

Through the Bible

MARK

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

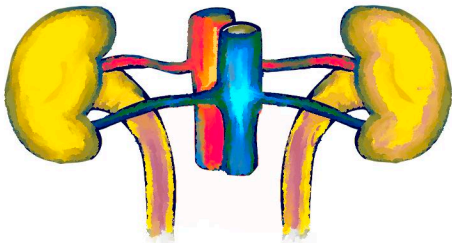
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INDIA**

Mark

WHILE MATTHEW WAS LAYING DOWN THE TEACHING OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH. MARK WAS DEMONSTRATING THAT JESUS WAS THE **SON OF GOD** ON EARTH.



"WHEN **JESUS** WAS GOING BY THE SEA OF **GALILEE**, HE SAW SIMON AND ANDREW, THE BROTHER OF SIMON, CASTING A NET, FOR THEY WERE **FISHERMEN**. JESUS SAID TO THEM, 'FOLLOW ME, AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN'" (1:16, 17). THERE WERE **HUNDREDS** OF FISHERMEN ALONG THE COASTS OF GALILEE. HE DID **NOT** CALL ALL OF THEM. HE CALLED ONLY FOUR -- PETER, ANDREW, JAMES AND JOHN. WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE **WITNESSES** FOR CHRIST. BUT TO ENTER INTO **FULL-TIME** MINISTRY FOR THE LORD, ONE MUST BE **SPECIFICALLY CALLED** BY **GOD**.



EVERY MINISTRY IN THE **BODY OF CHRIST** IS IMPORTANT, JUST LIKE EVERY PART OF THE **HUMAN BODY**. SOME PARTS LIKE THE FACE CAN BE **SEEN**, WHEREAS OTHERS LIKE THE **KIDNEYS** AND LIVER ARE **UNSEEN**. IN THE BODY OF CHRIST TOO, SOME MINISTRIES ARE **MORE VISIBLE** THAN OTHERS.



IN MATTHEW 11:29, JESUS SAID, "**LEARN FROM ME.**" HERE HE SAID, "**FOLLOW ME.**" THESE ARE THE **TWO** THINGS THAT A DISCIPLE HAS TO DO. A DISCIPLE IS A **LEARNER** AND A **FOLLOWER**. IN THE **ARMY** THEY **MARCH** SAYING, "**LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT.**" WE HAVE TO SAY, "**LEARN, FOLLOW. LEARN, FOLLOW**" -- UNTIL CHRIST RETURNS. IF WE DON'T **PRACTICE** WHAT WE **LEARN**, WE WILL ONLY PRODUCE **OTHERS** LIKE OURSELVES -- WHO MARCH ON **ONE FOOT**.



THE SECOND PART OF THAT VERSE IS A PROMISE. "IF YOU FOLLOW ME, I WILL **MAKE** YOU...." THINK OF THAT EXPRESSION, "I WILL MAKE YOU." THIS IS LIKE A **POTTER** MAKING A **VESSEL**. POTTERS DON'T MAKE ALL VESSELS OF THE SAME SHAPE. GOD ALSO MAKES US IN **DIFFERENT** SHAPES. IF YOU FOLLOW THE LORD, HE WILL MAKE YOU WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE. THAT IS THE **LORD'S RESPONSIBILITY**. SOME ARE CALLED TO BE APOSTLES, SOME PROPHETS AND SOME EVANGELISTS. IT MAY BE SOMETHING ELSE -- PERHAPS A **HELP** IN THE CHURCH. FULFIL THE TASK **GOD** HAS **CALLED** YOU TO FULFIL IN THE **BODY** OF CHRIST. "TAKE HEED TO THE MINISTRY WHICH **YOU** HAVE **RECEIVED** IN THE LORD, THAT YOU FULFIL IT." (COLOSSIANS 4:17). **WAIT** ON THE LORD AND **HE** WILL **MAKE** YOU INTO THE VESSEL **HE** DESIRES.



WHEN JESUS WAS DEALING WITH **DEMON-POSSESSED** PEOPLE, SOME OF THE DEMONS WOULD CRY OUT, "THIS IS THE **SON OF GOD**" (1:24). WOULDN'T IT THRILL YOU IF OTHERS HEARD THAT A **DEMON** **RECOGNISED** YOU AS A **MAN OF GOD**? BUT JESUS TOLD THE DEMONS TO BE **SILENT**, BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT A TESTIMONY FROM ANY **DEMON**. DEMONS ARE **LIARS** IN ANY CASE.



IN 1:35, WE READ OF A **HABIT** THAT JESUS HAD, THAT IS **GOOD** FOR EACH OF US TO HAVE -- GETTING UP **EARLY** AND **LISTENING** TO GOD (SEE ALSO ISAIAH 50:4). EVEN THOUGH HE WAS BUSY MINISTERING **LATE** INTO THE **PREVIOUS** NIGHT, HE STILL WOKE UP **BEFORE** THE SUN ROSE AND GOT **ALONE** WITH HIS **FATHER**. SOMEBODY SAID THAT JUST AS **TOURISTS** ENQUIRE ABOUT THE **SIGHTS** TO BE SEEN WHENEVER THEY COME TO A **NEW PLACE**, JESUS ALWAYS LOOKED AROUND TO SEE WHERE THE **LONELY** AND **DESERTED** PLACES WERE, WHERE HE COULD BE **ALONE** WITH HIS **FATHER**.



WHEN THE PEOPLE CAME AND **URGED** JESUS TO STAY ON THERE FOR SOME **MORE TIME**, BECAUSE A **REVIVAL** HAD BROKEN OUT, HE SAID HE COULD NOT, BECAUSE HE HAD ALREADY HEARD HIS FATHER TELLING HIM THAT MORNING, TO GO **ELSEWHERE**. HUMAN REASON WOULD SUGGEST THAT ONE SHOULD **STAY** ON IN A PLACE WHERE **REVIVAL** HAS BROKEN OUT. BUT **JESUS** WAS **NOT** MOVED BY THE **NEED** OF THE PEOPLE **PRIMARILY**, BUT BY THE **VOICE** OF HIS **FATHER**. WE MUST HAVE THIS ATTITUDE: "LORD, I **DON'T** WANT TO **WASTE** A **SINGLE** DAY OF MY LIFE. ARRANGE MY CIRCUMSTANCES SO THAT I WILL **ALWAYS** BE IN THE PLACE WHERE YOU WANT ME TO BE -- **EVERY SINGLE DAY** OF MY LIFE."

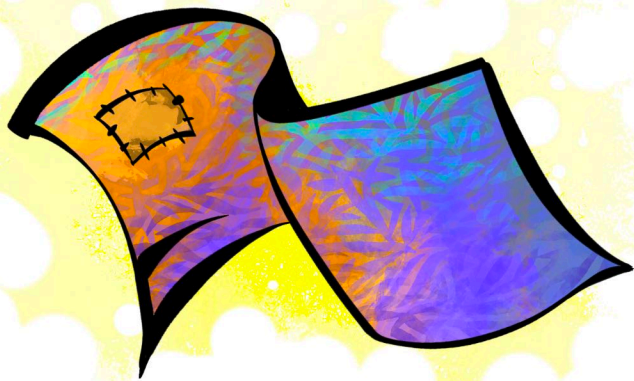


IN 2:3, WE READ ABOUT A MAN WHO WAS **PARALYSED** BEING BROUGHT TO **JESUS'** HOUSE. FOUR PEOPLE CARRIED HIM THERE AND WHEN THEY FOUND THEY COULDN'T GET IN BECAUSE OF THE CROWD, THEY DECIDED TO **BREAK** OPEN THE **ROOF**. HOW DID THEY **DARE** TO THINK OF DOING SUCH A THING?

BECAUSE THE **HOUSE** BELONGED TO **JESUS** (COMPARE VERSE 1 WITH MATTHEW 4:13) AND THEY KNEW THAT HE **LOVED** PEOPLE SO MUCH THAT HE WOULD **NOT MIND** HIS HOUSE BEING **DAMAGED** IF IT WOULD RESULT IN SOMEONE BEING **HEALED!!** JESUS SAW THE **FAITH** OF THOSE WHO CARRIED HIM IN (VERSE 5) AND HEALED THE MAN (VERSE 11). GENERALLY SPEAKING, WE RECEIVE FROM GOD "ACCORDING TO OUR OWN FAITH". JESUS ALWAYS WORKED ON THE BASIS OF FAITH, BUT HERE WE SEE SOMEONE **ELSE'S FAITH** BRINGING GOD'S BLESSING TO THE MAN. THIS MAN **MAY** HAVE HAD **NO FAITH** AT ALL. BUT THE **FAITH** OF HIS **FRIENDS** STILL BROUGHT HIM HEALING.



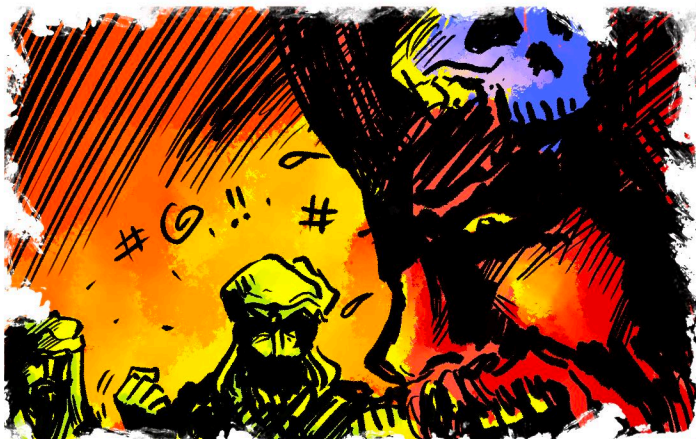
WE ALSO LEARN FROM THIS INCIDENT OUR **INTERDEPENDENCE** IN THE **BODY OF CHRIST**. WE ARE NOT TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ALL BY **OURSELVES**, BUT ALONG WITH **OTHERS**. IT IS CERTAINLY MORE **CONVENIENT** TO WORK ON OUR **OWN**, BECAUSE WE CAN DO WHAT WE **LIKE**, WHEN WE **LIKE** AND WE ARE **ANSWERABLE** TO **NOBODY**. BUT THOSE WHO WORK LIKE THAT WILL FINALLY **DESTROY** THEMSELVES. LET US **SEEK** FOR **FELLOWSHIP** -- FINDING A **GODLY BROTHER**, PARTICULARLY WHEN WE ARE YOUNG, AND BE SUBJECT TO HIS AUTHORITY.



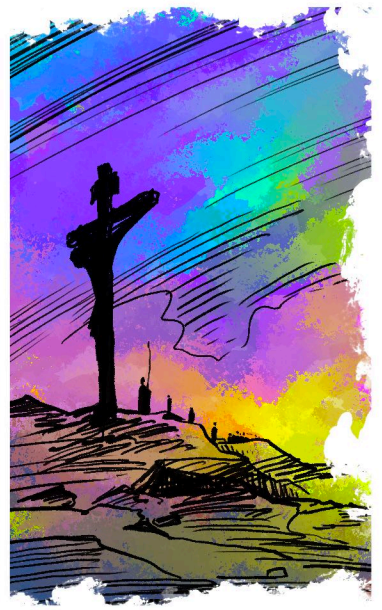
IN 2:18--22, WE READ THAT JESUS WAS ASKED **WHY** HIS DISCIPLES DID NOT **FAST** WHEN MANY OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS FASTED. JESUS NEVER GAVE US A COMMAND TO FAST. BUT THE BRIDE OF JESUS WILL FAST AND PRAY -- IN SECRET -- **VOLUNTARILY**. THEN JESUS EXPLAINED THAT IN THE NEW COVENANT, **EVERYTHING** (INCLUDING FASTING) WAS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT WAS UNDER THE **OLD** COVENANT. HE ILLUSTRATED THIS BY SAYING THAT IF YOU STITCHED A PIECE OF NEW **UNSHRUNK** CLOTH ON TO AN OLD COTTON GARMENT, THE **OLD** GARMENT WOULD **TEAR** WHEN WASHED. THE APPLICATION OF THIS WAS THAT YOU **COULDN'T** TAKE A LITTLE BIT OF **NEW-COVENANT** TRUTH AND ATTACH IT TO AN **OLD-COVENANT** SYSTEM. THE **LIFE OF JESUS** MUST HAVE A **NEW COVENANT CHURCH** TO EXPRESS ITSELF IN.



IN 3:1--6, WE READ THAT JESUS WENT INTO A SYNAGOGUE ON A **SABBATH** DAY. THERE WAS A MAN WITH A **PARALYSED** HAND THERE AND THE PHARISEES **WATCHED** TO SEE WHETHER HE WOULD HEAL HIM. THIS IS THE ONE PLACE IN SCRIPTURE WHERE WE READ THAT "JESUS WAS **ANGRY**". JESUS LOOKED AT THEM WITH **ANGER** HERE, BECAUSE HE WAS **GRIEVED** TO SEE THE **HARDNESS** OF THEIR **HEARTS**. HE HEALED THE MAN **IGNORING** WHAT THE PHARISEES THOUGHT OF HIM.



THE **EVIL** NATURE OF THE PHARISEES BECOMES MANIFEST HERE IN THAT **INSTEAD** OF **REJOICING** OVER THE HEALING OF THAT MAN, THEY BEGAN TO PLAN TO "**DESTROY JESUS**". WHY DID THEY WANT TO DESTROY JESUS? THAT MAN WITH THE PARALYSED HAND HAD SAT IN THEIR SYNAGOGUE FOR SO **MANY** YEARS AND THOSE **PHARISEES** COULD NOT HEAL HIM. BUT HERE AN **UNLEARNED CARPENTER** COMES FROM THE DESPISED TOWN OF NAZARETH AND HE HEALS THE MAN IMMEDIATELY. THEY BECAME **JEALOUS** OF JESUS AND REALISED THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD KNOW THAT THIS PREACHER COULD HELP THEM **MORE** THAN THE PHARISEES COULD -- AND THEY WOULD THEN **FOLLOW** HIM.



EPHESIANS 4:26 SAYS, "BE **ANGRY** BUT DO **NOT SIN**." THERE IS AN ANGER THAT IS SINFUL AND THERE IS AN ANGER THAT IS NOT SINFUL. WE CAN OBSERVE ANGER WITHOUT SIN IN **JESUS'** LIFE. WHEN WAS HE ANGRY AND WHEN WAS HE NOT ANGRY? HE WAS ANGRY WHEN PEOPLE WERE **HARD-HEARTED** TOWARDS **OTHER POOR** PEOPLE AND WHEN HE SAW PEOPLE **EXPLOITING** THE POOR AND MAKING **MONEY** IN THE **TEMPLE** IN **GOD'S** NAME. BUT HE **NEVER** BECAME ANGRY WHEN PEOPLE CALLED HIM A **DEVIL**, OR SPAT ON HIS FACE, OR **CRUCIFIED** HIM. WITH MANY CHRISTIANS, HOWEVER, IT IS EXACTLY THE **OPPOSITE**.



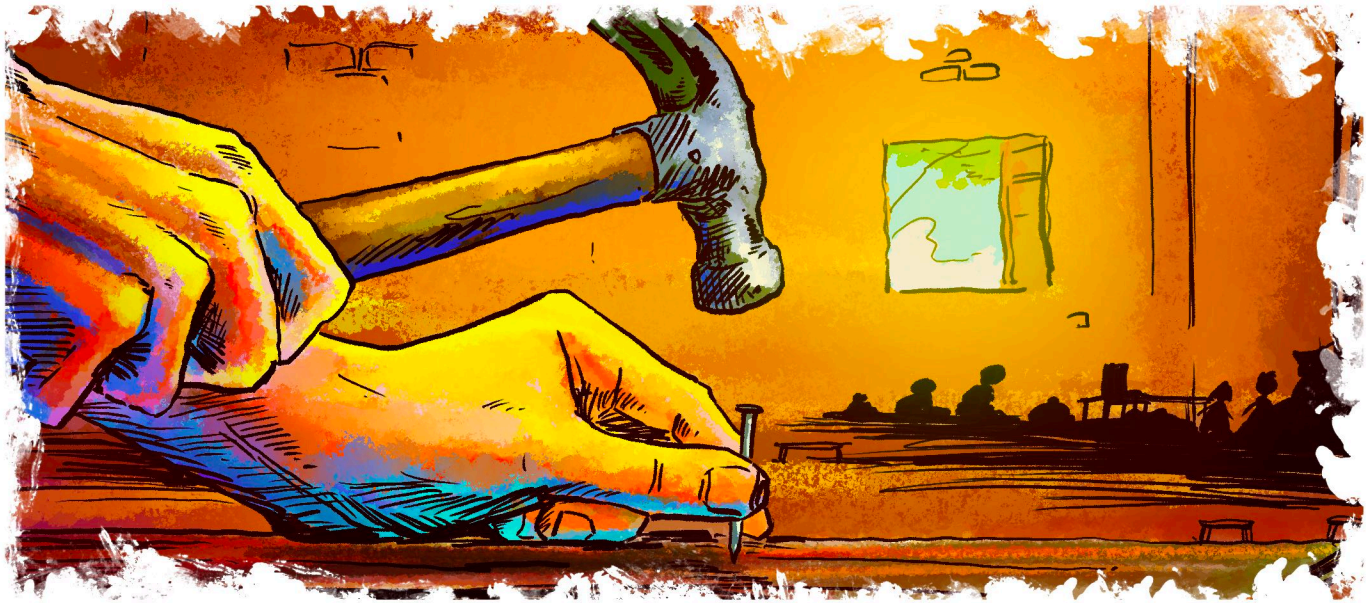
IN 4:38, WE READ OF JESUS SLEEPING ON A **CUSHION** IN THE BOAT. A **CUSHION** SPEAKS OF **COMFORT**. IT BLESSES MY HEART TO READ THAT JESUS DID **NOT** SLEEP ON THE **HARD WOODEN** FLOOR OF THE BOAT BUT ON A **CUSHION**. HE WAS **NOT** AN **ASCETIC** WHO WOULD REFUSE TO USE A **COMFORTABLE** BED WHEN IT WAS **FREELY AVAILABLE**.



IN CHAPTER 5, WE READ ABOUT A **DEMON-POSSESSED** MAN BEING DELIVERED. THE DEMONS REQUESTED THAT THEY BE PERMITTED TO ENTER SOME **PIGS** AND JESUS PERMITTED THEM. THIS MAN MUST HAVE HAD AT LEAST 2000 DEMONS IN HIM BECAUSE THEY ENTERED INTO **2000** PIGS! WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THAT AREA SAW THIS MAN TOTALLY DELIVERED AND SANE, INSTEAD OF BEING **EXCITED**, THEY URGED JESUS TO **LEAVE** IMMEDIATELY (VERSE 17). THAT TELLS US SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR SENSE OF VALUES: THEY VALUED **PIGS** MORE THAN **HUMAN** BEINGS.



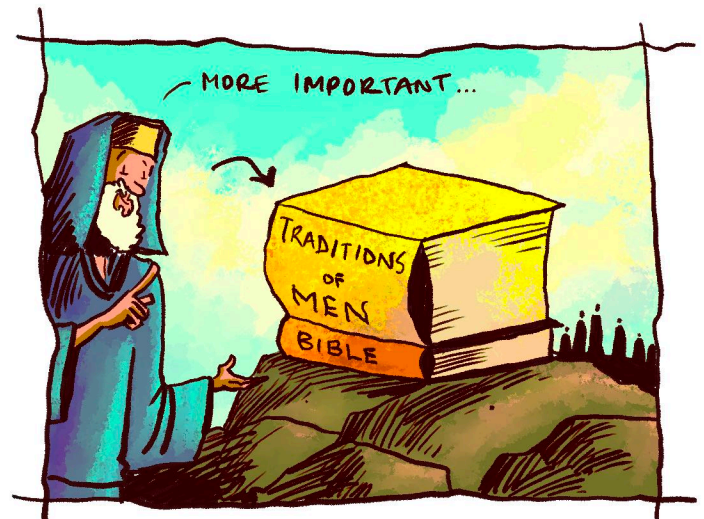
WHEREAS JESUS TAUGHT THAT **ONE** SOUL WAS WORTH MORE THAN THE **WHOLE WORLD** (MARK 8:36). JESUS **RESPECTED** THEIR WISHES AND WENT AWAY BUT TOLD THE **SAVED** MAN TO BE HIS **WITNESS** IN THAT LAND (VERSE 19).



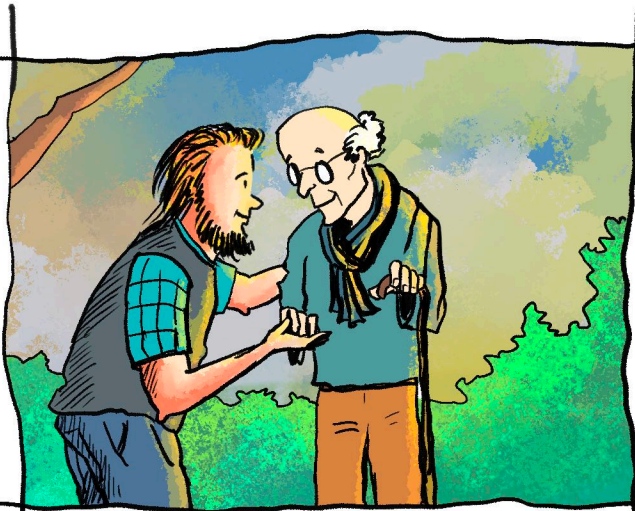
IN 6:3, WE READ THAT JESUS HAD **FOUR BROTHERS** -- JAMES, JOSES, JUDAS AND SIMON. HE HAD **SISTERS** ALSO -- WHICH MEANS **AT LEAST TWO**. SO MARY HAD AT LEAST **SEVEN** CHILDREN. SINCE WE DON'T HEAR OF JOSEPH, IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT HE HAD DIED BY NOW. SO, FOR MANY YEARS OF JESUS' LIFE HE HAD TO WORK AS A **CARPENTER** AND SUPPORT A FAMILY OF **EIGHT MEMBERS**. GOD ALLOWED HIS SON TO GO THROUGH THAT EXPERIENCE SO THAT JESUS COULD BE AN **EXAMPLE** TO PARENTS WHO HAVE TO **STRUGGLE** THROUGH DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES TO BRING UP A LARGE FAMILY. HE CAN **SYMPATHISE** WITH THEIR STRUGGLES (HEBREWS 4:15).



IN 6:4, JESUS SAID, "A PROPHET HAS HONOUR EVERYWHERE **EXCEPT** IN HIS **HOMETOWN** AND AMONG HIS RELATIVES IN HIS HOUSEHOLD." A PROPHET IS DESPISED BY HIS **OWN** RELATIVES AND GENERALLY NOT APPRECIATED IN HIS **HOME-TOWN**. HE IS VALUED BY THE **FEW GODLY** PEOPLE WHO KNOW HIM AND IN OTHER TOWNS **MORE** THAN IN HIS HOMETOWN. **FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT**. AND SO JESUS COULD NOT DO MANY MIRACLES IN HIS HOMETOWN (6:5). IF WE DON'T **VALUE** A MAN OF GOD, HIS MINISTRY WON'T **BLESS** US AS MUCH AS IT **BLESSES OTHERS** WHO **VALUE** HIM.



IN CHAPTER 7, JESUS **DENOUNCED** THE PHARISEES FOR VALUING THEIR **TRADITIONS ABOVE GOD'S WORD**. THIS IS TRUE OF MOST RELIGIOUS CHRISTIANS TODAY AS WELL. THIS WAS THE GREAT **CONFLICT** THAT JESUS HAD WITH THE PEOPLE OF HIS TIME: JESUS STOOD FOR GOD'S **WORD** WHILE THE PHARISEES STOOD FOR THE **TRADITION** OF THE **ELDERS**. AND THIS IS THE GREAT CONFLICT THAT WE FIND IN CHRISTENDOM TODAY AS WELL. JESUS WARNED HERE OF THREE STEPS DOWNWARD IF WE HOLD ON TO RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS THAT ARE NOT FOUND IN THE WORD OF GOD: FIRST, IT WILL LEAD TO **NEGLECT** OF GOD'S COMMANDMENTS (VERSE 8). THEN, WE WILL **SET ASIDE** GOD'S COMMANDMENTS (VERSE 9). FINALLY, WE WILL **CANCEL** OUT THE WORD OF GOD ALTOGETHER (VERSE 13).



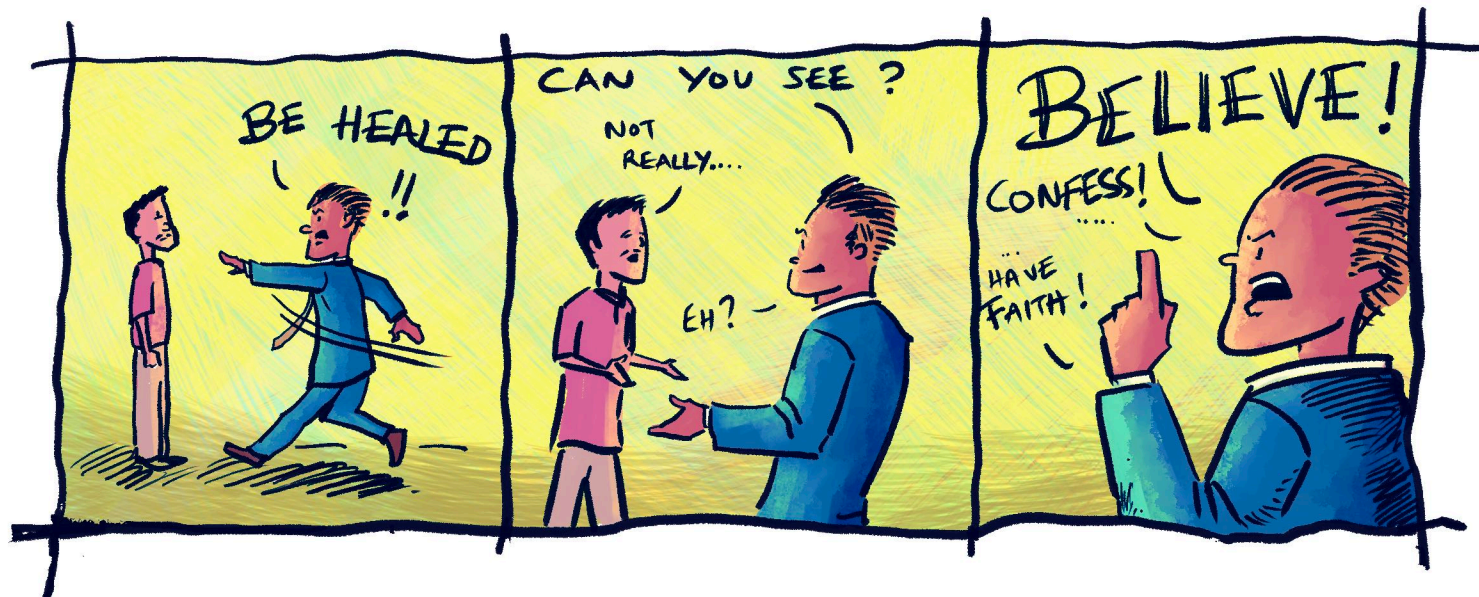
IN 7:10, 11, JESUS SPOKE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HELPING OUR PARENTS WHEN THEY ARE OLD. WE MUST HELP OUR **AGED PARENTS**. YOU CAN'T TELL THEM, "I HAVE GIVEN MY MONEY TO **GOD** AND HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO HELP YOU WITH." YOUR SERVICE TO **GOD** MUST INCLUDE **HELPING YOUR PARENTS**. YOU **DON'T** HAVE TO **OBEY** YOUR PARENTS AFTER YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR HOME AND YOU MUST **NOT ALLOW** THEM TO **HINDER** YOU FROM SERVING THE **LORD**. BUT YOU MUST HELP THEM **FINANCIALLY** AND IN OTHER **PRACTICAL WAYS** WHEN THEY ARE IN **NEED**. YOU MUST **CARE** FOR THEM.



JESUS WARNED HIS DISCIPLES AGAINST **THREE** TYPES OF **LEAVEN**. IN MATTHEW 16:11, HE WARNED AGAINST THE LEAVEN OF THE **PHARISEES** AND THE LEAVEN OF THE **SADDUCEES**. HERE HE WARNS THEM AGAINST THE LEAVEN OF **HEROD** AS WELL. THE **HERODIANS** WERE FOLLOWERS OF HEROD AND WERE THOROUGHLY **WORLDLY**. HEROD COULD ENJOY LISTENING TO A **POWERFUL** MESSAGE BY **JOHN** THE BAPTIST AND ALSO ENJOY A **SENSUAL DANCE** BY A SCANTILY-CLAD **SALOME** (MARK 6:20, 22). HE WAS LIKE THE **CHRISTIANS** WHO CAN ENJOY A GOOD **SERMON** OR A TIME OF **PRAISE** AND ENJOY **SENSUAL** SCENES IN A MOVIE **EQUALLY WHOLEHEARTEDLY!!**



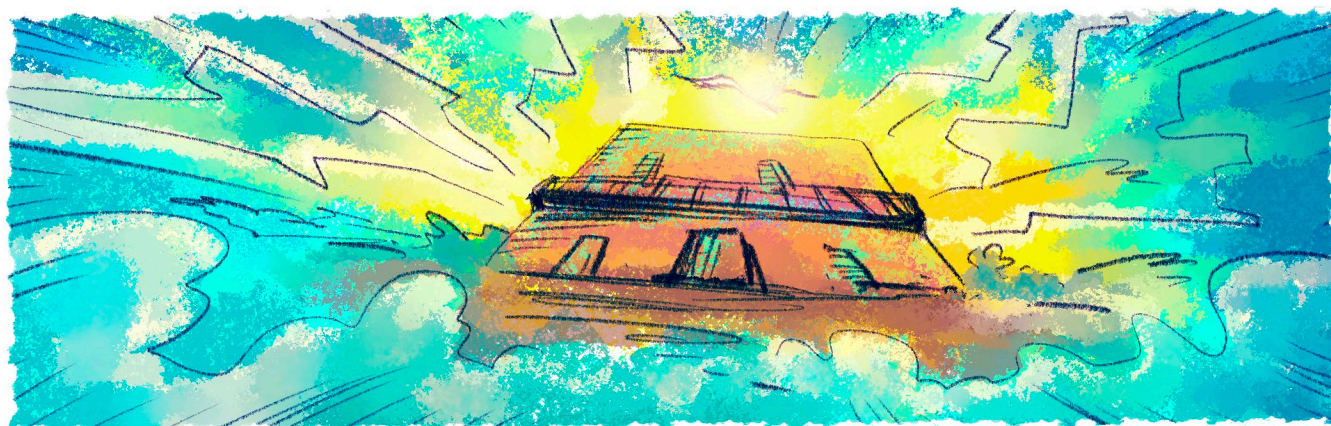
THESE **THREE** TYPES OF **CHRISTIANS** EXIST TODAY TOO: **EVANGELICALS**, **LIBERALS** AND **WORLDLY CHRISTIANS**. NOTE HOWEVER, THAT THE ONES WHO **OPPOSED** JESUS THE **MOST** WERE **NOT** THE **HERODIANS**, OR THE **SADDUCEES**, BUT THE **PHARISEES**. THE **EVANGELICALS** OF HIS TIME WERE THE **BIGGEST HYPOCRITES**; AND THAT IS TRUE **TODAY** AS WELL. THE **BIGGEST HYPOCRITES** TODAY ARE **NOT** FOUND AMONG **WORLDLY** AND **LIBERAL** **CHRISTIANS**, BUT AMONG **EVANGELICAL**, **FUNDAMENTAL** **CHRISTIANS**. MANY **FUNDAMENTALISTS** WHO ARE **PROUD** OF HAVING ALL THEIR **DOCTRINES CORRECT**, DON'T REALISE HOW **LEGALISTIC** AND **HYPOCRITICAL** THEY ARE. THEY DO NOT RESPOND TO THE **PROMPTINGS** OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND SO THEY **NEVER** BECOME **FREE** FROM THEIR **LEGALISM**. THE **LORD** IS IN **CONFLICT** WITH SUCH PEOPLE EVEN **TODAY** -- JUST AS HE WAS WHEN HE WALKED ON EARTH 2000 YEARS AGO.



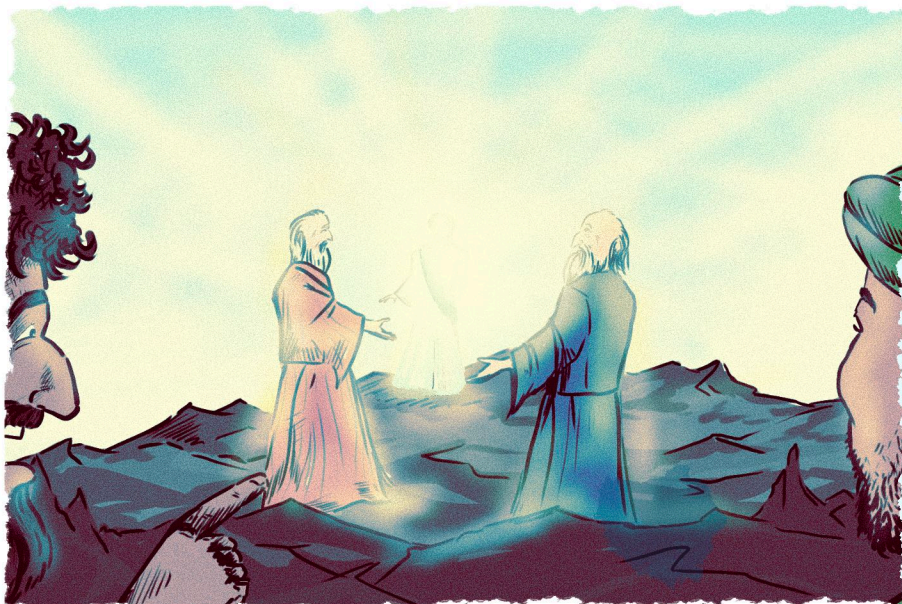
IN 8:23--26, WE FIND A VERY **IMPORTANT** TEACHING ON **HEALING**. THERE JESUS PRAYED FOR A **BLIND** MAN AND THE MAN WAS **NOT FULLY** HEALED. JESUS ASKED HIM, "DO YOU SEE EVERYTHING **CLEARLY**?" HE SAID, "**NO**. I SEE MEN LIKE TREES WALKING." IF JESUS WERE LIKE SOME **PREACHERS** TODAY, HE WOULD HAVE TOLD HIM, "NO. YOU MUST MAKE A **POSITIVE CONFESSION**. **BELIEVE** THAT YOU ARE **FULLY** HEALED AND **IGNORE** THE SYMPTOMS. **CONFESS** THAT YOU ARE **HEALED** AND ONLY THEN WILL YOU BE HEALED". BUT JESUS DIDN'T TELL HIM TO SAY THAT, BECAUSE JESUS DOESN'T WANT ANYONE TO TELL A **LIE**. **FAITH** IS **NOT POSITIVE CONFESSION**. JESUS PRAYED FOR HIM AGAIN AND **COMPLETED** THE WORK OF HEALING.



IN 8:33, WE SEE JESUS **REBUKING** PETER WITH THE STRONGEST WORDS HE EVER USED TO **ANYONE**: "GET BEHIND ME, **SATAN**." WHY DID HE SAY THAT? HERE IS THE ANSWER -- IN THE SAME VERSE. "YOUR MIND IS SET ON YOUR **OWN INTERESTS** AND NOT **GOD'S** INTERESTS." THE CHRISTIAN WORKER WHO WILL BE DECEIVED BY SATAN IS THE ONE WHOSE MIND IS SET ON HIS **OWN INTERESTS** AND **NOT GOD'S**.



IN 9:1, JESUS SAID, "I SAY TO YOU THAT SOME OF YOU STANDING HERE WILL NOT TASTE OF DEATH UNTIL THEY SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD AFTER IT HAS COME WITH POWER." THIS HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF **PENTECOST** -- AND SOME WHO WERE STANDING THERE WHEN JESUS SPOKE THOSE WORDS, **EXPERIENCED** IT. THE **POWER** OF GOD CAME INTO 120 HEARTS ON THE DAY OF **PENTECOST** (ACTS 1:8) WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT BROUGHT THE **KINGDOM** OF GOD TO EARTH (ROMANS 14:17). JESUS DEFINED THE DAY OF **PENTECOST** HERE AS THE **KINGDOM** OF GOD OR THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD COMING TO EARTH WITH **POWER**. THAT IS WHAT THE **CHURCH** IS SUPPOSED TO BE -- A SMALL POCKET OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD MANIFESTING THE POWER OF GOD, IN THE MIDST OF THE KINGDOM OF THE DEVIL.



IN CHAPTER 9, WE SEE **THREE** DISCIPLES WITH JESUS ON THE MOUNT WHERE JESUS WAS **TRANSFIGURED**. WHEN PETER SAW MOSES AND ELIJAH, HE WAS **EXCITED** AND SAID "LET'S MAKE **THREE** TABERNACLES HERE FOR JESUS, MOSES AND ELIJAH" (VERSE 5). IMMEDIATELY A CLOUD COVERED ALL OF THEM AND GOD SPOKE FROM HEAVEN SAYING, "DON'T PUT MY SON ON THE SAME LEVEL AS MOSES AND ELIJAH. THIS IS MY **SON**. LISTEN TO **HIM**." WHAT IS THE MESSAGE HERE FOR US? HOWEVER MUCH WE ARE BLESSED BY A **MAN OF GOD**, WE MUST **NEVER** ALLOW HIM TO COME BETWEEN **US** AND THE **LORD**. OUR VISION OF JESUS MUST ALWAYS BE **CLEAR**. THE MOMENT A MAN COMES BETWEEN US AND THE LORD, A **CLOUD** WILL COME IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST. WE MUST CERTAINLY **RESPECT** MEN OF GOD, BUT WE MUST RUN THE RACE "**LOOKING AT JESUS ALONE**" (VERSE 8).



IN 9:20--29, WE SEE HOW A **FATHER'S FAITH** BROUGHT DELIVERANCE TO HIS SON WHO WAS DEMON-POSSESSED. THE DISCIPLES ASKED JESUS WHY THEY COULDN'T CAST OUT THE DEMON. JESUS REPLIED AND SAID, "BECAUSE **YOU** DID NOT HAVE FAITH; AND YOU DID NOT HAVE FAITH BECAUSE YOU DID NOT **FAST AND PRAY**." (MATTHEW 17:20, 21). THERE ARE DIFFERENT DEGREES OF STRENGTH IN THE DEMONS AND SOME DEMONS CAN BE CAST OUT ONLY IF WE ARE **STRONG** ENOUGH IN **FAITH** THROUGH **FASTING AND PRAYER**.



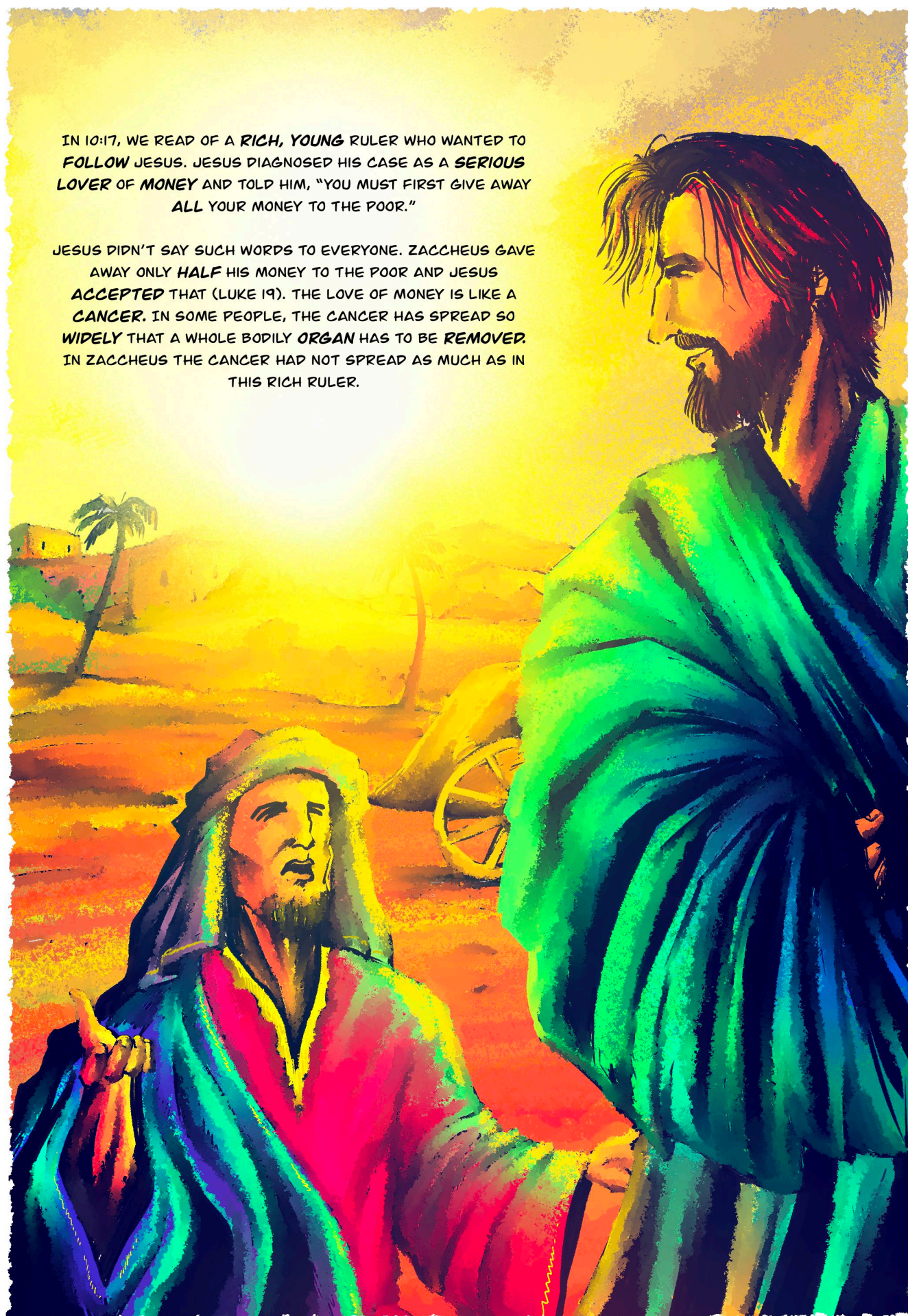
IN 9:43--48, JESUS SAID, "IF YOUR **HAND** CAUSES YOU TO **STUMBLE**, CUT IT OFF; IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO ENTER LIFE **CRIPPLED**, THAN, HAVING YOUR TWO HANDS, TO GO INTO HELL, INTO THE UNQUENCHABLE FIRE.... IF YOUR **FOOT** CAUSES YOU TO STUMBLE, CUT IT OFF; IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO ENTER LIFE **LAME**, THAN, HAVING YOUR TWO FEET, TO BE CAST INTO **HELL**.... IF YOUR **EYE** CAUSES YOU TO STUMBLE, THROW IT OUT; IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITH ONE EYE, THAN, HAVING TWO EYES, TO BE CAST INTO **HELL**." **JESUS** SPOKE ABOUT HELL MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, BECAUSE HE ALONE HAD SEEN THE **REALITY** OF HELL. EVERY **TRUE** SERVANT OF GOD WILL PREACH ABOUT HELL, BECAUSE **JESUS** DID.



IN 9:49, JESUS SAID, "EVERYBODY MUST BE **SALTED** WITH **FIRE**." I UNDERSTAND THAT VERSE TO MEAN THAT EVERYONE MUST HAVE **ONE** OF **TWO FIRES** -- EITHER THE FIRE OF **HEAVEN** OR THE FIRE OF **HELL**. **JOHN** THE BAPTIST SAID SOMETHING SIMILAR WHEN HE PROPHESIED THAT **JESUS** WOULD BAPTISE PEOPLE WITH **FIRE** AND ALSO **BURN UP** THE CHAFF IN **UNQUENCHABLE FIRE** (MATTHEW 3:11, 12).

IN 10:17, WE READ OF A **RICH, YOUNG** RULER WHO WANTED TO **FOLLOW** JESUS. JESUS DIAGNOSED HIS CASE AS A **SERIOUS** **LOVER OF MONEY** AND TOLD HIM, "YOU MUST FIRST GIVE AWAY **ALL** YOUR MONEY TO THE POOR."

JESUS DIDN'T SAY SUCH WORDS TO EVERYONE. ZACCHEUS GAVE AWAY ONLY **HALF** HIS MONEY TO THE POOR AND JESUS **ACCEPTED** THAT (LUKE 19). THE LOVE OF MONEY IS LIKE A **CANCER**. IN SOME PEOPLE, THE **CANCER** HAS SPREAD SO **WIDELY** THAT A WHOLE BODILY **ORGAN** HAS TO BE **REMOVED**. IN ZACCHEUS THE **CANCER** HAD NOT SPREAD AS MUCH AS IN THIS RICH RULER.





THEN JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES, "IT IS **EASIER** FOR A **CAMEL** TO GO THROUGH THE **EYE** OF A **NEEDLE** THAN FOR A **RICH** MAN TO ENTER **GOD'S KINGDOM**" (10:25). THE KINGDOM OF **HEAVEN** AND THE KINGDOM OF **EARTH** ARE **POLES** APART. WE **CANNOT** CHOOSE **BOTH**. WE HAVE TO CHOOSE ONE. JESUS WENT ON TO SAY THAT ONLY **GOD** COULD SAVE A MAN FROM THE **LOVE** OF **MONEY** (10:27).



IN 11:22--24, JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT FAITH. WHEN WE SEE A MOUNTAIN IN OUR WAY, THAT IS NOT NECESSARILY AN INDICATION THAT WE SHOULD TURN BACK. IT COULD BE A CHALLENGE TO OUR FAITH. GOD MAY WANT US TO REMOVE THAT MOUNTAIN AND MOVE FORWARD TO DO HIS WILL (VERSE 23).

THERE ARE TWO AMAZING STATEMENTS IN MARK'S GOSPEL.

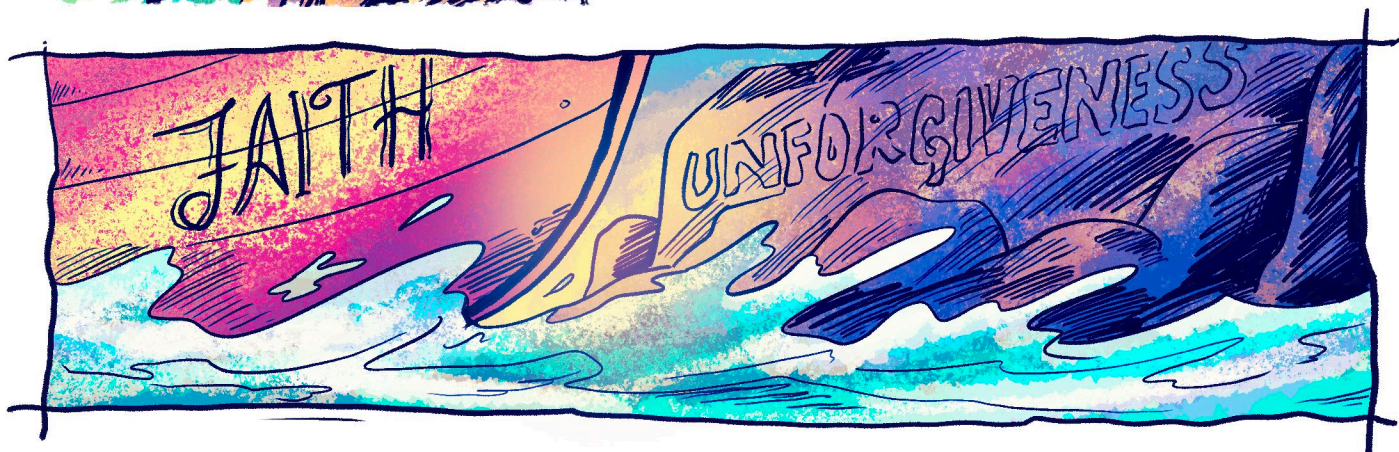
WHEN PUT TOGETHER, THE TRUTH IS STAGGERING:

1 - "ALL THINGS ARE **POSSIBLE** WITH **GOD**" (MARK 10:27).

2 - "ALL THINGS ARE **POSSIBLE** TO HIM WHO **BELIEVES**" (MARK 9:23). ALL BELIEVERS BELIEVE THE FIRST OF THESE TWO STATEMENTS. BUT IT IS FAITH IN THE SECOND STATEMENT THAT BRINGS THE POWER OF GOD INTO OUR LIFE AND MINISTRY.

WE HAVE ALL GOT TO CONFESS THAT WE LACK **FAITH** TREMENDOUSLY.

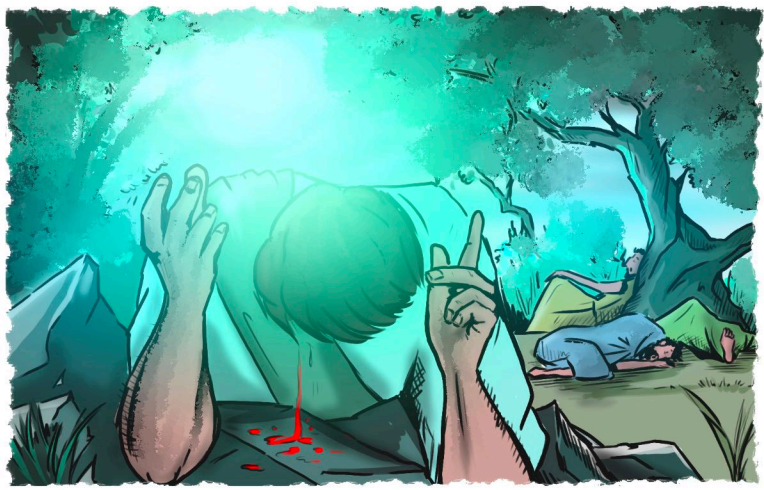
IT IS FAITH THAT WE NEED TO SEEK FOR, BECAUSE "WITHOUT FAITH IT IS **IMPOSSIBLE** TO PLEASE GOD" (HEBREWS 11:6).



JESUS THEN MENTIONED ONE OF THE **GREATEST HINDRANCES** TO **FAITH** -- AN **UNFORGIVING** SPIRIT (11:25, 26). IF THERE IS EVEN **ONE** HUMAN BEING ANYWHERE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH WHOM WE HAVE **NOT FORGIVEN**, THAT WILL ROB US OF **FAITH** AND EVEN OUR **SALVATION**.



IN 12:42--44, WE READ OF A **WIDOW** WHO PUT **TWO COPPER COINS** INTO THE OFFERING-BOX. JESUS WAS SITTING NEAR THE TREASURY **WATCHING HOW** PEOPLE WERE GIVING MONEY (12:41). HE WAS **NOT** WATCHING **HOW MUCH** THEY PUT IN, BUT **HOW** THEY PUT IN. IN THE OLD COVENANT THE IMPORTANT QUESTION WAS **HOW MUCH**. TEN PERCENT. IN THE NEW COVENANT, HOWEVER, IT IS HOW WE GIVE THAT MATTERS. DO WE GIVE **CHEERFULLY** AND **SACRIFICIALLY** AS THIS WIDOW DID? THAT IS WHAT THE LORD LOOKS FOR.

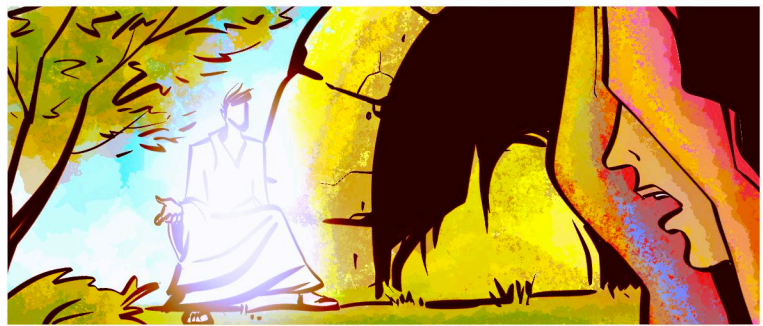


IN 14:34--36, WHAT WAS THE CUP THAT JESUS **SHRANK** FROM? IT WAS NOT **PHYSICAL** DEATH, FOR HE WAS BRAVER THAN ANY CHRISTIAN MARTYR. WHAT JESUS DREADED WAS THE **BREAK OF FELLOWSHIP** WITH HIS **FATHER** THAT WOULD TAKE PLACE WHEN HE TOOK THE PUNISHMENT FOR OUR SINS ON THE CROSS. HE HAD HAD **UNBROKEN FELLOWSHIP** WITH HIS **FATHER** FROM ALL **ETERNITY**. BUT NOW FOR THREE HOURS THAT FELLOWSHIP WOULD BE BROKEN ON THE CROSS. IN HIS **HUMAN WEAKNESS**, HE ASKED HIS FATHER IF THERE **WASN'T** ANY OTHER WAY. HE HE COULD HAVE GONE BACK TO HEAVEN FROM GETHSEMANE, FOR HE HAD NEVER SINNED. BUT HIS **LOVE** FOR US MADE HIM GO TO THE **CROSS**.



THEN WE READ IN 15:33, 34 THAT HE FACED THE **WRATH OF GOD** FOR OUR **SIN** -- BEING FORSAKEN BY HIS FATHER AND ENDURING THE PAINS OF AN **ETERNITY** IN **HELL** CONCENTRATED INTO **THREE HOURS**. THIS WAS THE ONLY TIME HE EVER ADDRESSED HIS FATHER AS **GOD** -- BECAUSE HE WAS NOW HANGING BEFORE THE **JUDGE** OF THE **UNIVERSE**. AND THEN THE WORK WAS FINISHED -- AND HIS LAST CRY WAS HIS **COMMITTING HIMSELF** AGAIN TO HIS FATHER WITH WHOM FELLOWSHIP HAD BEEN **RESTORED** (15:37). AND THE **VEIL** OF THE **TEMPLE** WAS TORN INDICATING THAT THE WAY WAS NOW **OPEN** FOR US TO ENTER INTO THE **FATHER'S PRESENCE** TOO (15:38). HALLELUJAH FOR SUCH A SAVIOUR!

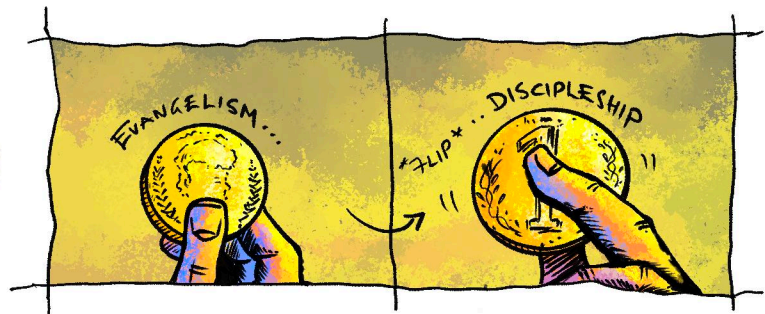




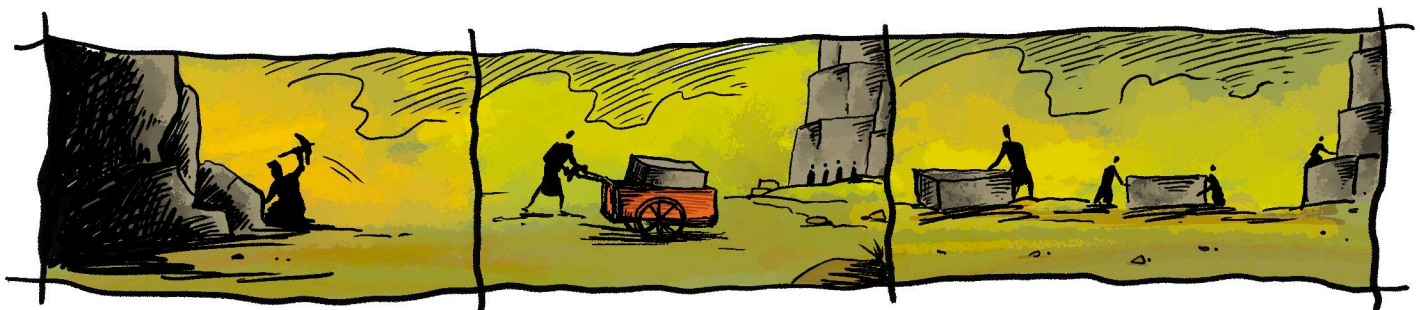
IN 16:7, WE SEE THE ANGEL SENDING A MESSAGE FROM THE LORD TO "HIS DISCIPLES AND PETER...". WHY DOES HE SAY "**AND PETER**"? WASN'T PETER ALSO ONE OF JESUS' DISCIPLES? THIS IS VERY PRECIOUS. PETER WOULD **NEVER** HAVE **BELIEVED** THAT ANY MESSAGE SENT TO JESUS' DISCIPLES COULD POSSIBLY **INCLUDE HIM**, BECAUSE HE WAS CERTAIN THAT BECAUSE HE HAD **DENIED THE LORD**, HE WAS **PERMANENTLY DISQUALIFIED** FROM BEING AN **APOSTLE**. THAT WAS WHY THE LORD **VERY TENDERLY** INCLUDED THAT PHRASE "**AND PETER...**" -- TO **ASSURE** HIM THAT THE INVITATION TO MEET WITH THE LORD WAS FOR **HIM TOO**. AND THAT IS HOW THE LORD SPEAKS TODAY ALSO TO THOSE WHO HAVE **FAILED** HIM. HE CALLS YOU **ESPECIALLY** TO COME TO HIM. THE INVITATION IS FOR **YOU** AS WELL.



IN 16:14 WE SEE **JESUS** AGAIN **REPROVING** HIS DISCIPLES "FOR THEIR **UNBELIEF** AND **HARDNESS OF HEART**". **SEVEN** TIMES IN THE GOSPEL RECORDS WE SEE JESUS **REBUKING** HIS DISCIPLES FOR THEIR **UNBELIEF**. HE **REPROVED** THEM FOR **UNBELIEF** MORE THAN FOR ANYTHING ELSE. WHAT HE **LONGED** TO SEE IN THEM WAS **FAITH**. AND THAT IS WHAT HE **LONGS** TO SEE IN US TOO.



IN 16:15--18, WE SEE THE LORD **COMMANDING** HIS DISCIPLES TO GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND **PREACH** THE **GOSPEL** TO EVERY HUMAN BEING. WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THE COMMISSION HE GAVE THEM IN MATTHEW 28 TO **MAKE DISCIPLES** IN EVERY NATION. THESE TWO COMMISSIONS ARE LIKE **TWO SIDES OF ONE COIN**. THE GREAT **TRAGEDY** TODAY IS THAT CHRISTIANS HAVE **SEPARATED** WHAT GOD HAS **JOINED TOGETHER** -- THESE TWO COMMISSIONS. **EVANGELISM WITHOUT DISCIPLE-MAKING** IS A **ONE-SIDED COIN** -- AND THEREFORE A **COUNTERFEIT COIN**.



GOD INTENDED EVANGELISTS TO BRING THEIR CONVERTS INTO **LOCAL CHURCHES** WHERE THEY COULD BE MADE INTO **DISCIPLES**. THAT IS WHY THE EVANGELIST MUST WORK ALONG WITH THE **APOSTLE, PROPHET, TEACHER** AND **SHEPHERD** TO BUILD THE **BODY OF CHRIST** (EPHESIANS 4:11). THE EVANGELIST IS LIKE A PERSON WHO GOES TO THE **QUARRY** AND CUTS OUT STONES AND BRINGS THEM TO THE **BUILDING SITE**. THE OTHER FOUR MINISTRIES ARE TO THEN BUILD THESE STONES INTO A **HOLY TEMPLE** FOR THE LORD TO **DWELL** IN. EACH OF US MUST FULFIL THE **TASK** GOD HAS **ASSIGNED** TO US.