

Through the Bible

I PETER

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

69, PARADISE ENCLAVE, BELAHALLI
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INDIA

1ST Peter

GRACE

THE THEME OF HIS LETTER, PETER SAYS IS:
"STANDING FIRM IN THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD" (5:12).

IN 1:1, 2, HE BEGINS BY TELLING US THAT GOD **CHOSE** US
ACCORDING TO HIS **FOREKNOWLEDGE**. THAT TEACHES US
CLEARLY THAT **GOD'S CHOICE** OF US TO BE HIS **CHILDREN** WAS
NOT ARBITRARY HE DID **NOT PICK NAMES RANDOMLY**. HE
CHOSE US BECAUSE HE **KNOWS** THE END FROM THE **BEGINNING**.

IN 1:2, WE SEE THE WHOLE
TRINITY. THE FATHER
CHOOSES US, THE HOLY
SPIRIT **SANCTIFIES** US AND
THE **PURPOSE** IS THAT WE
OBEY THE SON THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST.

GOD HAS RESERVED A **GREAT** INHERITANCE FOR US IN
HEAVEN (1:4). THAT INSPIRES US IN OUR **BATTLES** HERE ON
EARTH. ALL THE **TRIALS** THAT WE GO THROUGH ON EARTH
ARE ONLY, "FOR A **LITTLE WHILE**" (1:6). FROM THE STANDPOINT
OF **ETERNITY**, EVEN 100 YEARS IS ONLY A **LITTLE WHILE**.



THIS **ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE** IS WHAT WE MUST ALWAYS HAVE IN THE **MIDST** OF OUR **TRIALS**.

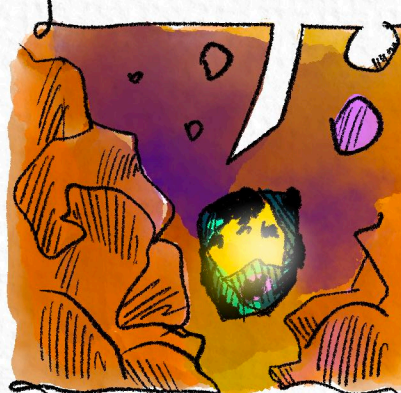
JAMES REFERS TO OUR **LIFE** AS A **VAPOUR** (JAMES 4:14). PAUL REFERS TO "OUR **MOMENTARY AFFLICTION**" (2 CORINTHIANS 4:17).



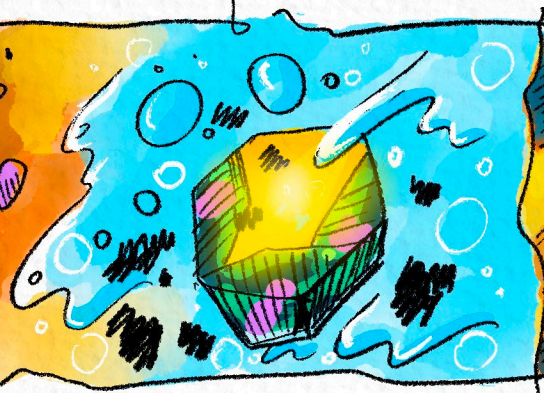
IT IS PERFECTLY **NORMAL** FOR THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE **TRUE GRACE** OF GOD TO BE DISTRESSED BY **VARIOUS TYPES** OF **TRIALS**.



THE PURPOSE OF THOSE **TRIALS** IS TO PROVE THE **GENUINENESS** OF YOUR **FAITH** -- LIKE "**GOLD TESTED IN THE FIRE**".



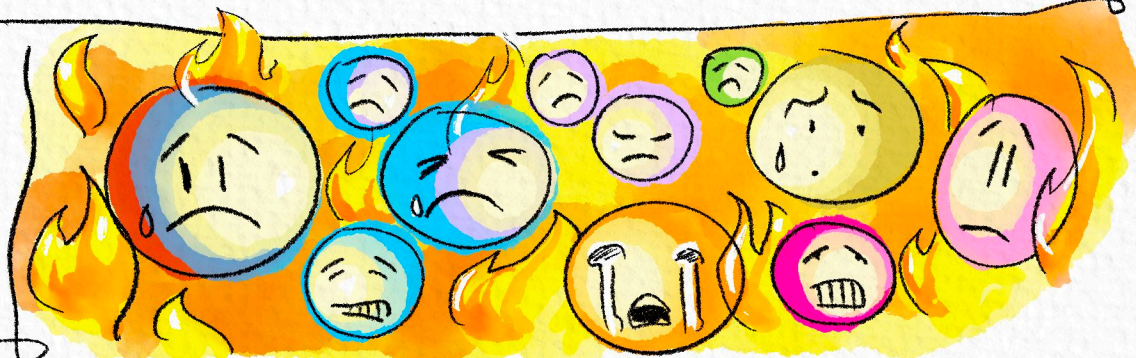
WHEN **GOLD** IS **DUG** FROM THE **DEPTHS** OF THE **EARTH** IT IS **NOT PURE**.



YOU CAN'T **PURIFY GOLD** BY **SCRUBBING** IT WITH **SOAP** AND **WATER**. THAT **ONLY** REMOVES THE **DIRT**. BUT TO REMOVE THE **METALS** THAT ARE **MIXED** IN THE **GOLD**, IT HAS TO BE PUT INTO THE **FIRE**. THEN ALL THE **ALLOYS** IN IT ARE **MELTED AWAY** AND THE **PURE GOLD** COMES FORTH.



THE **TRIALS** YOU GO THROUGH CAN BE **FIERY**. IT **HURTS**, AND YOU FEEL AS IF YOU ARE IN THE **FIRE**. THE **ONLY PURPOSE** IS TO GET RID OF THINGS IN YOUR **LIFE** THAT ARE **IMPURE**.





FOR EXAMPLE, IN COUNTRIES, WHERE **CHRISTIANS** WERE **PERSECUTED** AND THEIR **PROPERTY** WAS TAKEN AWAY, WHAT WAS THE **RESULT**? THEY BECAME **BETTER PILGRIMS**. THEY BECAME **LESS ATTACHED** TO THEIR **PROPERTY** BECAUSE NOW THEY HAD **NOTHING**.

BUT WHERE THERE IS **NO PERSECUTION**, EVEN THE BEST OF BELIEVERS CAN BE VERY **ATTACHED** TO THEIR **PROPERTY** AND THEIR **POSSESSIONS**.



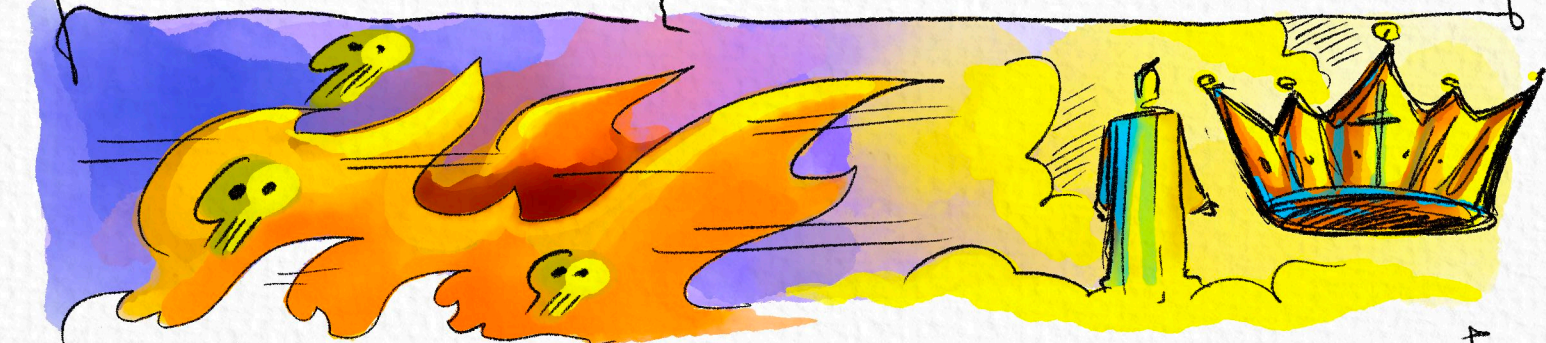
WHEN THE COMMUNISTS RULED RUSSIA, I HAVE HEARD THAT CHRISTIANS COULD NOT GET A **COLLEGE EDUCATION** OR **GOOD JOBS**. THEY COULD ONLY GET **LOWLY JOBS** LIKE **CLEANING THE STREETS**. IN SUCH SITUATIONS, WE **EASILY** GET **DETACHED** FROM THE **HONOUR** AND SENSE OF **IMPORTANCE** THAT COMES FROM HAVING **HIGH POSITIONS** AND **BIG JOBS**.

ALL THIS WILL **RESULT** IN BRINGING MUCH **PRAISE** AND **GLORY** AND **HONOUR** TO **CHRIST** WHEN HE RETURNS.



IN THE **MIDST** OF THESE **TRIALS**, EVEN THOUGH WE **DON'T SEE** JESUS, WE STILL **LOVE** HIM, **TRUST** HIM AND **REJOICE** WITH **GREAT JOY**.

PETER HAD **SEEN** JESUS **PHYSICALLY**. BUT JESUS SAID, "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE **NOT SEEN** AND YET **BELIEVE**" (JOHN 20:29).



FIERY TRIALS AND **PERSECUTION** HELP **GREATLY** IN DELIVERING US FROM MANY **EVILS**.

AS A **RESULT** OF GOING THROUGH **TRIALS** FAITHFULLY, WE RECEIVE "THE **SALVATION** OF OUR **SOULS**" (1:9).

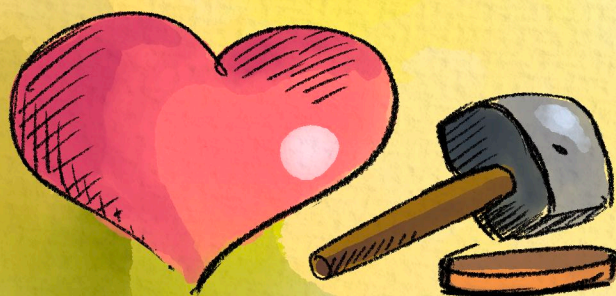


THIS IS THE SALVATION THAT THE **PROPHETS** IN PAST TIMES SOUGHT TO **UNDERSTAND**, BUT COULD NOT. EVEN THE **ANGELS** LONG TO LOOK INTO THIS (1:12).

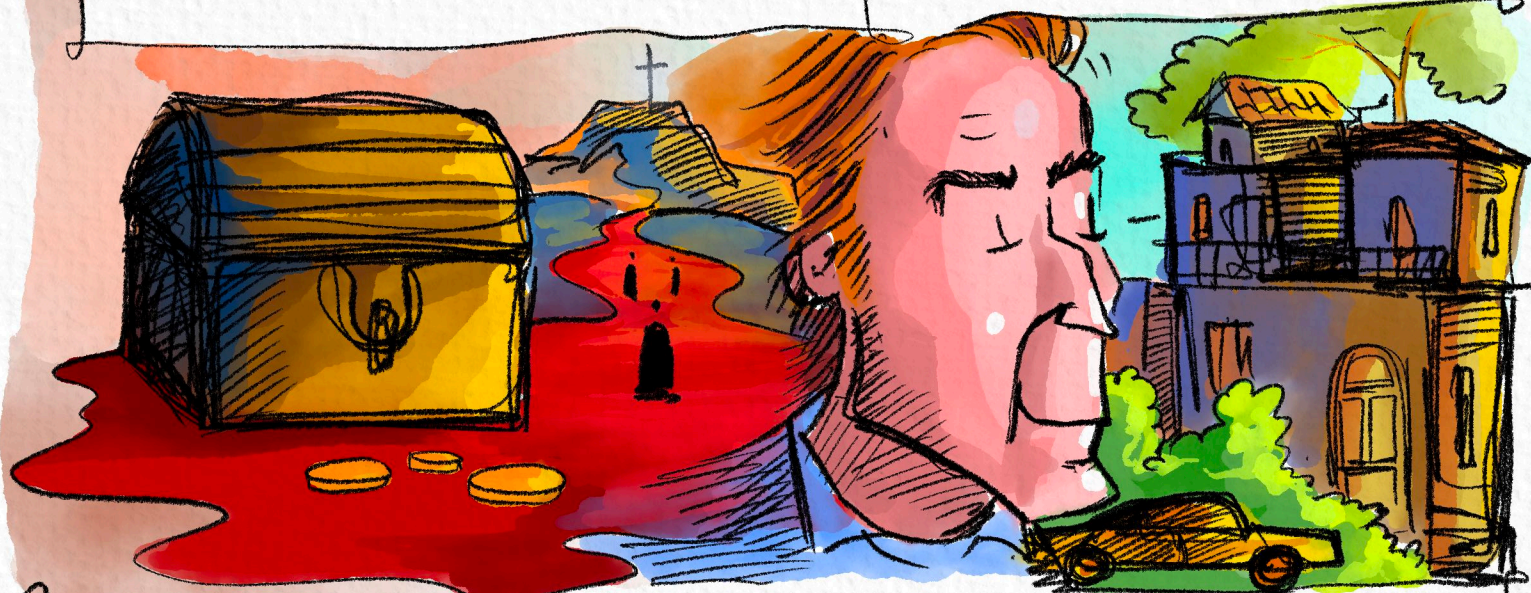
WE SHOULD **SHARPEN** OUR **MINDS** LOOKING FORWARD TO THE COMING OF **CHRIST** AND NOT BE **DISTURBED** BY THE **TRIALS** THAT WE FACE (1:13).



HE THEN REMINDS US OF OUR CALLING TO BE **HOLY** LIKE OUR **HEAVENLY FATHER** (1:15). THAT IS THE REASON WHY GOD SEEKS TO **PURIFY** US LIKE GOLD. THAT IS WHY "THE **AFFLICTION** OF THE **RIGHTEOUS** ARE **MANY**" (PSALM 34:19)

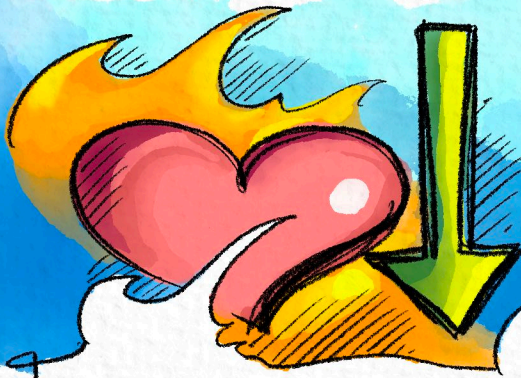


IF WE CALL GOD AS OUR **FATHER**, ONE WHO IS TOTALLY **IMPARTIAL** IN **JUDGING** EVERYBODY'S WORK, THEN WE MUST CONDUCT OURSELVES WITH **INTENSE REVERENCE** FOR HIM THROUGHOUT OUR EARTHLY LIFE (1:17).



WE MUST REMEMBER THAT WE WERE NOT PURCHASED WITH **SILVER** OR **GOLD**, BUT WITH THE **PRECIOUS BLOOD** OF **CHRIST**.

THERE IS A CERTAIN **HARDNESS** IN **BELIEVERS** WHO HAVE NEVER FACED ANY **SERIOUS TRIALS** IN THEIR LIVES. THEY LIVE IN **COMFORT** AND **EASE** WITH THEIR CHILDREN GROWING UP IN **WEALTH** AND **AFFLUENCE**. **GENTLENESS** AND **HUMILITY** WILL BE **MISSING** IN THEIR LIVES.



YOU WILL FIND THAT BELIEVERS WHO HAVE FACED **GREAT SORROWS** AND **TRIALS** IN FAITH, HAVE NO PROBLEM AT ALL TO **LOVE** OTHERS OR TO TAKE A **LOWLY PLACE**.



IN CHAPTER 2, PETER SPEAKS ABOUT **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**. WE GROW NOT ONLY BY FACING **TRIALS**, BUT ALSO BY HAVING A **THIRST** FOR THE **MILK** OF THE **WORD** OF **GOD**.

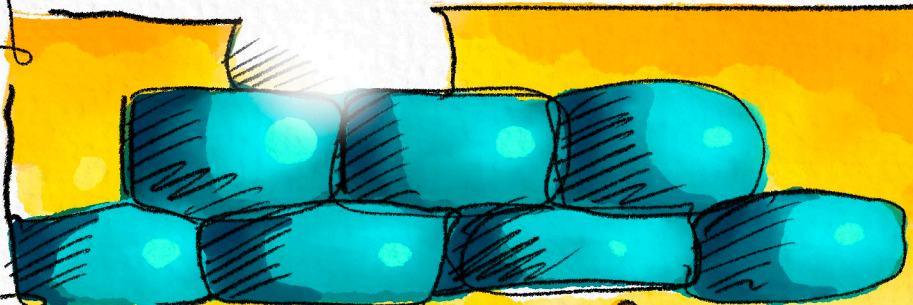


NOBODY **TEACHES** THAT **BABY** TO **CRY** FOR **MILK**. IT **CRIES** OUT OF A **SENSE** OF **NEED**.

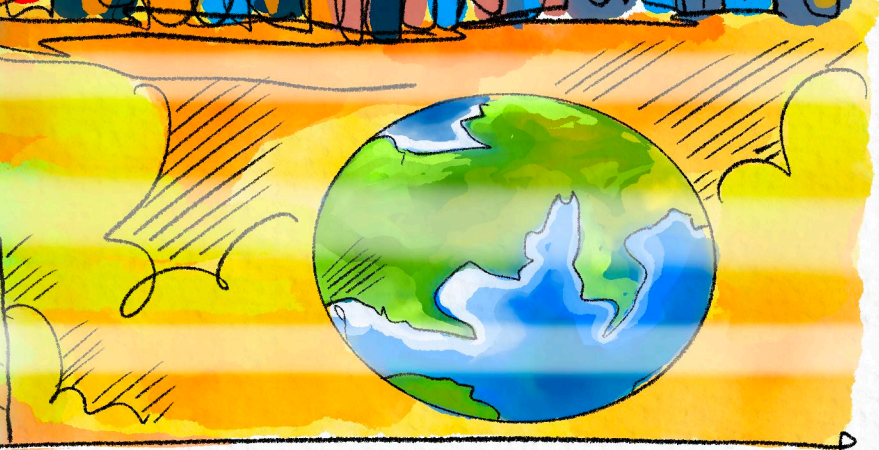
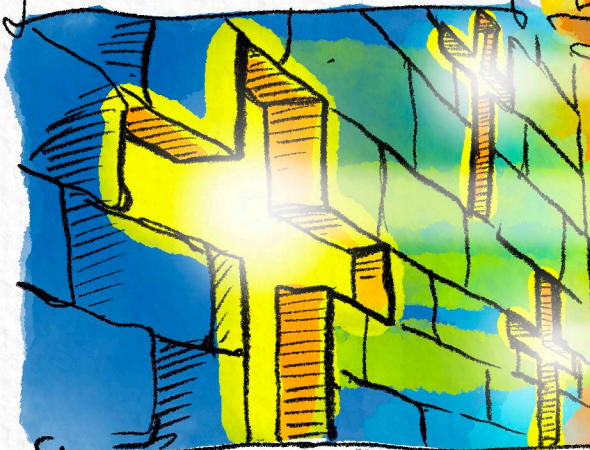


WE NEED THE **WORD** OF **GOD** TO "GROW IN RESPECT TO **SALVATION**" (2:2)


AS WE GROW IN THE **LORD**, HE BRINGS US INTO **FELLOWSHIP** WITH OTHERS OF LIKE MIND, WITH WHOM WE CAN BE BUILT UP TOGETHER AS A **SPIRITUAL HOUSE** FOR THE **LORD** (2:5).



WE ARE NOT ONLY **GOD'S** HOUSE BUT ALSO A **CHOSEN RACE**, A **HOLY NATION** AND A **PEOPLE** FOR **GOD'S** OWN **POSSESSION** (2:9).




THE PURPOSE OF **GOD** IN THIS IS THAT WE MAY SHOW FORTH **HIS EXCELLENCIES** TO THE **EVIL WORLD** AROUND US




THEN PETER GOES ON TO SAY **HOW** WE ARE TO **SHOW FORTH** THIS LIFE. "KEEP YOUR BEHAVIOUR **EXCELLENT** AMONG THE **HEATHEN**" (2:12).

HE THEN GOES ON TO SPEAK ABOUT **SUBMISSION**. SIN ORIGINATED IN **REBELLION**, LONG BEFORE ADAM WAS CREATED. THE **HIGHEST ARCHANGEL** REBELLED AGAINST GOD'S **AUTHORITY** AND BECAME **SATAN** IMMEDIATELY.




THAT IS WHY "REBELLION IS LIKE THE SIN OF **WITCHCRAFT**" (1 SAMUEL 15:23) -- FOR A **REBELLIOUS SPIRIT** BRINGS ONE IN TOUCH WITH **EVIL SPIRITS**, JUST AS MUCH AS **WITCHCRAFT** DOES.

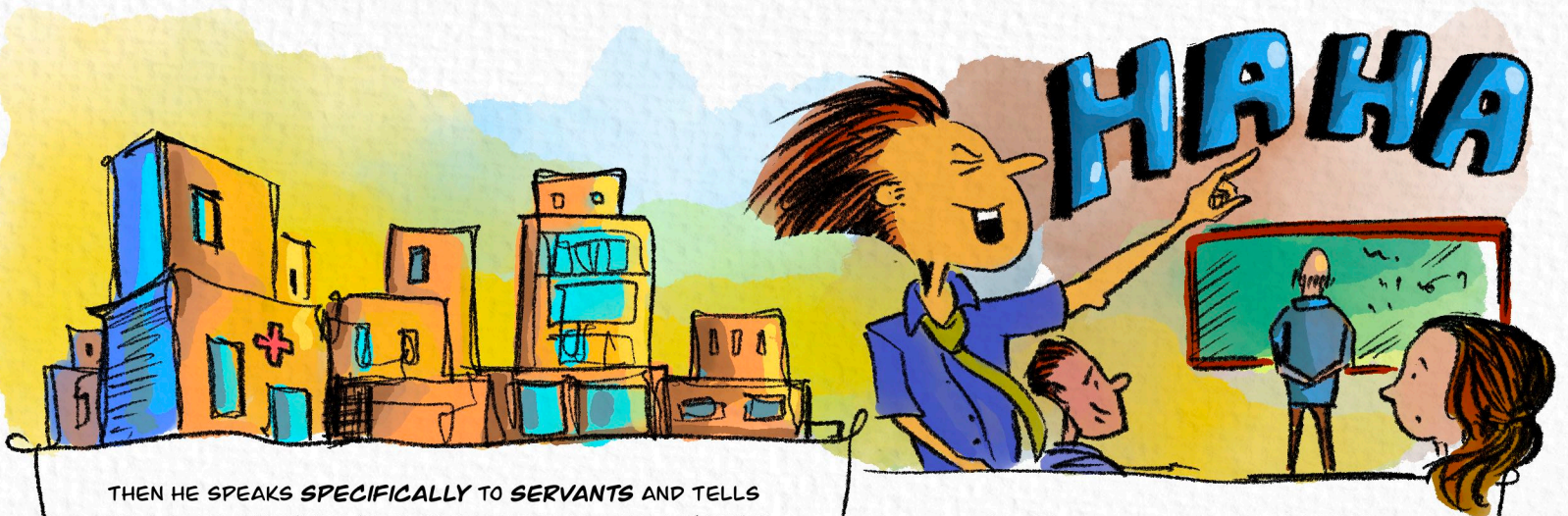
JESUS OVERCAME SATAN BY LIVING IN THE VERY **OPPOSITE** WAY.



CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO **SUBMIT** TO ALL **HUMAN AUTHORITIES**, TO **KINGS, GOVERNORS, ETC.**, (2:13, 14). AT THAT TIME THE **EMPEROR OF ROME** WAS **NERO**, ONE OF THE MOST **WICKED** KINGS THAT EVER RULED ROME, AND ONE WHO **PERSECUTED** AND **KILLED** CHRISTIANS.

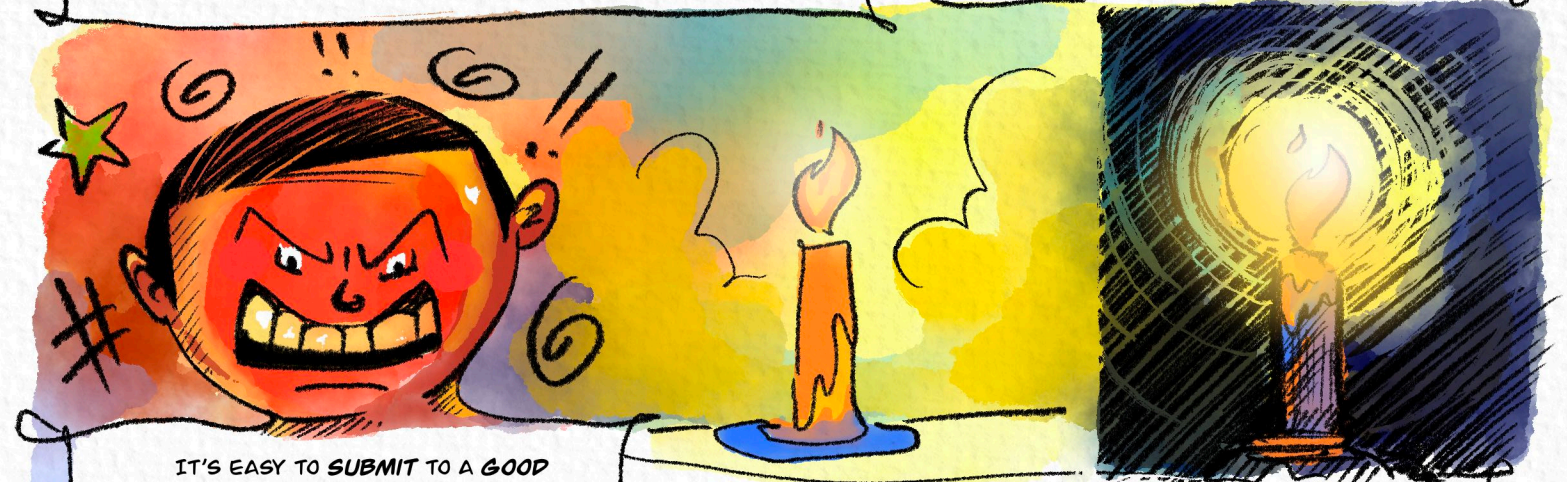


UNDER THE OLD COVENANT, THE LAW WAS TO HONOUR **AGED** PEOPLE (LEVITICUS 19:32). BUT UNDER THE **NEW COVENANT**, WE ARE TO HONOUR **ALL** PEOPLE (2:17). THE STANDARD IN **EVERY** AREA IS **HIGHER** UNDER THE **NEW COVENANT**.



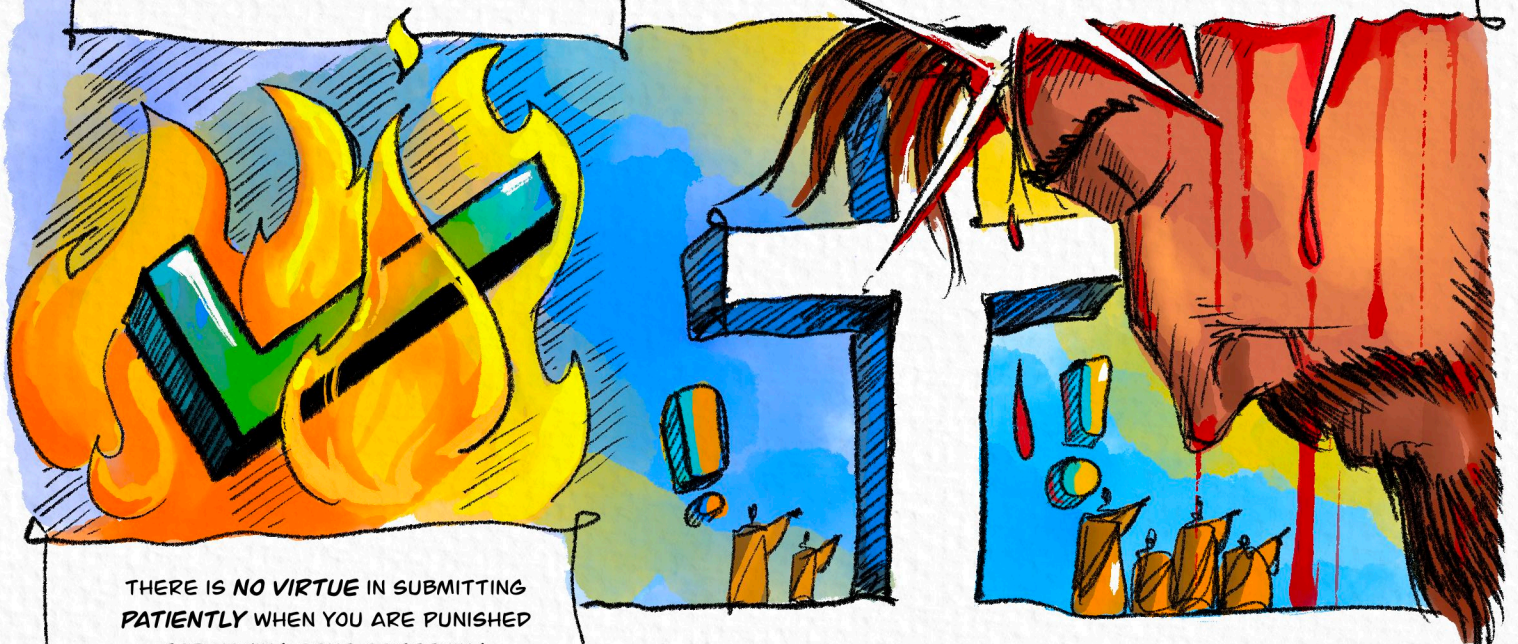
THEN HE SPEAKS SPECIFICALLY TO SERVANTS AND TELLS THEM TO BE **SUBMISSIVE** TO THEIR MASTERS IF YOU **WORK** IN AN OFFICE, FACTORY, SCHOOL, HOSPITAL OR ANYTHING, YOU MUST SHOW **RESPECT** TO THOSE ABOVE YOU IN THAT PLACE.

WE MUST **TEACH** OUR CHILDREN TO **RESPECT** THEIR **TEACHERS**, AND NOT TO **GANG UP** WITH OTHER CHILDREN AND **MAKE FUN** OF THE **TEACHERS**.



IT'S EASY TO **SUBMIT** TO A **GOOD MASTER**, BUT A CHRISTIAN WHO HAS EXPERIENCED "THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD" WILL **SUBMIT** TO AN **UNREASONABLE MASTER** AS WELL (2:18).

A **BURNING CANDLE** IS NOT EASILY **VISIBLE** IN THE **SUNLIGHT**. BUT AT **NIGHT** EVERYONE CAN SEE ITS **LIGHT**. EVEN SO, A **CHRISTIAN'S LIGHT** IS SEEN MOST **BRIGHTLY** WHEN HE IS IN **DARK SURROUNDINGS**.



THERE IS **NO VIRTUE** IN **SUBMITTING PATIENTLY** WHEN YOU ARE **PUNISHED FOR HAVING DONE SOMETHING WRONG**. BUT WHEN YOU **PATIENTLY** **ENDURE SUFFERING, EVEN WHEN YOU DID WHAT WAS RIGHT**, THEN **GOD IS PLEASED WITH YOU** (2:20).

WE ARE CALLED HERE TO "**FOLLOW** IN HIS **STEPS** WHO **NEVER SINNED**, WHO **NEVER TOLD A LIE**, WHO **NEVER ANSWERED BACK WHEN INSULTED**; AND WHO, WHEN HE **SUFFERED**, DID NOT **THREATEN** TO GET EVEN; BUT KEPT **ENTRUSTING HIS CASE** TO **GOD** WHO **JUDGES RIGHTEOUSLY**" (2:21--23).

THE LAST PHRASE IN 2:24 "BY HIS WOUNDS YOU WERE HEALED" IS A QUOTE FROM ISAIAH 53:5. IT IS REFERRING TO HEALING FROM SIN (SPIRITUAL SICKNESS) AND BECOMING RIGHTEOUS (SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY).

WHEN JESUS SUFFERED INJUSTICE WITHOUT COMPLAINING ON THE CROSS, A ROMAN CENTURION, WHO HAD CRUCIFIED MANY PEOPLE, HAD NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS. AND HE SAID, "THIS IS THE SON OF GOD" AND WAS CONVERTED INSTANTANEOUSLY.



WHEN AN UNREASONABLE HUSBAND SEES HIS WIFE'S CHRISTLIKE CONDUCT, HE ALSO WILL GET CONVERTED. PETER SAYS, "YOU WILL BE ABLE TO WIN HIM WITHOUT PREACHING ONE WORD TO HIM" (3:1).



A THIEF HANGING NEXT TO JESUS ALSO HAD NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS. HE ALSO BELIEVED THAT JESUS WAS THE SON OF GOD

MANY CHRISTIAN WIVES TRY TO CONVERT THEIR HUSBANDS BY PREACHING TO THEM. BUT THE MORE THEY PREACH TO THEM, THE MORE THEIR HUSBANDS TURN AWAY FROM THE LORD.



THEN PETER TEACHES WOMEN HOW TO ADORN THEMSELVES. NOT WITH FANCY HAIRSTYLES OR GOLD JEWELLERY OR EXPENSIVE DRESSES, BUT WITH THE INNER BEAUTY OF "A GENTLE, QUIET SPIRIT" (3:4). THAT BEAUTY WILL NEVER FADE AWAY AND NEVER PERISH.

THIS IS NOT REFERRING TO SILENCE IN SPEECH BUT TO SILENCE IN HER SPIRIT. IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF HOW MUCH SHE TALKS, BUT RATHER HOW SHE TALKS AND CONDUCTS HERSELF.



HOW CAN WE KNOW IF A **HUSBAND** HAS EXPERIENCED "THE **TRUE GRACE OF GOD**"? PETER SAYS THAT IT IS BY HIS LIVING IN AN **UNDERSTANDING WAY** WITH HIS **WIFE**, **RESPECTING HER AS A WEAKER VESSEL**.

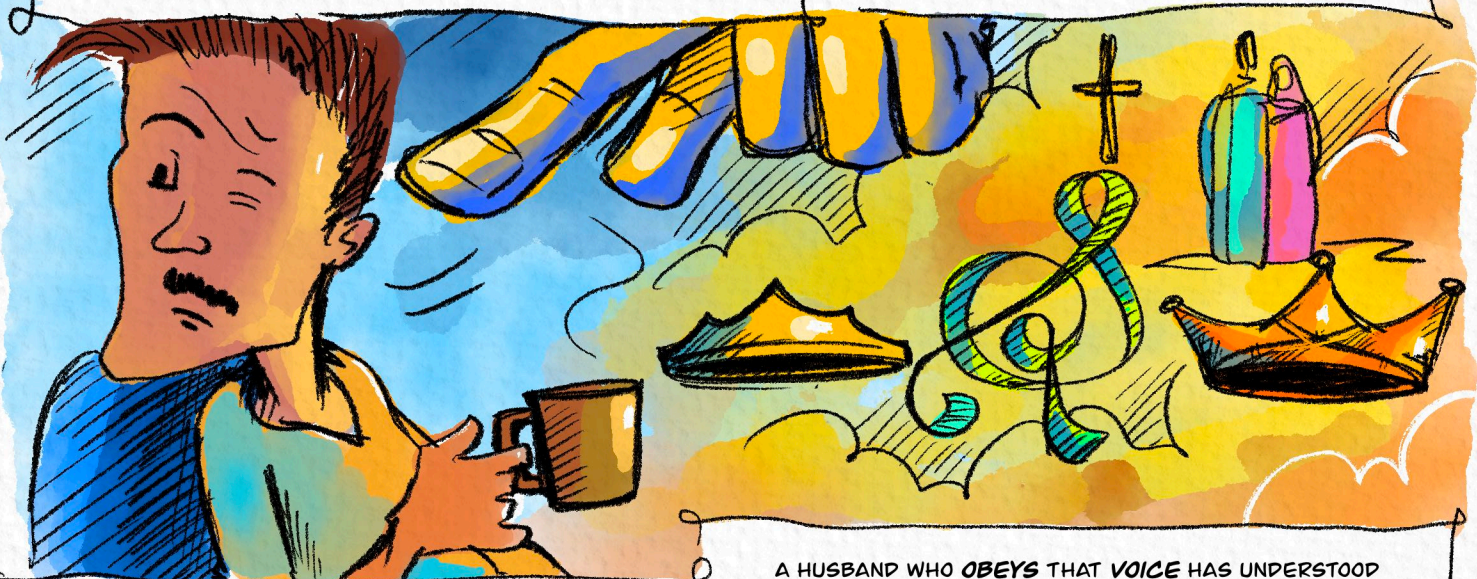


IF YOU AND YOUR WIFE ARE TRAVELLING WITH **TWO SUITCASES** -- ONE **BIG** AND ONE **SMALL** -- YOU WILL **DEFINITELY CARRY THE BIG SUITCASE YOURSELF** AND GIVE HER THE **SMALL ONE**. IT MUST BE THE **SAME WITH BURDENS IN THE HOME AS WELL**.



FOR EXAMPLE, A WIFE MAY BE **STRUGGLING** IN THE **MORNING COOKING BREAKFAST**, LOOKING AFTER THE **BABY** AND GETTING THE **OLDER CHILDREN** READY FOR **SCHOOL**.

HER **HUSBAND** MAY BE **SITTING QUIETLY**, READING HIS **BIBLE** AND ASKING **GOD TO SPEAK** TO HIM AND GIVE HIM SOME **NEW REVELATION!**



IF HE HAS **EARS TO HEAR**, HE WILL HEAR **GOD SAYING**, "**CLOSE YOUR BIBLE AND GO AND HELP YOUR WIFE!**"

A HUSBAND WHO **OBEYS THAT VOICE** HAS UNDERSTOOD "THE **TRUE GRACE OF GOD**". IF A HUSBAND AND WIFE LIVE LIKE THAT, THEY WILL BE "**JOINT-HEIRS**" -- A **KING** AND A **QUEEN** TOGETHER -- OF THE **GRACE OF LIFE.**"

THE LIVING BIBLE
PARAPHRASE OF
3:8--11 READS LIKE
THIS:

"AND NOW THIS
WORD TO ALL OF
YOU: YOU SHOULD BE
LIKE ONE **BIG**
HAPPY FAMILY,
FULL OF **SYMPATHY**
TOWARD EACH
OTHER,

LOVING ONE
ANOTHER WITH
TENDER HEARTS
AND **HUMBLE**
MINDS.

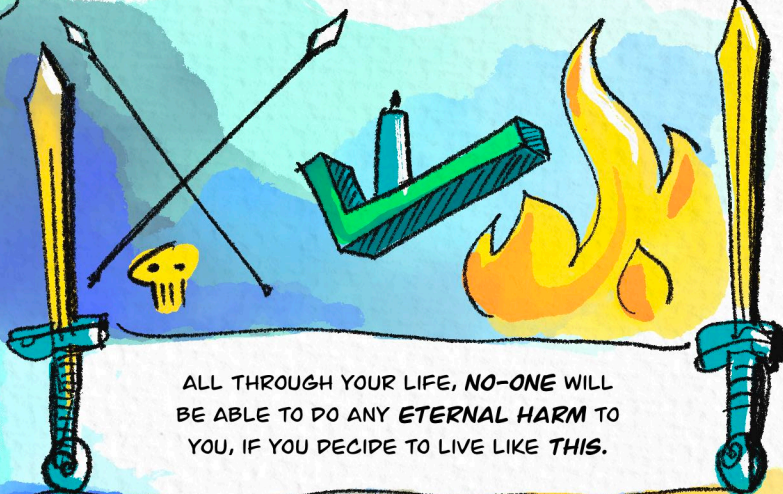
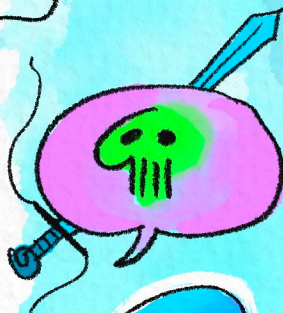
DON'T REPAY EVIL
FOR EVIL. DON'T
SNAP BACK AT
THOSE WHO SAY
UNKIND THINGS
ABOUT YOU.

INSTEAD, **PRAY** FOR
GOD'S HELP FOR
THEM, FOR WE ARE
TO BE **KIND** TO
OTHERS, AND GOD
WILL **BLESS** US FOR
IT.

IF YOU WANT A
HAPPY, GOOD LIFE,
KEEP **CONTROL** OF
YOUR **TONGUE**, AND
GUARD YOUR **LIPS**
FROM TELLING **LIES**.

TURN AWAY FROM
EVIL AND DO GOOD.

TRY TO **LIVE IN**
PEACE EVEN IF YOU
MUST **RUN AFTER**
IT TO **CATCH** AND
HOLD IT!"



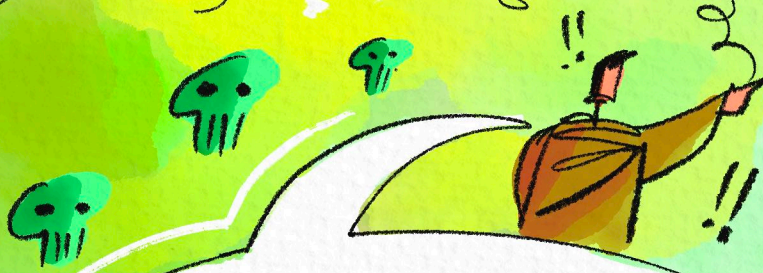
ALL THROUGH YOUR LIFE, **NO-ONE** WILL
BE ABLE TO DO ANY **ETERNAL HARM** TO
YOU, IF YOU DECIDE TO LIVE LIKE **THIS**.

HOPE

IN 3:15, PETER TELLS US HOW TO REPLY TO
OTHERS WHO **QUESTION** US ABOUT THE
"**REASON FOR THE HOPE** THAT IS IN US".



HE SAYS THAT YOU MUST ALWAYS REPLY
WITH **GENTLENESS** AND **RESPECT**.



"DO WHAT IS RIGHT; THEN IF MEN SPEAK AGAINST YOU,
CALLING YOU **EVIL NAMES**, THEY WILL BECOME **ASHAMED**
OF THEMSELVES FOR FALSELY ACCUSING YOU WHEN YOU
HAVE ONLY DONE WHAT IS **GOOD**. REMEMBER, IF **GOD** WANTS
YOU TO **SUFFER**, IT IS BETTER TO **SUFFER** FOR DOING
GOOD THAN FOR DOING **WRONG**!" (3:16, 17 - LIVING).

JESUS DENIED HIMSELF AND LEARNED **OBEEDIENCE** THROUGH **SUFFERING** -- THE SUFFERING OF **DENYING HIS OWN WILL** (HEBREWS 5:8). THIS IS HOW HE "**SUFFERED IN THE FLESH**" FOR 33½ YEARS. IF WE **ARM OURSELVES** WITH THE SAME MIND, WE TOO WILL **STOP SINNING**.

THEN YOU WILL **NO LONGER** LIVE THE REST OF YOUR LIFE FOR THE **LUSTS OF MEN** BUT TO DO THE **WILL OF GOD** (4:2).

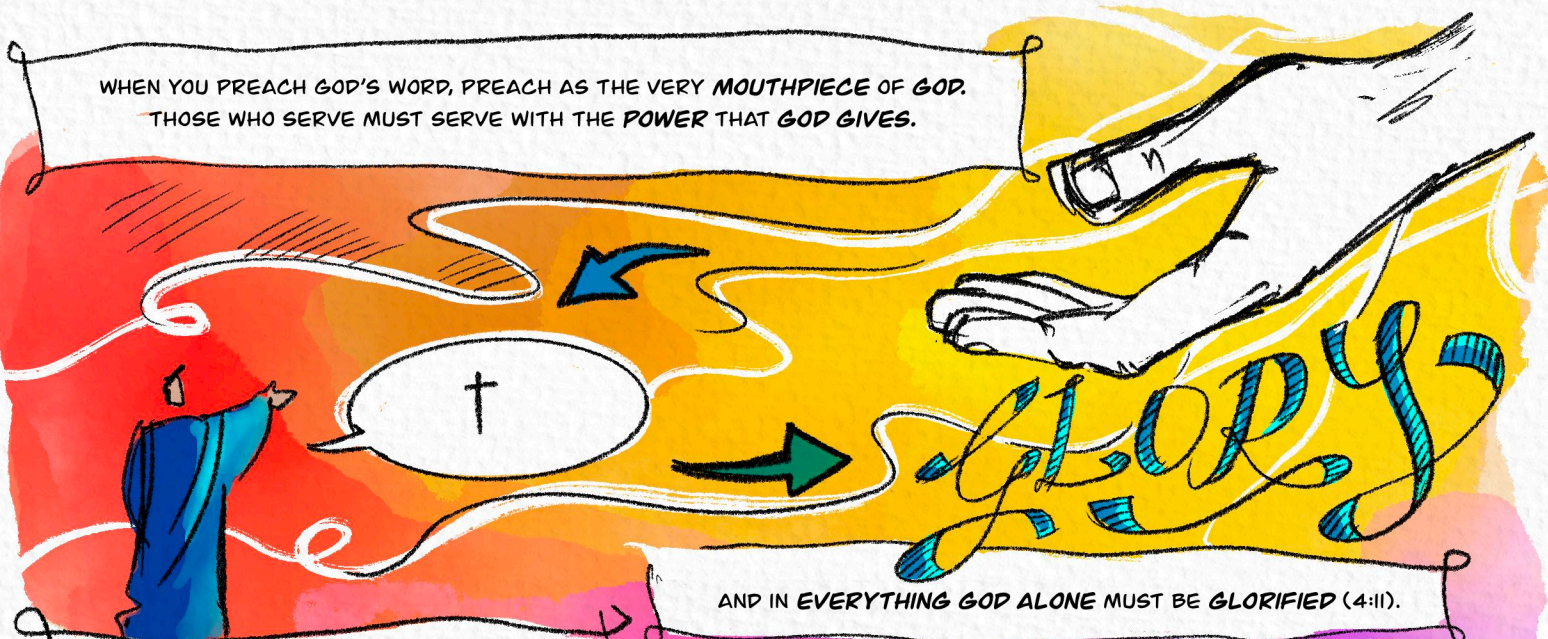
WE ARE LIVING AT A TIME WHEN "THE **END OF ALL THINGS**" IS **MUCH NEARER** THAN IT WAS IN **PETER'S TIME**. SO WE MUST LIVE "**SOBERLY** FOR THE PURPOSE OF **PRAYER**" (4:7).

THEN PETER GIVES SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE ON HOW TO REMAIN IN **FERVENT LOVE** FOR ONE ANOTHER: **FORGIVE EVERYONE** AND BE **HOSPITABLE** (4:9).

IN **INDIA**, I HAVE NOTICED THAT IT IS THE **POOR** PEOPLE WHO ARE REALLY **HOSPITABLE**. THE **RICHER** PEOPLE ARE, THE **STINGIER** THEY BECOME.

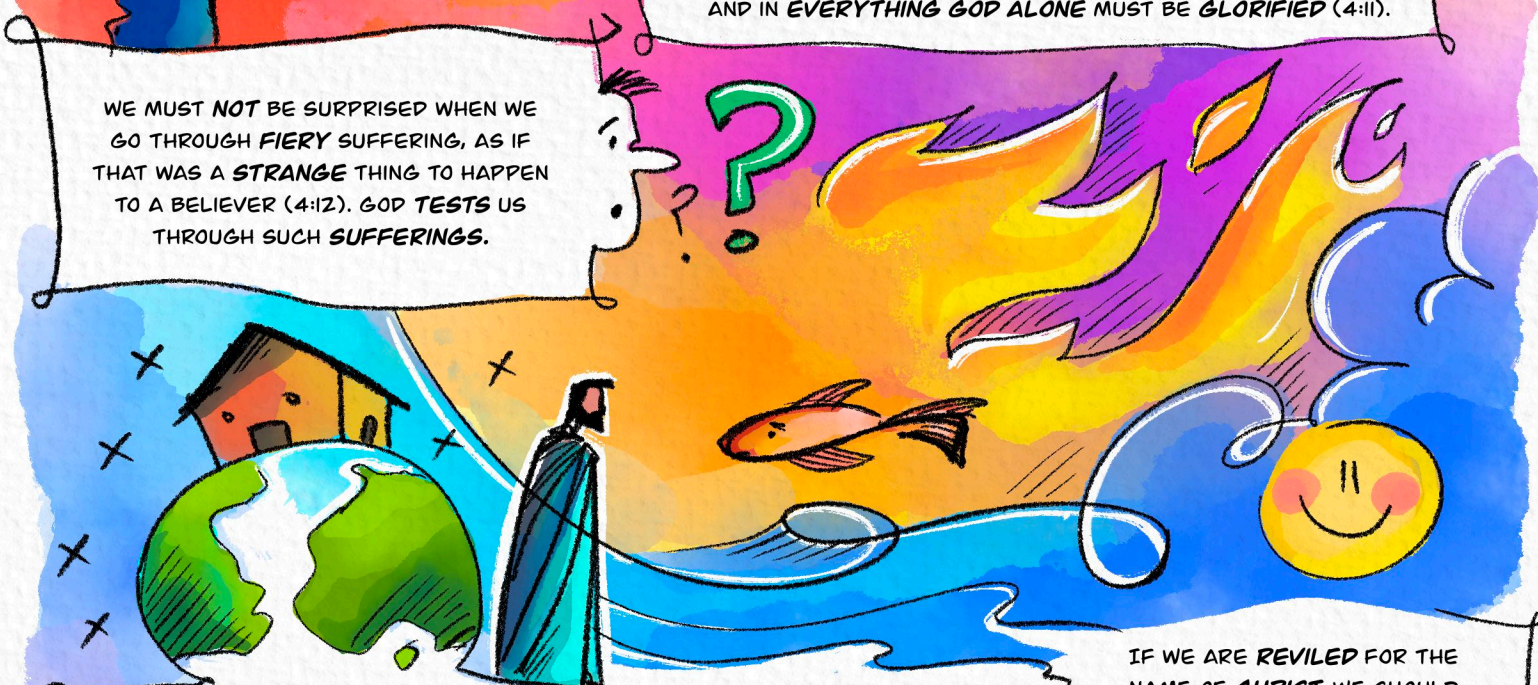
IF GOD HAS GIVEN YOU A **SPIRITUAL GIFT**, EXERCISE THAT GIFT IN **HUMILITY** (4:10).

WHEN YOU PREACH GOD'S WORD, PREACH AS THE VERY MOUTHPIECE OF GOD.
THOSE WHO SERVE MUST SERVE WITH THE POWER THAT GOD GIVES.



AND IN EVERYTHING GOD ALONE MUST BE GLORIFIED (4:11).

WE MUST **NOT** BE SURPRISED WHEN WE GO THROUGH **FIERY** SUFFERING, AS IF THAT WAS A **STRANGE** THING TO HAPPEN TO A BELIEVER (4:12). GOD **TESTS** US THROUGH SUCH **SUFFERINGS**.



X THIS WORLD IS NOT OUR HOME.

WE ARE LIKE FISH OUT OF WATER HERE. SO WE WILL SUFFER.

IF WE ARE **REVILED** FOR THE NAME OF **CHRIST**, WE SHOULD **CONSIDER** OURSELVES **BLESSED**, FOR THAT IS AN **HONOUR** (4:14).



PETER SAYS, "DON'T SUFFER AS A **MURDERER**, OR AS A **THIEF**, OR AS AN **EVILDOER**, OR AS A **BUSYBODY** IN OTHER PEOPLE'S MATTERS" (4:15).

MANY UNFORTUNATELY ARE **BUSYBODIES** IN OTHER PEOPLE'S MATTERS. THEY **DON'T** KNOW HOW TO **MIND** THEIR OWN BUSINESS. THAT IS A VERY **BAD TESTIMONY**.



INSTEAD OF **JUDGING** OTHER PEOPLE, WE MUST LEARN TO **JUDGE OURSELVES** FIRST (4:17).

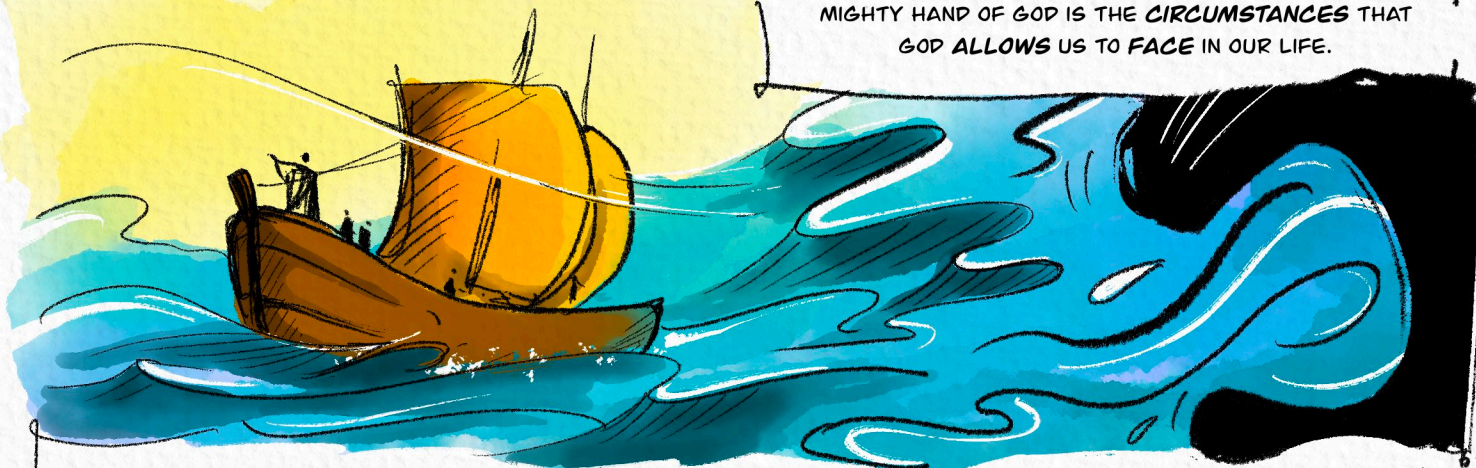
ELDERS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD WILL LOOK AFTER THEIR FLOCK **VOLUNTARILY, CHEERFULLY, AND WITHOUT SEEKING FOR MONEY** (5:2).

A **GODLY ELDER** WILL ALSO **NEVER LORD** IT OVER HIS FLOCK, BUT WILL BE AN **EXAMPLE** TO THEM IN ALL AREAS (5:3).



THEN ONE DAY WHEN THE **CHIEF SHEPHERD** RETURNS, HE WILL RECEIVE A **CROWN OF GLORY** FROM HIM.

"GOD IS **OPPOSED** TO THE **PROUD** BUT GIVES **GRACE** TO THE **HUMBLE**. THEREFORE, **HUMBLE** YOURSELF UNDER THE **MIGHTY HAND** OF GOD" (5:5, 6). THE **MIGHTY HAND** OF GOD IS THE **CIRCUMSTANCES** THAT GOD **ALLOWS** US TO **FACE** IN OUR LIFE.



WHEN WE FACE THESE **CIRCUMSTANCES**, WE MUST **HUMBLE** OURSELVES UNDER THEM. THAT MEANS WE DO NOT **GRUMBLE** BUT **ACCEPT** THEM **JOYFULLY** AS HAVING BEEN **PERMITTED** BY GOD. THEN GOD WILL EXALT US OVER OUR **CIRCUMSTANCES** AND MAKE US **VICTORIOUS**.

WHEN YOU **HUMBLE** YOURSELF LIKE THAT, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO **RESIST** THE **DEVIL**, **FIRM** IN YOUR **FAITH** (5:8, 9). **SATAN** MAY COME AS A **ROARING LION**, BUT HE **WON'T** BE ABLE TO **HARM** YOU

ALL THE **SUFFERING** WE FACE ON EARTH IS ONLY "FOR A **LITTLE WHILE**" (5:10). BUT THEN GOD WILL "**PERFECT** YOU, **CONFIRM** YOU, **STRENGTHEN** YOU AND **ESTABLISH** YOU."

