

# Saving Faith and The Heart!

This is a very important topic to be examined, as we survey what the Bible says about these things.

First of all, the Bible makes it very clear that a person is saved by God's grace, through FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior.

In fact, Jesus Himself made it clear that man is saved by faith alone, in Him alone!

The reason God accepts faith alone is because it is a **non-meritorious** way to receive the perfect work of the Savior (in other words, if it's by faith then we have no merit in this, and we can't take any credit!) (see **Joh 1:12-13,3:16-18,5:24, Act 16:31**).

**We also know that man cannot even take credit for having faith,** because according to the Word of God, even faith is a GIFT from God, and NOT of ourselves. (see **Eph 2:8-9, Rom 12:3, 1Pe 1:3**)

**God is one the who opens our eyes to our need for the Savior!  
Without Him, we would not see spiritually!**

Let's first see this with our God-given eyes in Holy Scripture...

**Eph 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And **this is not your own doing**; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

**Rom 12:3** *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, **each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.***

**1 Peter 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

I hope you see the point: we can't even take credit for having faith! Without God's help, we would have no faith. We would be lost like most in the world!

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Before we get into our series topic... we could visit over 100 New Testament scriptures that say a person is saved by faith alone; **by believing in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.**

Here are just a few examples before we start talking about the heart...

**John 1:12-13** *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were **born**, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but **of God.***

There we see the way we become “born of God” is by believing in the Name of Christ. This matches up with **John 3:3-18**. 😊

**John 3:16-18** *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 “He who **believes in Him** is not judged; **he who does not believe** has been judged already, because **he has not believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

There we see BELIEVING is mentioned 4 times by our Lord Jesus as the way to receiving eternal life! Thank God it is that simple, or none of us would be saved!

**John 5:24** *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and **believes Him who sent Me**, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”*

**Acts 16:31** *They said, “**Believe in the Lord Jesus**, and you will be saved, you and your household.”*

According to Strong’s Concordance, the word “believe” in the original Greek language is “Pisteuo”.

It's not important you remember the Greek word, but it means **to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing)**, i.e. credit; by implication, **to entrust** (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ)

We can safely say "believing" implies **trusting in someone else** to do, or be, something for us, as seen even clearer in the noun form:

This Greek verb pisteuo comes from the noun pistis... what we would call "the faith".

"Pistis"; persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), **especially reliance upon Christ for salvation;**

We can rightly conclude to "believe" means to have faith, to entrust, to rely upon, or to give credit to another Person.

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Here's the main point of this series on *Saving Faith and the Heart*:

**It's one thing to believe that someone exists,... but it's another thing to believe IN someone, to place your trust IN someone, relying on them in your heart!**

This is the biblical meaning of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

It's one thing to believe certain facts about Him, but it's completely another thing to place your trust in Him! Amen?!

i.e. - There are plenty of religious people out there that acknowledge Jesus existed, and that's He's even a prophet,... BUT, they haven't actually placed their trust in Jesus as Lord to save them from their sins (**i.e. Act 20:21**).

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

Now let's think about the concept of **repentance**...

**Acts 3:19-20** *"Therefore **repent** and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you."*

According to Thayer, "repent" is the Greek word "metanoceo", which means "to turn around, to change one's mind."

According to Louw and Nida's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, "repent" means "to change one's way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude with regard to sin and righteousness".

**In other words, a real change of mind translates to a change in a person's actual lifestyle; there's a "turning around" in their life if there's a genuine repentance from the heart.**

We might say to friends about almost anything: "if you really believe that, then do it!"

Doing something is a sign of truly believing something.

We see this throughout the whole Bible, and we'll visit many scriptural examples!

Repenting is not just a casual, flippant thing, because true repentance involves the heart. And the Bible is very clear that God looks at the heart. **1Sam 16:7**

And this is why WE CAN'T FOOL GOD!

**1Sam 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.**"*

**Repentance is a real decision of the heart that results in a change in one's life, just as "believing" does. They are two sides of the same coin.**

Now, let me give you a balance statement: this doesn't mean someone will live a perfect life if they "*repent and believe*", as the Lord Jesus commanded in **Mark 1:15**...

... the Bible reveals we will unfortunately sin until the day we die (think of Paul's struggles in **Romans 7**)...

... but it does mean that the repentant person will have some type of change in their life as a believer, **BECAUSE THEY'VE BEEN CHANGED BY GOD**, according to the Word of God.

i.e. - Believers now have the Spirit of God living inside of them!

**Rom 8:9-11** *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you,*

*although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

**When a person repents towards God and turns to Christ by faith, the Bible says God changes them. (i.e.- Eze 36:26-27, 2Cor 5:17)**

*Ezek 36:26-27 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

This was a OT prophecy about **the new covenant** that would come by the Messiah (Jesus Christ) one day.

And after Christ came, we see this in the NT:

**2Cor 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

There we see that God supernaturally **CHANGES** the true believer.

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But the Bible also talks about **pretenders**, often called "false brethren", who claim to believe but actually do not!

This series is about realizing the difference... what's different about the faith of a believer vs. a pretender? After all, they both claim to be believers!!!

**The difference is found in the attitude of the heart. A true believer has a submissive, humble heart... one that cries out to the Lord for mercy and forgiveness and follows Him out of gratitude! (Joh 10:27)**

The point is that anyone can fake repentance, or even say they repent out of selfish motivations, but their heart might be far from God, according to Jesus. (i.e.-**Mat 15:7-9**)

**Mat 15:7-9** *You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:*

*8 "This people honors me with their lips,*

*but their heart is far from me;*

*9 in vain do they worship me,*

*teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"*

**The Bible talks about people giving lip service to the Lord, but not submitting in their heart...**

**... and again, God looks at the heart!**

I personally know about this because I was one of those people.

I know what it means to SAY the right thing, but not mean it in my heart.

And unfortunately, this is the case for a lot of religious people today.

Thankfully, God opened my eyes, and I am now a sinner saved by His grace, through faith in Christ!!

And I know that ANYTHING good about me is from Him, and He gets all the credit for changing me.

How do I know this? - Because I remember my bad heart as a young man.

For example, before I was into the Word of God, people in need would ask me for help with something. But I was a very selfish young man.

So to **look good in front of others and not appear to be selfish**, I would SAY the right thing with my lips : “Yes, sure, I’ll help you” ... but even at that very moment I was saying in my heart “I’m NOT going to be there, I can’t waste MY time on that”.

Sadly, it was all about ME.

Does that sound familiar to anyone? **If we're honest, it should, because we're all born with a sinful nature that is simply selfish!**

I would SAY the right thing with my lips (actually lying), but my heart was far from good intentions.

We are all **naturally** selfish in some ways, according to the Bible.

Why is this so true?? How do we know this is true about every human being?? – It's because of the sinful **natures** we were all born with, inherited from Adam, often called "the flesh" in the Bible.

**Eph 2:1-3** *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

In my personal example, my words made it appear I was with others, but my heart was certainly not!

There are unfortunately many "religious" people that fit in this category, using God's name but having poor, selfish motives in their hearts.

They act spiritual to APPEAR good to others, or to try to EARN God's favor, but their hearts are not with God!

They have no genuine fear or reverence for God, but instead just look to Him for what they can get (selfishness, again).

This is why we must persistently spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so they may be saved too!

This type of person simply has not surrendered to the Lord in humble, repentant faith...

... they have not turned to God from the heart, as sinners reaching out to Christ for mercy and forgiveness, which is the only way to be saved!

**In this way, repentance and faith are matters of the heart, between each person and the Lord!**

And please remember; when we talk about "matters of the heart", we're not necessarily talking about an emotional response, although emotions might be there.

We're talking about a person's **inner motivation**, or WHY they do what they do!

What's really going on in the heart of a person is what's important, because God looks at the heart!

In other words, God looks at WHY we do what we do, and that should humble every one of us!!

**The heart includes a person's inner motivation! And apparently, our "*thoughts and intentions*" come from the heart! (i.e. – Act 8:20-22, Heb 4:12)**

**Heb 4:12** *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***

My friends, God knows EVERYTHING about us, including our every thought!

Look what Peter said to Simon the magician:

**Act 8:20-22** *But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, **for your heart is not right before God.** Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, **the intent of your heart** may be forgiven you.*

Do you see it?? Our intentions come from the heart. This is what God is concerned with!

And this should give us a good and healthy fear of God, which the Bible speaks about frequently.

This is why God chose David to be king of Israel.

God saw that **David’s heart was fully devoted to Him**; not only in words, or even in deeds!

In fact, God even called David a man after His own heart!!!

**Act 13:22** *"After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.'*

David clearly had a humble, pure heart before the Lord. He truly wanted what the Lord wanted!

We might say his motives lined up with the Lord's priorities.

But contrary to David's heart were the hearts of many religious Jews (who used God's Name) in the Old Testament times.

**Isa 29:13** *The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, **but their hearts are far from me.** Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men."*

This is the person who APPEARS to be spiritual but is really just going through the motions.

They're just trying to appease God, and they look at going to church as an insurance policy, "just in case".

And because their heart is far from God, the Lord does not accept them, or their religiosity!

God doesn't want us following religious rituals to try to earn our way with Him. You should know that's actually impossible, according to **Romans 3**.

**Instead, He wants us to repent of our sins against Him** (*"repentance towards God"*, Act 20:21) and to believe in the Lord Jesus from the heart (*"with the heart one believes"*, Rom 10:9-10).

And as a result, the Bible also says that humble, repentant faith leads to FOLLOWING JESUS (*"My sheep... follow Me"*, Joh 10:27).

Do you see the big picture yet? Do you see the full picture of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

If you don't see it yet, that's ok, just stick to the rest of this series!

**Repentance and faith are really two sides of the same coin, and they both involve the heart, according to the Bible.**

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Here's a couple key questions...

*How does someone genuinely believe in Christ if he doesn't think he needs a Savior?*

*Why would a person turn to Jesus to pay his debt if he thinks he doesn't need to repent of his sins against God? - HE WOULDN'T!!*

He might use His Name, "just in case", but he wouldn't turn to the Lord from the heart.

The main point of this message is...

**The Bible repeatedly tells us that both repentance and faith are matters of the heart, and that God looks at the heart! 1Sam 16:7, Act 1:24,15:8, Rom 10:9-10, Heb 4:12-13**

And here are two biblical truths we must ponder: **that man is saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, AND that God looks at the heart!**

How do these two things relate, according to Holy Scripture?

For example, we saw even though the Pharisees claimed to follow God, Jesus called them out for their "lip service".

**Mat 15:7-8** *"You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:*

*8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,  
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.*

This is very humbling, isn't it? We each must examine our own hearts before God to make sure we haven't fallen into this religious trap!

The point is that people must turn to the Lord **from the heart**, not just with their words.

And this means a **willingness to surrender** to God and Christ!

All throughout the Bible, we see God is after a willing and humble heart in man; what we might call a repentant heart.

And NO ONE can ever fool God!

**Rom 10:3** *For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.*

Do you see the problem? Do you see the decision that each person must make??

This verse describes people who want to have their own religion. They think they can be righteous on their own!

**They deceive themselves by relying on their own relative righteousness instead of turning to the perfect righteousness of Christ!**

And this is where my heart aches for people who SAY they believe in Jesus, but their hearts don't appear to be changed at all. (i.e.-They don't seem to have any personal affection for Christ, and they just live their lives for themselves!)

How can we tell?

**According to the Lord Jesus Christ, we can tell by their fruit** (by what's coming forth in their lives).

Maybe they have absolutely NO good fruit in their lives. In fact, you might sadly notice all bad fruit! This is what Jesus said to look for in **Mat 7**.

These religious people are not humble and they live their lives for themselves, NOT for God and others, as the Lord teaches us.

And unfortunately, this is a sign that these professing believers might not be saved; that God never cleansed their hearts in the first place! (only GOD can cleanse our hearts!)

Because, of course, God's work in a believer is NEVER ineffective or impotent! May it never be!

**Act 15:7-9** *After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 "And **God, who knows the heart**, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, **cleansing their hearts by faith.***

There we see God at work in our salvation! GOD is the one who cleanses our hearts by faith!

But God will not cleanse the heart of a man who stubbornly thinks he's good enough on his own!! (remember **Rom 10:3?**)

**Rom 10:3** *For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.*

**If a person chooses to remain in this arrogance, God will not cleanse his heart by faith because God truly gives each person a choice.**

Many "religious" people use the name of God but think they're going to heaven because they're a "good" person.

Remember, God sees the heart and knows our motivation!!

He knows that's what we're thinking, if we think our own good efforts can earn our way to heaven!!

Here's the key point: **if someone thinks they're going to heaven because they're a "good" person (in other words, in their heart they're trusting in their own goodness), then they have NOT TRUSTED in the Lord Jesus Christ!**

If you think about it, they've actually TRUSTED IN THEMSELVES for their own salvation!

But the Bible clearly tells us it's one or the other, it can't be both. (i.e. - **Luk 18:9-14, Rom 10:3**)

- Every person must examine the motivation of his own heart...
- *... am I trusting in myself and my own supposed goodness to satisfy God's righteous demands?*
- *... OR, am I trusting in Christ alone and His sacrifice for my sins?!*

During times of self-examination, I've asked myself this question many times over the years; and the Bible says **God will test our hearts.**

THIS is a main issue in salvation, my friends.

Everyone must decide in his own heart, before God... *Who am I putting my faith in? - myself or the Lord???*

**Luk 18:9-14** *"To some who were confident of their own righteousness (self) and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'*

*"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."*

**A person either places his confidence in self and his own supposed goodness... OR in Christ alone, the only truly good One, the Savior of the world.**

What do you say in your heart???

Here's another way to put it:

*Do we put faith in our "self" as being "good enough", OR do we have the repentant faith of the tax collector, who freely admitted he sinned against God and cried out for mercy?!*

This leads us to a big picture question:

**What is saving faith?! (And what does it look like?)**

i.e.- Many people call themselves “Christians” simply because that’s how they were brought up as children...

... or maybe because they consider themselves “members” of a certain church or denomination,...

... so, by default, many people SAY they believe in Jesus, but for some people it's only because that’s what they think they SHOULD say...

... and unfortunately, maybe they just want to belong somewhere and say they're a member of something.

BUT... is this saving faith, according to the Bible??! (Only God knows the heart, and it truly is between each person and the Lord.)

**\* Has this type of person humbly turned to Christ from the heart, trusting in Him alone to be saved from their sins?**

Or, are they simply operating in religion and just "going through the motions" of what they "should" say and do?

In other words, “let's cut to the chase”; *Where’s their heart at? What’s going on in their heart, in their motivation, even? And WHY do they say they believe?* – **THAT’S WHAT GOD SEES!**

**God looks at what’s going on in the heart of a person!**

Here's a wonderful verse that illustrates for us what saving faith really looks like:

**Rom 10:9-10** *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.*

Here, we clearly see that the heart is involved in saving faith.

Unfortunately, there are many "religious" people out there whose hearts remain far from God (they refuse to surrender to Him as their Lord and Savior)!

This is why we say **repentance and faith are heart issues**, as we will see in the scriptures.

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On a side note... if someone claims to be a believer but has NO EVIDENCE of a changed heart/a new life from God, they might have a BIG problem!

Now, please take caution in your soul: this doesn't mean we go around judging people, because no one knows another person's heart. Amen??

**But the point is this: if we see NO good fruit in a so-called believer's life, we might want to discuss the Gospel with them again, if God gives us the opportunity. We might bring up repentance and faith and the heart, and tell them the truth in love. Eph 4:15, 1Co 16:14**

In love, we can approach people who might not understand what it means to be saved.

That's another important point of this series; that **we shouldn't take for granted or assume that people are saved, ESPECIALLY** if they're not following Christ in any way!

After all, what did Jesus say His sheep DO???

**Joh 10:27** *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and **they follow Me;***

It's certainly a good idea to discuss the Gospel with someone who's not following Christ (i.e. - living selfishly)...

... because, frankly, that's a sign that someone is NOT born again and saved.

**Luke 6:46** *"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"*

(And then we have the "scary" passages in Matthew ch. 7 & ch. 25!)

In Lk 6, the Lord goes on to talk about building our house on a solid foundation, as opposed to having our house destroyed one day!

The Bible says there WILL be evidence of saving faith if someone has honestly turned to Christ from the heart.

Why is that? - Very simply, because God has made them a new creation, and God's power is not impotent!

**2 Cor 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Again, **no one can fool God. That's an impossibility.**

How do you fool Someone who can always see what's going on in your heart?!

And here's a humbling reminder for us all;

**Gal 6:7** *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.*

Regarding this topic of the evidence of faith, let's go back to **Acts 16**, where a man was saved by faith alone in Christ alone...

... and **do we see any evidence, or proof, that the Roman jailer had genuine saving faith?**

First of all, WE DO SEE A REPENTANT HEART, as he was humbled and his heart was softened by the miracle God had just performed in front of his eyes...

**Acts 16:25-30** *But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 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. 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.*

*But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" 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?"*

There we see a humbled person, admitting his need, even if he didn't fully understand it yet. God certainly has His ways of reaching people, doesn't He?! **Isa 55:8-9**

**Acts 16:31-34** *They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house (**he was LISTENING to the Word of God**). And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds (**revealing a changed heart**), and immediately he was baptized (**eagerness to go forward with God only comes from a changed heart**), he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them (**he served them**), and rejoiced greatly having believed in God with his whole household. (**he had great joy in his heart because he realized and accepted the Truth!**)*

Do you see all the evidence that he truly did receive Christ as his Lord and Savior??

Another evidence of saving faith is that **his attitude was changed from fear to joy and service**, which is another sign his heart was changed by God!

The Roman jailor was a new man, "born again" by the grace of God, and WE CAN SIMPLY SEE FROM HIS RESPONSE that he truly turned around in his heart (he repented). And, WE CAN SEE FROM HIS LIFE that he truly believed in Christ. **Mk 1:15**.

**\*Saving faith, which could be described as the heart surrendering to the Lord (Rom 10:3,10), will have some kind of evidence or proof; what Jesus called "fruit" in Mat 7:20.**

Again, we are not to judge others, as we never know what's going on in the heart of another person!

However, we can and should **be DISCERNING**.

The Bible does tell us that we can recognize believers and unbelievers by their fruit.

So, while we shouldn't judge, we also shouldn't be naive. (Go and read **Mat 7, James, 1John** - these books reveal to us what true believers look like!)

When we look at the Roman jailor, I guess we could say there's evidence of saving faith BEFORE AND AFTER he received Christ...

... we see a **repentant attitude** before he believed, and then **thankfulness and joy** after believing... a very good sign of genuine saving faith...

... all this is a result of a humble person receiving the Holy Spirit's conviction!!

**John 1:12-13** *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

When someone's born of God, good things happen!!

Once again, these GOOD things can only come from a heart that's been changed by God... they do NOT come from a mere mental assent to a belief system or religion. Amen?!

Only God can change the heart, and it has a certain effect upon us!

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Stepping back; we know BELIEVING in Christ is the main issue in salvation: we're saved "by grace... through faith" (**Eph 2:8-9**).

But the key questions are... **WHERE** do we believe? And **HOW** do we believe?

A "saved" person is someone who has repented towards God and turned to Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior...

... and the Bible says that saving faith took place **in his heart**, not only in his mind.

In other words, it includes his very motivation from his inner being called "the heart".

That's why we're describing saving faith as a surrender of the heart to God. It's an act of submission, if you will, as in **Rom 10:3**.

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And let's also remember, saving faith is a supernatural gift from God; it's **NOT** something the natural-minded man can produce on his own!

**1 Cor 2:14** *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and **he is not able** to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*

Without the Holy Spirit, man is not capable of believing in Christ.

Saving faith is **NOT** only a knowledge of Jesus, and it's **NOT** only a mental assent to His goodness.

**It's a supernatural gift from God, where God helps a person turn to Jesus from the heart!**

As we saw from the original Greek language, saving faith is a **trusting faith**, granted by God to the one who humbles himself before the Lord.

And the Bible clearly teaches that this faith is a matter of the heart. (Compare **Luk 18:14, Eph 2:8-9, Rom 10:9-10, Jam 4:6**)

Just as an example... why are so many ladies today cautious to commit to a man in a relationship, at least in America?

**It's because they know they're putting their hearts on the line if they venture into the land of trust.**

They know once they place their trust in someone, they become vulnerable and they might get hurt.

(In America, we wrongly "try people out" before marriage! And it just destroys people's souls.)

Here's another example: **If I look you in the eye and say "I trust you", that's something I came to terms first within my heart...**

... that I believe I can trust you, so I make a commitment of sorts.

In other words, it's a very real leap of faith to make the decision to trust someone, and therefore become somewhat vulnerable.

That's why people don't easily trust in other people, or they're slow to get into personal relationships, at least in America...

... it's because they know once they decide to trust someone, they've let down their guard, and their heart is now vulnerable.

**But, thankfully, our God and Savior Jesus Christ is perfect! We can trust Him with all our hearts without any worries!**

And there is no fear in His love, **1Jo 4**, and therefore there's no apprehension in trusting Him for deliverance, both in this life and eternity.

With Jesus, our heart doesn't need to worry about being vulnerable or hurt.

THIS is what it means to **believe** in Jesus Christ!! It means to **place your trust in Him** as your personal Lord and Savior!

This is why we say SAVING FAITH IS A MATTER OF THE HEART.

Again, to our main point:

**Saving faith is a supernatural gift from God. It's NOT just a knowledge of Jesus, nor a mere mental assent to His existence. It's actually God creating a new creature within the believer, giving him a new heart! Eze 36:26-27, Joh 1:12-13, 2Cor 5:17**

First of all, it was prophesied from the days before Christ came:

**Ezek 36:26-27** *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

A stone is dead, it has NO life, right?? This is more evidence of the miracle of salvation that God performs.

Then we saw it come about in the days of Jesus Christ:

**John 1:12-13** *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Notice, believers are "born of God"; this means they've been given a NEW birth.

Then God makes it clear to us what happened when we first believed:

**2 Cor 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Saving faith is like God opening up the eyes of a man who cannot see. He was spiritually blind, ignorant of our God and Savior, but now he sees the Truth.

At the same time, God doesn't violate man's will, but He grants the willing person the opportunity and ability to understand the Gospel and receive it!

Please remember this is SUPERNATURAL; we cannot understand or explain the exact ways God does all of this within man's heart of stone!

We must, by faith, leave it to HIM!

**Saving faith is granted by God to those who humble themselves before Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. And**

**trusting in Christ is a matter of the heart. Lk 18:14, Eph 2:8-9, Rom 10:1-11**

**Eph 2:8-9** *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Please notice, even a man's faith is a gift of God and it's NOT of himself!

And the humble person receives this gift of faith because he knows he has nothing to boast about in himself (we're all sinners, after all).

And Romans chapter 10 reveals WHERE we do our believing...

**Rom 10:1** *"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. 2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, **they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God (their hearts have not surrendered to needing Christ's righteousness, they were UNWILLING to "subject themselves" to HIS righteousness; so they are still trusting in themselves!)** . 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

*5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART,*

'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." **(in other words, do not say "we need Jesus here with us to understand")** 8 But what does it **(the righteousness based on faith)** say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART" — that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

This was partly a quote from **Deut 30**, where the Lord gave the people no excuse, but **He said the truth is right in them, right in front of them, to believe.**

And those who choose to believe have been given His Word and His Spirit, and even a good conscience, **1Ti 1:5,19.**

We must conclude that God grants man all the tools needed to know His righteousness! (it is SUPERNATURAL, remember!)

And now to our main point...

**Rom 10:9** *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."*

It should be quite clear that believing in Christ, which essentially means trusting in Him for salvation, **takes place in the heart of a man.**

In other words, faith is not only an academic issue! It's not only learning the facts about Jesus!

**Saving faith involves a surrender of the heart to God.**

Want more evidence of this??

Even Satan has great knowledge of Jesus Christ and Who He is and what He did on the Cross!

In fact, Satan is a brilliant creature who knows the Bible far better than any of us!

But, is Satan saved by all this knowledge??! Not according to the Bible. - Why not?

If Satan has all this knowledge about Jesus Christ, why does the Bible speak of him as the eternal enemy of God?

It's quite simple. Are you ready???

**Satan refused to surrender to the Lord. He's not saved because he refused to turn to Christ in his heart as his Lord and Savior from his sins.**

Think of **Rom 10:3**... Satan refused to *subject himself to the righteousness of God*...

**... instead, he stubbornly clings to his own righteousness, a mistake many people make as well!**

**James 2:19-20** *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*

My friends, this is why saving faith is more than just knowledge... do you see it's a stubborn heart we're talking about?

The Bible talks about "hard hearts" quite often.

**Satan has all the knowledge in the world, including about God, but his stubborn, arrogant heart REFUSES to surrender to the Lord.**

This is another reason we conclude that salvation is a matter of the heart, between each person and his Creator/Savior.

And we've also discussed one type of evidence of this heartfelt decision; **a willingness to confess Jesus as Lord will accompany true saving faith (Rom 10:9-10).**

Why is this? Because true saving faith means the heart has been changed by God! (God opened your eyes!)

And as Jesus told us; what's in the heart, or the inner man, will also come out of the mouth (**Mat 15:18**)!

And as stated in **Romans 10**, if one believes with his heart, he will confess with his mouth (he's willing to proclaim his faith in Christ).

But the greater point in this study is that saving faith takes place in the heart of a person.

"Believing" is an act of the heart, not just the mind...

... and according to the Bible, it involves a man's inner motivation, his will, subjecting itself to the righteousness of God. (ala **Rom 10:3**)

And may we never forget salvation is a SUPERNATURAL occurrence that we cannot fully explain! (Exactly HOW this happens in a person's soul is a mystery and a miracle)

But we DO know it involves a surrender of the heart to God and Christ.

Look at vs. 9 again...

**Rom 10:9** *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.*

Where, and with what, does a person "believe"? - THE HEART.

And this does not mean it's an emotional decision, although emotions may be involved.

But according to the Bible, the heart is **where the motivation exists**, which we will see coming up. (the "why" is found in our hearts)

In other words, **the mind might compute all the facts, like Satan's did. But the heart is where a real decision is made, in the "inner man".**

What exactly do we mean by this? To a certain degree, it's a mystery, right??

Well, here's one beautiful explanation:

**Eph 3:16-19** *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit **in the inner man**, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and **to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge**, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.*

I hope you see there's something SUPERNATURAL that occurs in the inner man and the heart at the moment of one's salvation.

Our Lord also revealed this connection between saving faith and the heart when He explained the parable of the seed and the sower...

**Luke 8:11-15** *"Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. 12 "Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word **from their heart**, so that they will not believe and be saved. 13 "Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they*

*hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.*

*14 "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 "But the seed in the good soil, **these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.**"*

Back to vs. 12, notice the connection between the Word being taken from the heart, and not believing and being saved. Do you see it??

Apparently,... believing, or not believing, takes place in the heart of a person!

In vs. 15, we see an honest and good heart is found in the seed in the good soil, and it bears fruit with perseverance. (And again, good fruit is the EVIDENCE that genuine saving faith took place in one's heart.)

**Perseverance is one of the proofs of someone turning to Christ from the heart (that God has changed their heart).**

...

As we move on, an inescapable biblical truth is that "God looks at the heart"! He doesn't look at the outward appearance, like man does. **1Sa 16:7, Act 1:24,15:8, Heb 4:12-13**

**1Sa 16:6-7** *When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him." 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.**"*

Think about it, the Lord our God sees what's going on in our hearts!

**Act 1:24** *And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen.*

**Act 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.***

And God, being the Word ala **Joh 1:1**, judges our hearts through it!

**Heb 4:12-13** *"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.**"*

The Word of God judges the thoughts and intentions of our hearts! Wooaaaahhhh!!!

The Word of God is like us looking into a mirror, to help us see what's really going on in our own hearts! (ala **James 1:23-24**)

This reality should humble us all before Him! And this is something we should share with others when we share the Gospel!

**God is after our hearts, not our sacrifices or rituals. The Bible tells us if our hearts aren't with Him, then our sacrifices mean nothing to Him!**

*Ps 40:6 Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.*

Without an "open ear", or a humble heart, even the commanded sacrifices mean nothing to Him.

**And in a similar way, the Bible tells us good deeds done without love are nothing to Him. 1Co 13** (there's a connection to think about!)

**Matt 9:13** *"But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

In other words, **God looks at the heart behind the sacrifice, not the sacrifice itself...**

... just like He looks for love to be **our motivation** for a good deed, not at the deed itself.

And this all begins with FAITH, my friends.

**And genuine faith takes place in the heart of a man.**

We know this from several passages, as we've been seeing.

**Heb 3:12** *"Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God."*

Here we see the danger for man to hold on to an evil, unbelieving heart.

WHERE does a man believe, or in this case, not believe? - **In his heart!**

**Heb 10:22** *"let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."*

**Faith is conceived in the heart of a man; that's where God gives birth to our faith and we're "born again" by believing in Christ!**

But even that is by the grace of God alone! It's a miraculous work of God in our hearts!

And just as our soul and body are **supernaturally connected**, so are faith and a new life from God.

NOW we're talking about the heart and new life; these things are intimately tied together!

And again, the Bible tells us a true change in heart WILL PRODUCE some good fruit of some kind in the believer's life; thirty fold, sixty fold, a hundred fold. (**Mar 4:8, Mat 13:23**)

And very simply, part of that good fruit is what comes out of a believer's mouth, which we will see coming up.

**Good fruit is inevitable because when God changes someone's heart, He gives them a new life! 2Co 5:7, Gal 6:15**

This is why if a so-called believer has trouble saying the name of Jesus, or they're not willing to talk about Him, I wonder if they're truly saved.

As previously discussed, we shouldn't take it for granted that others are saved, but instead we should go fishing (**Mk 1:17**)...

... we should help them explore their faith if they're willing, to hopefully make sure they've placed their trust in Christ alone for their salvation.

And, of course, we should go to them **in love**, not with any form of judging.

But, if a so-called believer is unwilling to say His Name, then we should wonder if they had saving faith from an honest heart!

Let's see what else Jesus said about the evidence of saving faith, and **what comes out of the mouth reveals what's in a man's heart...**

**Matt 15:1-11** *Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?*

*4 "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.' 5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God," 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.*

*7 "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.'**" 10 *After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, "Hear and understand. 11 "It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but **what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.**"*

Before we go on, notice it's possible for people to say the right things but their heart is not with God.

Then in vs. 11, we see it's what comes OUT of the mouth that can make us unclean, not what goes in.

Going forward in the same chapter, we see what proceeds out of the mouth COME FROM THE HEART...

**Mat 15:15-20** *Peter said to Him, "Explain the parable to us." 16 Jesus said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also? 17 "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? 18 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 20 "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."*

What comes out of the mouth COMES FROM THE HEART (think of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, ala **Heb 4:12**).

Our words can be evidence either for or against us, because it reveals what's really going on in our hearts!

And this is why **confessing the name of Jesus with the mouth** is one evidence of saving faith, because it's evidence of a changed heart within, ala **Romans 10**. I hope you see the connection!

Let me share with you a story from a family I have known for years in Christ.

I know of a young man who SAID he was a believer,... he at least acknowledged Jesus Christ and he never fought against his wife being really into the Word of God, even though he wasn't.

His wife is a beautiful woman of God who really loves the Lord with all her heart. And she would not have married him unless she was confident he was a believer.

A few years after getting married, he started having some mental struggles, and so he went to talk to the pastor of a local church.

And this young man says he came out of that meeting SAVED!

He humbly realized his NEED for Christ as his Lord and Savior, and his whole attitude changed!

And it was apparent to all of us, even obvious, that his heart was now changed. He was a different person.

It was like a veil was lifted from his face and he could now see!

He then eagerly began to speak about Christ with his wife, and he wanted to go purchase the first Bible of his own!

### **What does this real-life situation reveal to us?**

When my female friend married this young man, she THOUGHT he was a believer.

He said the right things,... but apparently his heart was far from God.

And what has the Spirit been convicting us of in this series?

How about the reality of “*working out your own salvation with fear and trembling*”?

**Phil 2:12-13** *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling**; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

We must remember; the only soul we can really examine is our own!

**Our salvation is between each of us and the Lord, and no one knows the heart of another person.**

So we must each examine our own faith; it's between each of us and the Lord.

But this is NOT to say we can work for our salvation! May it never be!

It's **IMPOSSIBLE** for us to please a perfect God on our own!

But this IS to say that **saving faith is a matter of the heart**, between each of us and God... just as in this true story.

How about checking your own heart and faith before God, as the apostle Paul advised us?

**1 Cor 15:1-4** *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by*

*which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*

**2 Cor 13:5-6** *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. 6 Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*

These passages are pointing to heart issues, my friends.

The Lord wants each of us to examine our own hearts before Him, to make sure we're right with Him.

Has your heart surrendered to God and Christ? ... because that's what true faith looks like!

The heart is what God is looking at.

**Pro 21:2** *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart.*

This goes to show that man can deceive himself in his own thinking.

Here's an interesting example of how we humans can say and even do the right things, but our hearts are not right:

**Pro 23:6-7** *Do not eat the bread of a man who is stingy; do not desire his delicacies, 7 for he is like one who is inwardly calculating. "Eat and*

*drink!" he says to you, but his heart is not with you.*

That reminds me of what Jesus said in Matthew about lip service of the religious, but their hearts were not with Him.

Again, we're NOT talking about earning our salvation by good works, because **salvation is a gift from God, and grace excludes works or it's no longer grace (Eph 2:9, Rom 11:6)!**

We ARE talking about genuine saving faith, and the evidence of it.

This is a FAITH issue, and faith is a HEART issue, as we've just seen throughout Holy Scripture.

Unfortunately, as the Bible tells us, there are some professing Christians who are "false brethren" and are not saved. **2Co 11:26, Gal 2:4**

**This can only be because their heart is not right before God!!**

They have not humbly repented towards God and turned to Christ alone as their personal Lord and Savior from their sins. **Luk 13:1-5, Act 20:21, Rom 10:9-11**

Many people in this world are caught up in self-reliance and religious activity, rather than honestly asking God for mercy and forgiveness for their sins, seeking the Savior. **Lk 18:13**

**Saving faith may be described as a surrender to Jesus as one's Lord and Savior.**

And surrendering is something you come to terms with **in your heart**, just like when you decide to trust someone.

And that's exactly what our God is after; **our hearts!**

A person must be willing to put aside his own stubborn thoughts and turn to Christ in humility to be saved.

You might ask why we're using the word "surrender".

As Holy Scripture reveals, many religious people have not "*subjected themselves to the righteousness of God*", as we saw in **Romans 10:3**.

We see **submission** here as a characteristic of genuine faith.

But many are unwilling to submit or surrender, remaining self-reliant, thinking they can be righteous on their own, which might be the biggest lie on this planet!

Unfortunately, they have bought a lie, and therefore they refuse to repent and turn to Christ alone.

They don't realize it yet, but they have a great need to "turn around" in their souls (repentance).

For example, the prophet Isaiah tell us who the Redeemer comes for:

**Isa 59:20** *"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the Lord.*

Do you see the heart attitude the Lord is requiring?? It includes a willingness to turn from sin.

Again, we're not saved by anything other than **faith alone, in Christ alone.** (just read the gospel of John)

But TRUE faith is humble, and trusting in Christ for salvation is done with the heart. **Rom 10:10**

Some religious people, who want to rely on their own goodness, remain stubborn and prideful...

... and they sadly refuse to turn to the Lord Jesus ALONE as their Savior.

Again, this is a personal soul issue between each of us and God.

...

Think about the fact that there will be some pastors and teachers that do NOT go up in the Rapture of the Church...

... because there are some who believe in and preach a false gospel based on works and keeping the Law to be saved, as in **Gal 1.**

And if they preach a false gospel like this, that's evidence they haven't trusted **in Christ alone** from the heart...

... but they've wrongly added works and religiosity as a requirement to salvation, thus adding to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

**It's either by grace or by works, it can't be both!**

**Rom 11:6** *But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.*

And it's also a sad reality that some people are involved in the ministry for the wrong reasons (such as money, power, attention, pride, women, etc.... all horrible motivations),...

... and they might SAY the right things and they might use Christ's Name, but their hearts are far from Him, as we saw with the Pharisees.

Each man must examine his own heart and motivation before the Lord.

...

Let's begin to close this teaching with our main theme... **what exactly is saving faith, and what does it look like according to the Scriptures?!**

For example: Is saving faith just a mental acknowledgment that Jesus Christ lived on earth 2000 years ago?...

... OR is it someone submitting from the heart, reaching out to the Lord for mercy? - *"I need you Lord. I've sinned against you. Save me please!"*? (i.e.- **Lk 18:13**)

**Luk 18:13-14** *"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

That, my friends, is a really good example of what saving faith looks like! It's humble, at the very least!

And there we also see the grace of God in action, as it's **the Lord who reaches out and saves whoever humbles himself before The Christ.**

Many people in America will say "Oh yeah, I believe in Jesus", but when they're asked further about their faith, they say He was only a good man, or just a prophet!

Unfortunately, many DON'T believe what the Bible says about Him...

... that He's both Lord and Savior, God in the flesh, Immanuel, which means "God with us" (**Isa 7:14,9:6, and Mat 1:23**),...

... and unfortunately, they DON'T believe He died for their sins and rose again from the grave, as in **1Co 15!**

Many people in this world only believe Jesus was a wise spiritual person, like other "spiritual" men from other religions.

However, that's what the Bible calls believing in "another Jesus", as in **2Co 11:4**, not the real Jesus found in the Word of God!

**The Bible teaches Jesus is Lord, God and Savior!**

Look at this warning.

**2Co 11:4** *"For if one comes and preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or you receive **a different spirit** which you have not received, or **a different gospel** which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully."* (divine sarcasm here from the Apostle Paul)

Does this type of religious person trust in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of their soul from sin and judgment? - NO.

They made up their own version of Jesus.

Yet, just because they grew up in some church or religion, people will assume they're good with God!

**But their heart has not been changed by God if they haven't turned to the Christ as their only hope of being saved from their sins!**

They haven't humbled themselves before the Lord and given Him credit for Who He really is. Sadly, they believe in "another Jesus".

Furthermore, I have known people in other countries who SAY they "believe in Jesus", but to them He is just another of many so-called gods. (i.e. Hindus in India)

Is that person saved?! We must say NO, according to Holy Scripture!

**Faith in Jesus as their one and only Lord and Savior is MISSING, and THAT'S exactly what's required to be saved! (i.e.- Joh 3:16-18, Act 16:31, Rom 10:9-11)**

These people don't realize, or admit to, Who Jesus really is, and they haven't received ("taken hold of" ala **Jn 1:12**) Him as their personal Lord and Savior.

People cannot be saved unless they're willing to repent, as the Lord Jesus Himself proclaimed (**Mk 1:15, Luk 13:1-5**), as well as the apostle Paul proclaimed everywhere he went (**Act 20:21**)!

**And let's remember, by grace, God knows how to reach people of all kinds with the Gospel.**

For example, according to the Bible, where has God placed eternity? - IN MEN'S HEARTS!

**Eccl 3:11** *"He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end."*

On this same idea...

**Rom 1:18-20** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because **that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.** 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, **so that they are without excuse.***

Logically speaking, if God has placed eternity in men's hearts, then it's with the heart that a man can find salvation. That's what God has equipped us with to be able to know Him!

And with the heart, salvation is found by trusting in Christ alone.

**Luk 8:15, Rom 10:9-10**

**This is why we should never take it for granted that someone is saved!**

Beware of those who SAY they believe in Jesus, but they don't follow Him as Lord in their lives AT ALL.

**Joh 10:27** *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and **THEY FOLLOW ME;***

**Following Jesus** is what happens in the life of His sheep; His children.

Again, we aren't to judge others; but that's NOT what this is about.

The point is WE SHOULDN'T ASSUME that people are saved if they have NO good fruit in their lives whatsoever.

If your spiritual senses tell you something's off with a person (that's the Holy Spirit tapping your good conscience), if you can see their life doesn't give the Lord Jesus ANY priority, then you might not want to assume they're saved.

**Remember, due to the deceptions of the sinful human flesh, people will say a lot of things for the wrong reasons.**

But, God sees the heart... He looks at WHY people say or do what they do.

Also, it's possible they acknowledged Jesus because they "should", because of their family background or their religious denomination, ...

... OR, maybe they just don't want to be confronted by others, so they say with their lips "yes I believe".

The point is that we just might want to follow up with these people, giving them a few words to help them examine their own faith, or ask them a question or two, IN LOVE. **Eph 4:15**

Remember, Jesus wants us to be "fishers of men"... (**Mat 4:19**)

... and a good fisherman knows how to throw the line in the water, and what bait to put on the hook.

He also knows how to be patient (i.e. - listening to others speak), as opposed to being too eager and yanking the line in too soon.

So, to the dear person who SAYS they believe in Jesus, why not graciously give them a follow-up question or two?

IF YOU DO SO OUT OF LOVE, the Holy Spirit will give you the right thing to say. 😊

For example, maybe you ask “how long have you been saved?”, or “isn’t it great to know our sins are totally paid for by Christ?” ...

... and LET IT SIT, let the bait sit in the water of their soul.... and LISTEN. You might be totally surprised by their response, as I have been at times.

**We must patiently and lovingly give others the chance to draw their own conclusions about what's going on in their hearts, ...**

... and let them ask their own questions when they're ready. (*Love is patient, 1Co 13*)

There are times as the Lord’s fishermen that we are to pull in the line aggressively, maybe being passionate and emotional about The Good News, if the Spirit leads us.

And there are also times we are to be patient, showing longsuffering to someone who’s just not ready to come along yet,...

... but, **if you show them love**, they're ready enough to talk to you at their own pace.

Let's also remember, we are called to simply "plant seeds". Don't expect to see growth right away in front of your eyes.

You might never get to see the growth of another person in this life, or maybe God will let you see it years later.

Our job, our duty, is to plant the seed of the Gospel, or water it, when given the opportunity!

But **ONLY GOD** can cause the growth in a person.

**1Co 3:5-9** *"What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, **but God was causing the growth**. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building."*

We are to share the Good News, in love and truth, and leave the results to the Lord. Amen???

**ONLY the Spirit of God can convict people in their hearts that they need to repent and turn to Christ to be saved.**

The Spirit has taught us the importance of heart issues; both in examining our own faith, and in others.

...

And remember, the Bible abundantly teaches that one's **lifestyle** reveals the true beliefs in their heart... "**practice**" reveals if someone has truly repented/believed in Christ as his Lord and Savior.

**Our habits, practice, or lifestyle reveal what's going on in our hearts. (read 1Jn 3)**

As Jesus said, you will know true and false believers by their fruits.

**Matt 7:15-23** *"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits.*

*21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. (there's the unavoidable evidence of genuine saving faith) 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'*

Notice that bad fruit, “practicing lawlessness”, is a sign of unbelief.

...

In closing, we believers are told to "do the work of an evangelist" in **2Tim 4:5**, and we are all under the Great Commission of our Lord, as in **Mat 28:18-20** and **Luk 24:45-49**.

God has also given each of us "our own pulpits", whether at work or at home or at school. **Let's run with it, by faith!**

It's our privilege and opportunity to spread the Good News and bring glory to God in this way!

**Prayerfully, we must simply be willing and available, and God will provide all we need.**

And remember, God has entrusted this to you, his adopted child!

He's trusting His children with His Gospel, to bring it out to a lost and dying world, because His heart desires all men to be saved.

**1 Tim 2:1-6** *"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,*

*4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.*

God changes your heart when you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior,...

... and you then have His power in you, enabling you to share His Truth by means of His Spirit.

God has a mission field for each of us to tend to...

... and we can do it with faith and joy because His Spirit will supply us with wisdom whenever needed!

**And finally, remember this as you go out and obey His Great Commission; it's with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness! Mat 28:19-20, Rom 4:5, 5:1-2, 10:10**

Godspeed!