and therefore ready to receive our Lord and Savior.

Again, we have here a beautiful picture of what true saving faith looks like!

And here's our third example of one already possessing a repentant attitude, **the Roman jailor**:

Again, the point is that **true saving faith is repentant in nature**.

Acts 16:25-31 *But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. 27 When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, **he drew his sword and was about to kill himself**, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.*

28 But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" 29 And he called for lights and rushed in, and

trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

The jailor's heart was like ripe soil.

By grace, his heart had lost all hope in himself, allowing him to truly turn to Christ for salvation.

Unless someone sees he is hopeless in himself, he will not truly turn to Christ from the heart.

Unless one "humbles himself" before the Lord, he will not be able to receive the grace gift of saving faith, **Luk 18:9-14, Eph 2:8-9.** (God gives grace to the humble! **Jam 4:6, 1Pe 5:5**)

Without humility, he will not be granted repentance from God, either. **Act 5:31,11:18,16:14, 2Tim 2:25-26.**

The Bible clearly teaches even our ability to repent and believe are GIFTS from God!

Man truly can take no credit in his salvation. It is a work of God!

Acts 16:14 *A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and **the Lord opened her heart** to respond to the things spoken by Paul.*

Notice, it's THE LORD who opened her heart; she didn't open her own heart.

And again, repentance is a **gift** granted by God to the humble.

Acts 5:31 *"He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to **grant repentance** to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

Acts 11:18 *When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has **granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.**" (eternal "life"; salvation in view)*

2 Tim 2:24-25 *The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps **God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.***

We might rightly say the only part man has to play in salvation is **humbly receiving what God gives him.**

As my dear Pastor Collins has said in the past: "*man gets to choose between a platter of arrogance and a platter of humility*".

God, by His grace, gives people a certain number of opportunities in their lifetimes to push away the plate of arrogance and eat some humble pie before Him...

... and when a person is finally willing to do so, that frees the grace of God to bless him with repentance and saving faith in His Son.

Humility is evident in true saving faith (but there is no humility in religious lip service, or in a person looking to "cover all their bases" - that person needs to be born again and saved! - **John 3**).

Saving faith is NOT a person believing in Jesus "just in case", or accepting Him "on the side" as part of THEIR life that THEY want to continue living for SELF. (that's what the Bible reveals as a counterfeit faith)

The attitude of the heart is all wrong; there's no genuine humility there!

Saving faith is a WILLINGNESS to drop one's own life (i.e. to stop relying upon one's self-righteousness) and instead to cry out for Christ to be saved! Act 26:18-20

We see this in Paul's defense before King Agrippa:

Ac 26:12-20 *While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13 at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. 14 "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15 "And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 rescuing you from the Jewish people*

and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

19 "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, **that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.**

Think of our 3 examples of men who illustrated a true saving faith to us.

When someone truly repents towards God, there's evidence of such a change of mind.

That's why Paul said what he said at the end of verse 20.

Too many churches today teach a watered-down gospel, almost making light of the NEED for faith in Christ,...

... when instead it should be presented as a REAL DECISION to place one's trust in Christ alone!

What do you think our Lord meant when He stated the following?

Mt 13:44-46 *"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Saving Faith Includes Surrender: This is **the attitude of the heart** of those who recognize and receive the offer of the kingdom of heaven, **Mt 13:44-46**, of those who receive (take hold of) Christ, **Jn 1:12**.

Many churchgoers today think they are "in" with God based on their own goodness, or based on their spiritual heritage (being born into a Christian family or a certain Christian denomination).

That lie couldn't be further from the truth, because God looks at the heart!

John 1:12-13 *But as many as received (Greek "lambano"; to take hold of) Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe (trust) in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Here again, we see salvation is a work of God, not of man.

And a personal surrender to Christ, by grace through faith alone, is the earmark of salvation.

It involves the WILLINGNESS to sell all, to sell one's own life even, in exchange for the Lord and His righteousness. (see **Luk 14:25-35**)

Think of the Lord's response to the rich, young ruler.

He asked how to inherit eternal life! - Isn't the correct biblical answer for him to "believe" in Christ?? YES it is!

Yet, the Lord told him to sell everything and follow Him, **Luk 18:18-27**.

If your local evangelist said that to someone today, many Christians would lash out against him.

If we're saved by grace through faith, which we are, then why say this to someone?!!

My friends, this is another illustration from our Lord's own mouth that believing in Him is not a superficial decision, or one that involves lip service **without a surrender of the heart to Him**.

Think about it, Isaiah was talking about religious people who used the name of the Lord on their lips, but they were not saved!

We see the same type of people mentioned by our Lord in **Mat 7:21-23**.

True faith, faith that saves, comes from the heart, where one has counted the cost, Luk 14:28.

It's a real decision to entrust the Lord with his very life to be saved from eternal judgment.

Biblical Salvation: Saving faith is the heart "raising the white flag" in surrender to Jesus Christ as God and Savior.

And one must accept the King's righteousness alone as the way to be saved. Is 61:10a, Mt 22:14, Ac 16:31, Ro 3:21-26, 10:3, Php 3:8-9

The issue is clearly turning from one's own (self) righteousness and accepting God's offer of perfect righteousness, through Jesus Christ alone. (**Rom 3:21-26**)

Remember one of the Lord's parables (**Mat 22:1-14**), where the King asked one who came to His banquet: *Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?*

The man had no answer at all; a picture of how speechless unbelievers will be when they face the Lord.

The King then proceeded to cast him out into eternal judgment, just for having the wrong clothes on!

This is a picture of one who tries to go to God with his own righteousness, not submitting to God's righteousness. **Rom 10:3, Phi 3:8-9**

Arrogantly, they are ashamed to admit their own spiritual poverty. They refuse the better garment the King graciously offers them.

This is akin to the "robe of righteousness" that only comes from God, to cleanse those to turn to Him.

Isa 61:10a *I will rejoice greatly in the Lord,*

My soul will exult in my God;

For He has clothed me with garments of salvation,

He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness,

Yes, God has offered man peace through His Son, but make no mistake, He is the King, and one can **only be made righteous** by turning to the grace of the King in his heart.

Rom 3:21-26 *But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

May we all share the fullness of the Gospel with others, before it's too late, and the religious have their true colors revealed to them!