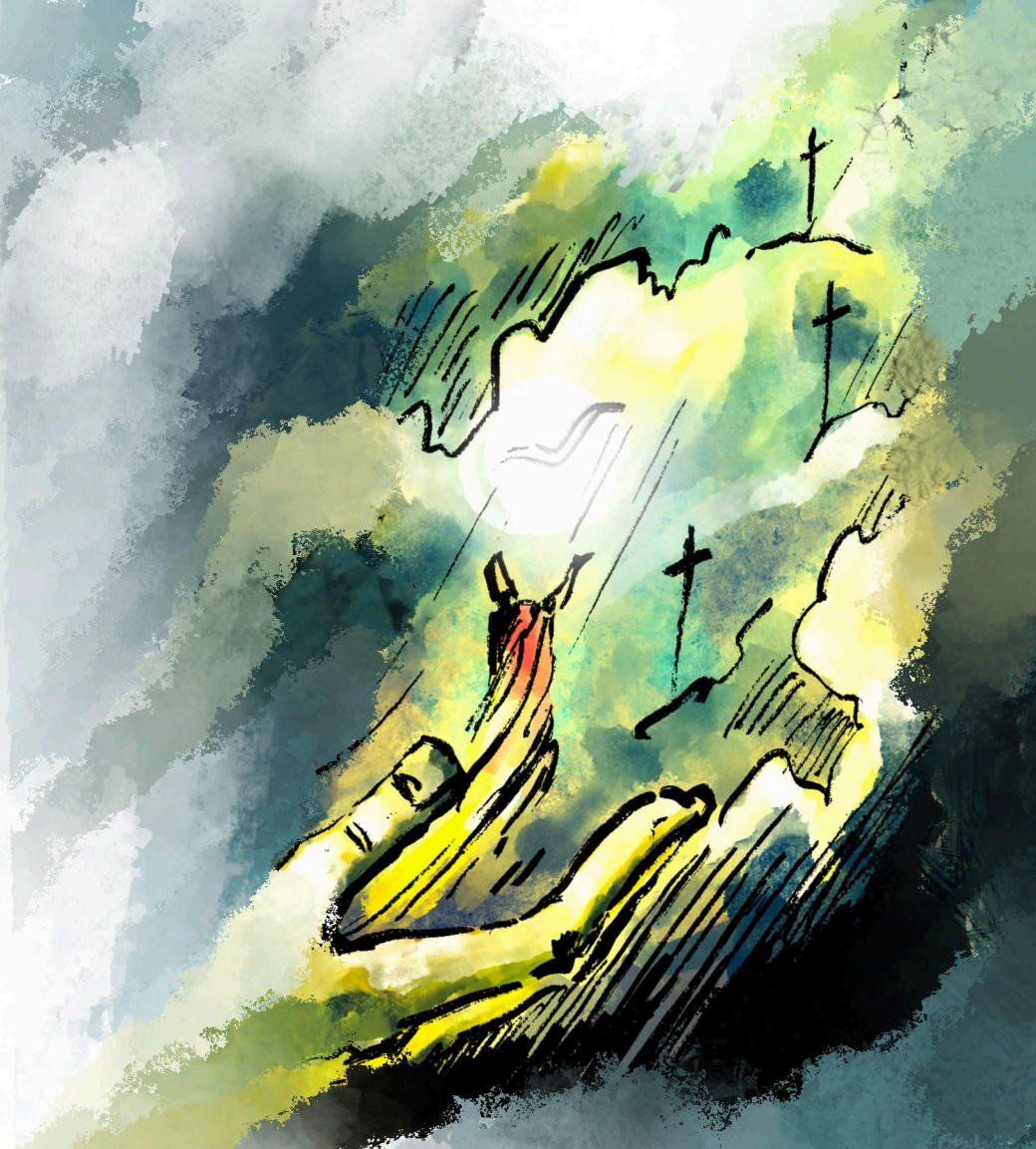


Through the Bible

# GALATIANS

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruwilla

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**CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

69, PARADISE ENCLAVE, BELAHALLI  
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INDIA

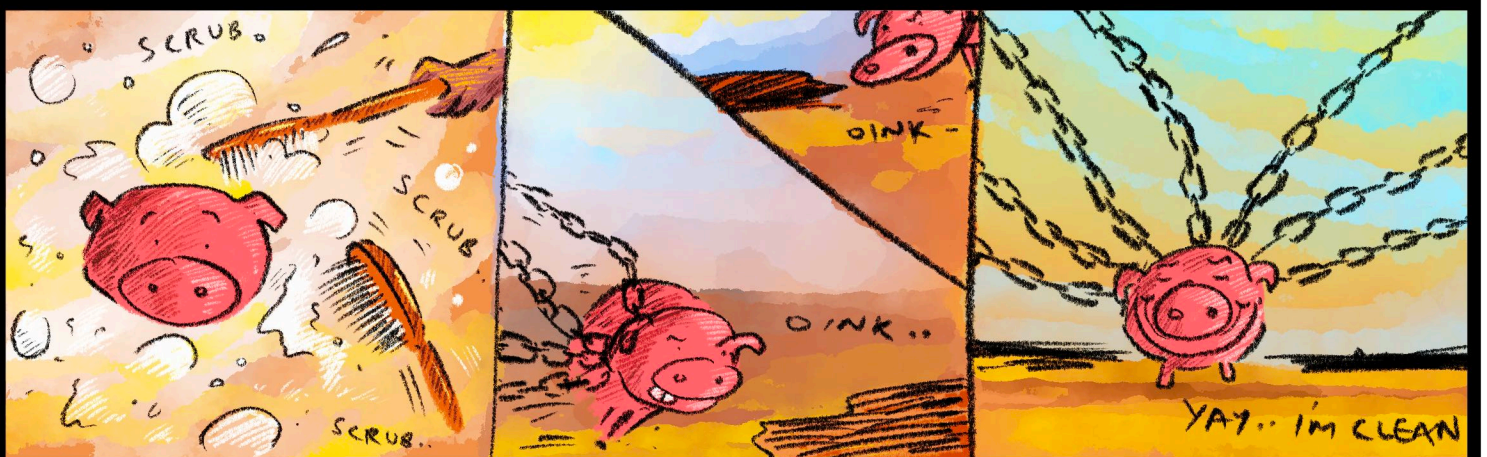
# Galatians



'FREEDOM FROM THE LAW' IS THE SUBJECT OF GALATIANS. PAUL SPEAKS HERE OF ANOTHER GOSPEL CONTRARY TO THE ONE THE APOSTLES PREACHED (1:8). THE OTHER GOSPEL IS A FALSE GOSPEL THAT KEEPS CHRISTIANS BOUND TO THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW -- TRYING TO PLEASE GOD BY KEEPING CERTAIN RULES. CHRISTIANS WHO WANT TO BE HOLY STAND IN GREAT RISK OF BECOMING LEGALISTIC INSTEAD OF LIVING BY THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

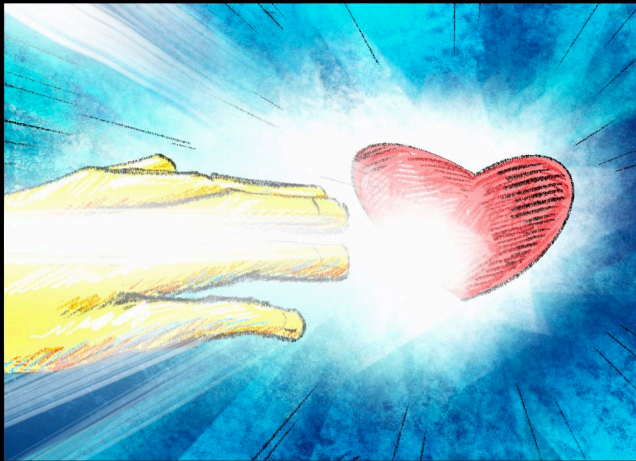
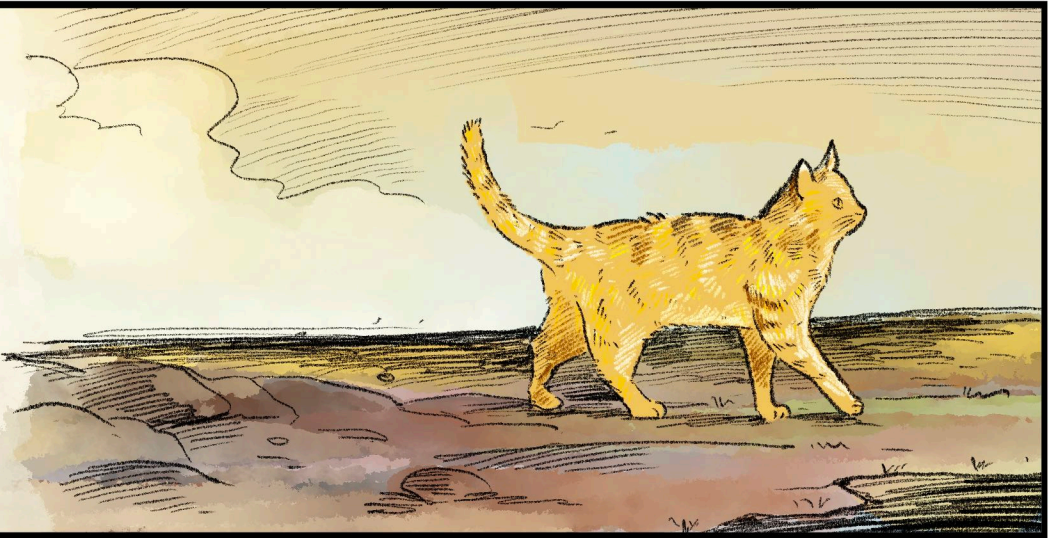


CHURCH-ELDERS CAN FEEL THAT IF THEY PREACH TOO MUCH ON GRACE, THEN THEIR PEOPLE WILL LIVE JUST AS THEY LIKE -- AND SIN. SO THEY INTRODUCE A FEW RULES FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THEIR CHURCH -- RULES THAT ARE NOT FOUND IN GOD'S WORD -- IN ORDER TO CONTROL THEIR PEOPLE. BUT THAT IS NOT GOD'S WAY -- BECAUSE THAT ALWAYS BRINGS PEOPLE INTO BONDAGE.

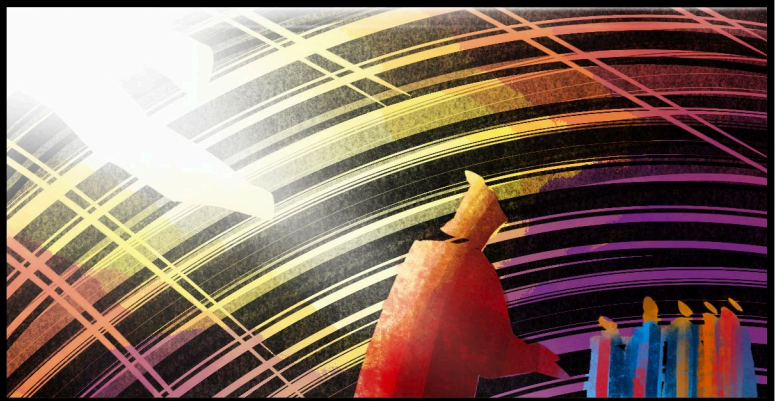


THE LAW COULD KEEP A PERSON CLEAN EXTERNALLY. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS COULD BE LIKENED TO TEN CHAINS PUT ON A PIG. IF YOU CLEAN UP A PIG AND THEN TAKE IT THROUGH A FILTHY AREA, IT WILL COME THROUGH CLEAN, IF YOU KEEP CONTROLLING IT WITH THOSE CHAINS EVERY TIME IT WANTS TO TURN THIS WAY OR THAT TO WALLOW IN THE MUCK.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF YOU WERE TO SEND A CAT THROUGH THAT TWO-KILOMETRE STRETCH, IT WILL COME OUT CLEAN -- WITHOUT ANY CHAINS. IT JUST AVOIDS EVERYTHING DIRTY. THAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ONE WHO IS UNDER LAW AND ONE WHO IS UNDER GRACE. IT IS A CAT'S INWARD NATURE THAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM THE PIG.



GOD DOES NOT WANT TO CONTROL US WITH CHAINS BUT TO CHANGE OUR NATURE WITHIN.



PAUL RELATES THE LEGALISTIC GOSPEL TO A DESIRE TO PLEASE MAN. "AM I SEEKING TO PLEASE MEN OR GOD?" (1:10). THOSE WHO LIVE UNDER THE LAW ARE INVARIABLY MEN-PLEASERS. THAT IS THE REAL PROBLEM.



IN 1:4, PAUL SAYS, "CHRIST GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER US FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD," AND ITS OPINION, APPROVAL, RULES AND REGULATIONS. THOSE WHO ARE LEGALISTIC USUALLY WANT TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD SYSTEM AS CHRISTIANS.



THEY MAY DRESS SIMPLY, BUT THEY ARE WORLDLY IN THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS.

NO RELIGION PREACHES FREE FORGIVENESS WITHOUT OUR HAVING TO DO ANYTHING. EVERY RELIGION TEACHES THAT WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING BEFORE GOD CAN FORGIVE US AND ACCEPT US. AND WHENEVER "CHRISTIANITY" BEGINS TO PREACH SOME-THING LIKE THAT, YOU CAN BE SURE IT IS A FALSE GOSPEL.

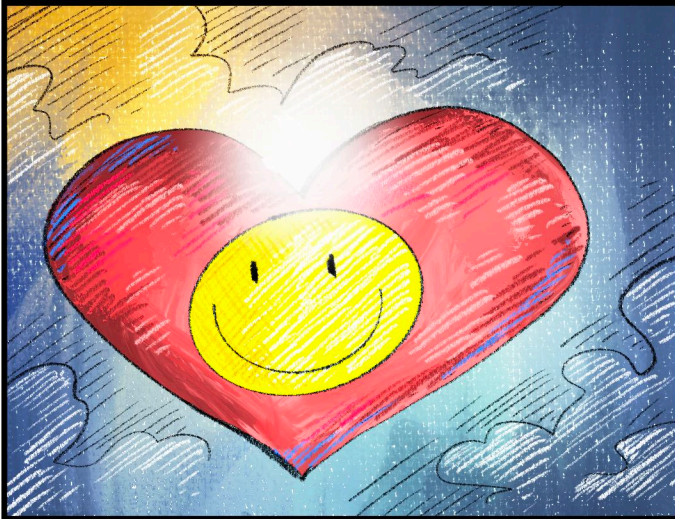
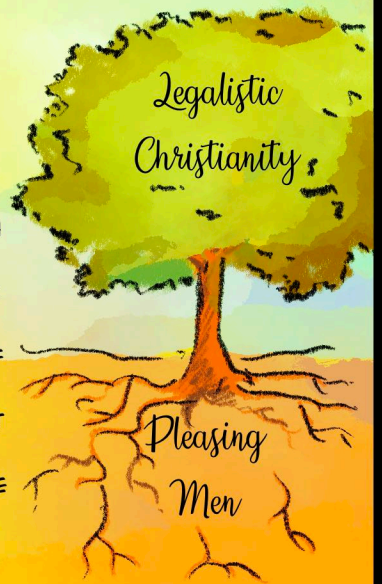




BUT THE **RIGHTEOUSNESS** THAT COMES THROUGH **GRACE** AND FROM **GOD** IS PRIMARILY **INWARD**. IF WE SEEK TO **PLEASE MEN**, WE WILL **NOT CARE** ABOUT OUR **INSIDE**. **JESUS SAID** TO THE **PHARISEES**, "YOU CLEAN THE **OUTSIDE** OF THE **CUP**, BUT THE **INSIDE** IS **DIRTY**."

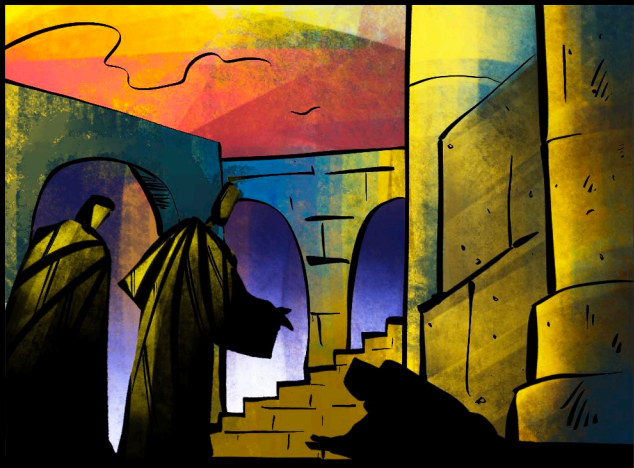
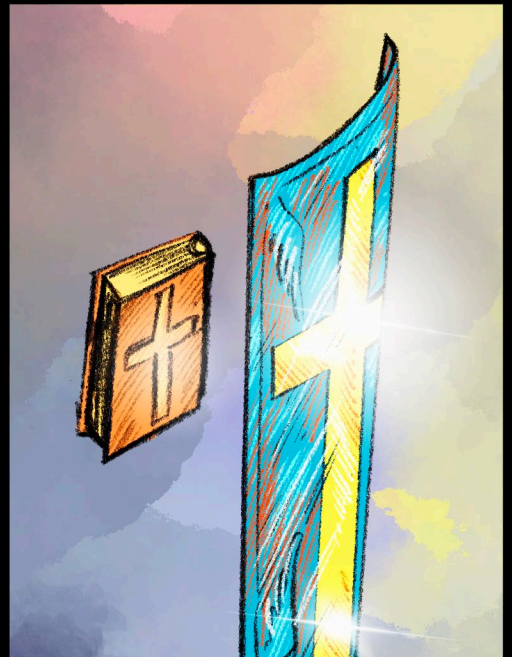
PAUL SAYS HERE THAT IF WE **TRULY** WANT TO BE **FREE** FROM **LEGALISTIC** **CHRISTIANITY**, THEN WE MUST **DEAL** WITH THE **ROOT-CAUSE** OF IT WHICH IS **PLEASEING MEN**.

**GALATIANS 1:10** SAYS "IF I SEEK TO **PLEASE MEN**, I **CANNOT** BE A **SERVANT** OF **CHRIST**" WHEN IT SAYS HERE, '**TO PLEASE MEN**', IT INCLUDES **SATISFYING OURSELVES** TOO. WHEN WE **PLEASE OURSELVES** WE **CANNOT PLEASE GOD**..



WHEN WE **DENY** OURSELVES AND **SEEK** TO **PLEASE GOD** ALONE, LIFE WILL **THEN** BECOME FULL OF THE **JOY** OF THE **LORD** AND WE WILL BE ABLE TO **SERVE** OTHERS IN THE **POWER** OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**.

PAUL THEN GOES ON TO **DEFEND** HIS **MINISTRY** SINCE HE WAS **WRITING** **SCRIPTURE** AT A TIME WHEN THE **NEW TESTAMENT** WAS **NOT WRITTEN**. TODAY, WE **DEFEND** THE **AUTHORITY** OF THE **BIBLE** AS THE **WORD** OF **GOD**, TO THOSE WHO DO **NOT ACCEPT** ITS **AUTHORITY**.



IN THE **ACTS** OF THE **APOSTLES**, **GOD** **CONFIRMED** THE MESSAGE OF THE **GOSPEL** WITH **MIRACLES** WHEREVER IT WAS BEING **PREACHED** FOR THE **FIRST** TIME. AND **GOD** IS DOING SUCH **MIRACLES** EVEN **TODAY** IN **REMOTE** AREAS WHERE THE **GOSPEL** IS BEING **PREACHED** FOR THE **FIRST** TIME.



PAUL THEN SAYS THAT HE DID **NOT** RECEIVE THE **GOSPEL** FROM **MAN** (1:12), BUT BY **DIRECT REVELATION** FROM **CHRIST**. ONCE HE HAD BEEN VERY **ZEALOUS** FOR THE **LAW** AND HAD **PROMOTED** IT.



BUT WHEN GOD REVEALED HIS SON TO PAUL'S HEART, HE DID NOT CONSULT WITH MAN BUT WENT STRAIGHTAWAY TO ARABIA AND THEN WENT TO JERUSALEM ONLY THREE YEARS LATER (1:16, 17).



HE HAD SPENT THREE YEARS IN GAMALIEL'S BIBLE SCHOOL IN JERUSALEM, ACQUIRING WRONG IDEAS ABOUT GOD AND ABOUT HOW ONE COULD BE SAVED THROUGH THE LAW. SO IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GOD TOOK HIM AWAY TO THE DESERT FOR THREE YEARS TO GET ALL THAT CHAFF OUT OF HIS HEAD AND TO GIVE HIM REVELATION ON THE NEW-COVENANT GOSPEL.



UNDER THE OLD COVENANT, THE EMPHASIS WAS ONLY ON 'MEDITATION.' IT'S IMPORTANT WHEN STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES, THAT WE GET REVELATION ON IT FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND IT.



THE DEVIL ALSO UNDERSTANDS AND BELIEVES IN THAT WAY. BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE SATAN. REVELATION ON SCRIPTURE CHANGES YOUR LIFE, YOUR AMBITIONS, YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD MONEY, YOUR ATTITUDE TO YOUR ENEMIES AND YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS SIN.



GAMALIEL, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, WAS A GOD-FEARING MAN (ACTS 5:34--39). BUT HE DID NOT HAVE THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. SO HE COULD NOT LEAD THE STUDENTS IN HIS BIBLE SCHOOL INTO DIVINE TRUTH.



IN CHRISTENDOM, WE FIND PEOPLE WHO HAVE GONE TO TWO EXTREMES. SOME ARE TOTALLY INTELLECTUAL AND DO NOT BELIEVE IN REVELATION; THEY ARE DEAD SPIRITUALLY. THEN THERE ARE OTHERS WHO BELIEVE IN REVELATION BUT WHO HAVE TAKEN IT TO ANOTHER EXTREME. THEY TALK ABOUT SPECIAL REVELATIONS THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED, THAT ARE NOT IN THE BIBLE. THESE ARE EXTREMISTS AND CULTISTS.

IN ARABIA HE HAD RECEIVED REVELATION ON THE MYSTERIES OF GOD. THEN GOD GAVE HIM ANOTHER REVELATION AND TOLD HIM TO GO TO JERUSALEM AND SUBMIT THIS GOSPEL HE WAS NOW PREACHING PRIVATELY TO GODLY LEADERS IN THE CHURCH THERE -- TO CHECK UP WHETHER HE WAS TEACHING THE TRUTH. IT IS A SAFETY FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE TO GO TO OLDER PEOPLE AND CONFIRM WHETHER THEIR REVELATIONS ARE FROM GOD. THAT WILL SAVE YOU FROM BEING IMBALANCED AND WILL PROTECT YOU FROM FALSE TEACHING.



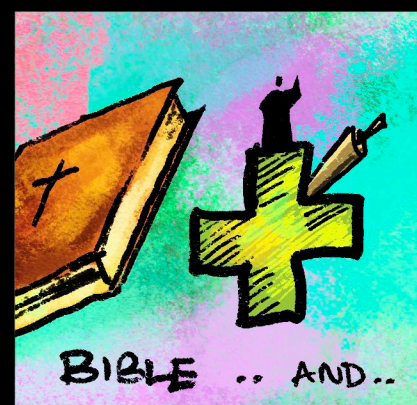
IN THOSE DAYS, THERE WERE FALSE BROTHERS WHO CAME INTO THE CHURCH TO SPY OUT THE LIBERTY THAT PEOPLE WERE HAVING IN CHRIST AND PREACHING ABOUT AND WANTED TO BRING THEM INTO BONDAGE AGAIN (2:4). PAUL WOULD NOT LISTEN TO THEM AT ALL.



IN THOSE DAYS, SOME JEWISH CHRISTIANS SAID, "YOU MUST BE CIRCUMCISED IN ORDER TO BE SAVED". TODAY SOME CHURCH LEADERS SAY, "YOU MUST REMOVE YOUR JEWELLERY BEFORE WE WILL BAPTISE YOU", OR "YOU MUST GET RID OF YOUR TELEVISION SET BEFORE WE WILL ALLOW YOU TO BREAK BREAD WITH US".



SUCH LEGALISM HAS BEEN AROUND IN CHRISTENDOM FOR CENTURIES, IN DIFFERENT FORMS. LEGALISTS HAVE ALWAYS SOUGHT TO ADD SOMETHING OR THE OTHER TO THE SIMPLE MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN CHRIST FOR SALVATION.





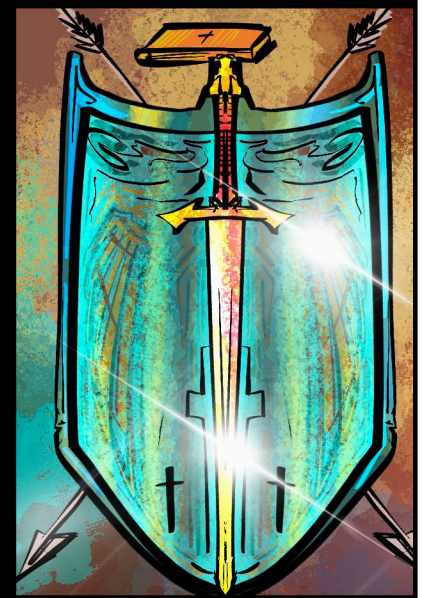
ARE YOU IN A CHURCH-SYSTEM WHOSE TOP LEADERS BELIEVE SOMETHING THAT YOU KNOW IS A TRADITION? THOSE ELDERS ARE BRINGING A WHOLE LOT OF PEOPLE INTO BONDAGE THROUGH THOSE TRADITIONS.



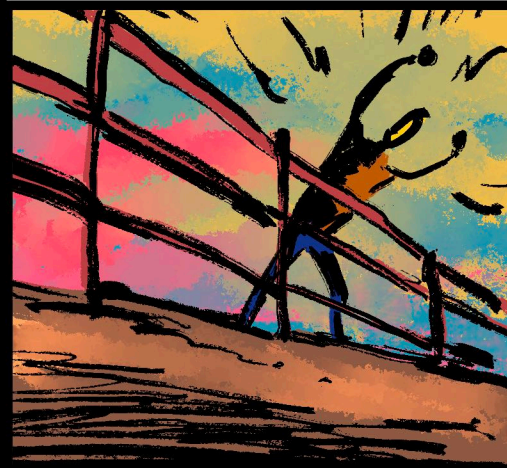
HOW MANY ARE THERE, WHO HAVE COURAGE LIKE PAUL, TO CONFRONT SUCH ELDERS AND TO TELL THEM THAT THEY ARE WRONG. PAUL CONFRONTED EVEN PETER. "PETER CAME TO ANTIOCH, AND I OPPOSED HIM TO THE FACE" (2:11).



THERE IS SOMETHING WONDERFUL WE SEE HERE ABOUT PETER, JAMES AND JOHN. PAUL WHO WAS MUCH YOUNGER THAN THEM, BEGAN HAVING A WIDER MINISTRY THAN THEM -- AND THEY HAD THE GRACE TO RECOGNISE IT AND ENCOURAGE HIM IN IT.



WHY ARE THERE SO FEW LIKE PAUL? BECAUSE MOST CHRISTIANS ARE DIPLOMATIC AND SEEK TO PLEASE MEN. THEY MISTAKE THEIR COMPROMISING ATTITUDE FOR GENTLENESS AND HUMILITY. WHEN IT COMES TO THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL, WE MUST NOT SEEK OUR REPUTATION. TRUTH IS NOT OUR PROPERTY. IT IS GOD'S AND SO WE HAVE TO DEFEND IT.



MOST CHRISTIANS WOULD FIGHT TOOTH AND NAIL FOR THEIR EARTHLY PROPERTY. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO GOD'S PROPERTY -- THE TRUTH -- THAT IS BEING STOLEN, MOST CHRISTIANS JUST KEEP QUIET.



PETER WAS A SENIOR APOSTLE, BUT WHAT HE WAS DOING WAS WRONG (2:12). HE USED TO EAT WITH THE GENTILES. BUT WHEN SOME PEOPLE CAME FROM JAMES (THE ELDER AT JERUSALEM), HE BECAME AFRAID OF WHAT JAMES WOULD THINK AND WITHDREW.



THAT WAS WHEN PAUL STOOD UP TO PETER. EVEN BARNABAS WAS CARRIED AWAY BY PETER'S HYPOCRISY (2:13). BARNABAS ALSO WAS SENIOR TO PAUL. HE WAS A GENTLE, GRACIOUS PERSON. HIS ATTITUDE MAY HAVE BEEN, "BROTHER PETER IS A SENIOR BROTHER. SO LET ME NOT SAY ANYTHING AND JUDGE THIS GODLY MAN." PAUL'S ATTITUDE, HOWEVER, WAS, "IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF WHETHER HE IS MORE GODLY. I AM NOT COMPARING MYSELF WITH HIM. WHAT HE IS DOING IS CONTRARY TO THE GOSPEL MESSAGE THAT WE ARE PREACHING."



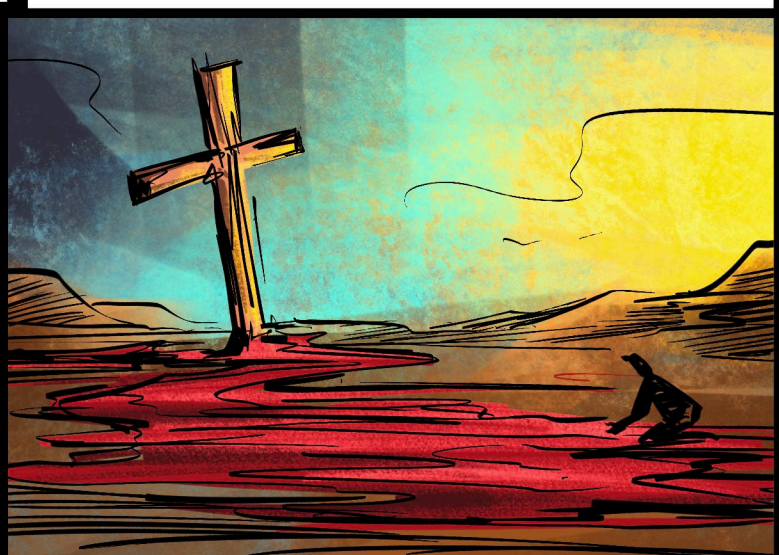
IN 2:20, WE SEE THE SECRET OF PAUL'S LIFE AND HOW HE HAD THE COURAGE TO STAND FOR THE TRUTH. HE WAS "CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST." THE OLD PAUL HAD DIED. CHRIST WAS LIVING IN HIM NOW.



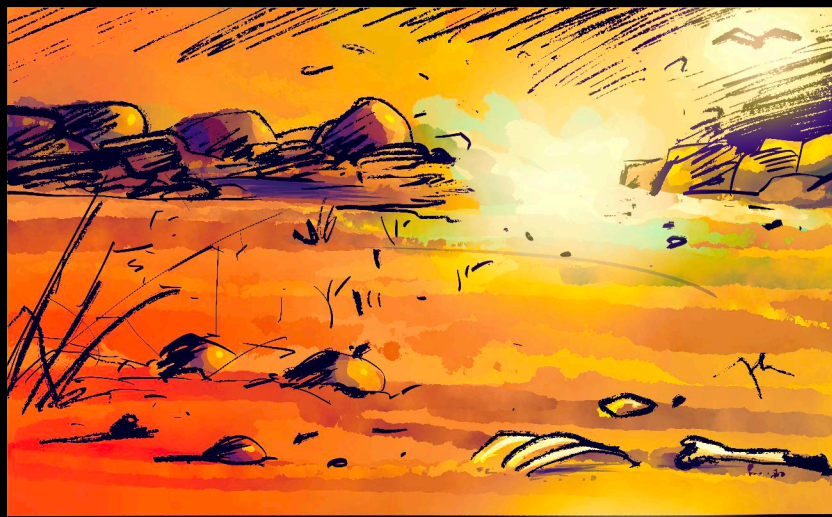
MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE UNDERSTOOD ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE WAY OF THE CROSS -- THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF IT -- DEATH TO SELF. BUT THERE'S ANOTHER GLORIOUS SIDE TO IT -- "CHRIST LIVES IN ME." DEATH TO SELF LEADS TO THE RESURRECTION-LIFE OF CHRIST. THEN HIS LIFE CAN BE MANIFESTED THROUGH US.



IN CHAPTER 3, PAUL SPEAKS ABOUT THE BASIS ON WHICH WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT -- NOT WORKS, BUT FAITH. HE ASKS THEM, "DID YOU RECEIVE THE SPIRIT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW?" (3:2). SOME PEOPLE IMAGINE THAT GOD WILL GIVE THEM THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IF THEY FAST AND PRAY SUFFICIENTLY.



BUT DID YOU GET FORGIVENESS OF YOUR SINS BECAUSE YOU FASTED AND PRAYED? NO. IT WAS A GIFT. FORGIVENESS OF SINS AND THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE BOTH GIVEN EXACTLY ON THE SAME BASIS: BY GRACE, WITHOUT WORKS.

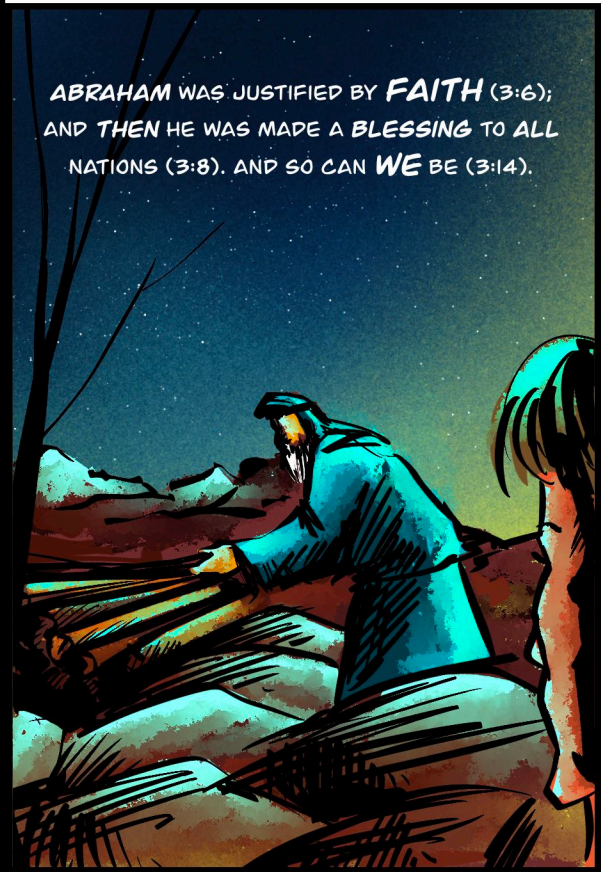


PAUL THEN ASKS THE GALATIANS, "IF YOU **STARTED** YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE BY **FAITH**, DO YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN NOW **PERFECT** IT BY **FLESHLY EFFORTS**?" IT WAS THE **HOLY SPIRIT** WHO **BROUGHT SALVATION** INTO YOUR LIFE, AND **HE** IS THE ONE WHO WILL **MAKE YOU HOLY** AS WELL.



THEN PAUL REMINDS THEM THAT THE **MIRACLES** GOD WORKED AMONG THEM WERE ALSO **NOT** AS A **RESULT** OF THEIR **WORKS** (3:5). THEY WERE IN **RESPONSE** TO THEIR **FAITH**. GOD DOES **AMAZING SUPERNATURAL WORKS** FOR HIS **CHILDREN** -- **NOT** BECAUSE THEY **DESERVE** IT OR BECAUSE OF ANY **GOOD WORKS** THEY DID, BUT BECAUSE OF THEIR **FAITH**.

**ABRAHAM** WAS JUSTIFIED BY **FAITH** (3:6); AND THEN HE WAS MADE A **BLESSING** TO ALL NATIONS (3:8). AND SO CAN **WE** BE (3:14).



IF YOU **DON'T** LIVE ACCORDING TO THE **STANDARD** OF THE **LAW**, YOU ARE **CURSED**. DEUTERONOMY 28 LISTS SOME OF THESE **CURSES**

WHEN **CHRIST** HUNG ON THE **CROSS**, HE **BECAME** A **CURSE** FOR US (3:13), TO **REMOVE** THE **CURSE** OF THE **LAW** FROM US. WE **DON'T** HAVE TO LIVE IN **FEAR** OF ANY **GENERATIONAL CURSE** NOW.



THE BLESSING GIVEN BY GOD TO ABRAHAM WAS: "ALL NATIONS AND ALL FAMILIES ON EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOU" (3:8). SO THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT COMING INTO OUR LIVES IS TO MAKE US A BLESSING TO EVERY PERSON WE MEET.



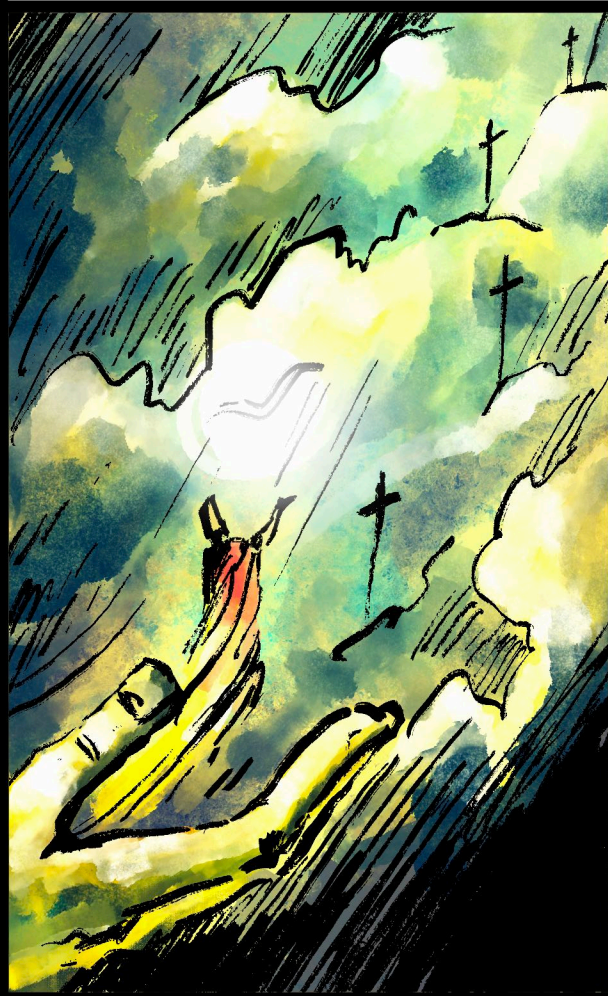
IN THE REST OF CHAPTER 3, WE READ ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE. IN 3:24, WE ARE TOLD THAT "THE LAW IS LIKE A CHILD-TRAINER (OR NANNY) THAT LEADS US TO CHRIST."



ONE FUNCTION OF THE LAW WAS TO SHOW US THAT NO MATTER HOW HOLY A MAN WAS, HE COULD NEVER RISE UP TO GOD'S STANDARD. PASS MARKS IN GOD'S KINGDOM IS 100%. THE BEST AMONG US GET 0%!! FOR 1500 YEARS, THE ISRAELITES TRIED TO KEEP THE LAW, BUT FAILED REPEATEDLY. THEY WERE LIKE THE DISCIPLES WHO WENT FISHING AND CAUGHT NO FISH (0%) THE WHOLE NIGHT (JOHN 21). FINALLY, THEY LOOKED TO THE LORD AND HE FILLED THEIR BOAT WITH FISH (100%) IN A MOMENT.



WE ALL GET 0% BY GOD'S STANDARDS. BUT GOD OFFERS US ALL 100 GRACE MARKS. THOSE WHO ACCEPT THE OFFER GET 100%. THOSE WHO REFUSE, HAVE TO LIVE WITH THEIR 0%. THUS, THOSE WHO ACCEPT THE 100 GRACE MARKS GO AHEAD OF ALL THE OTHERS, EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY BE WORSE STUDENTS!! THIS IS THE GOSPEL OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.



IT DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHO YOU ARE -- "YOU ARE ALL SONS OF GOD" (3:26). NOBODY IS BETTER THAN ANOTHER IN CHRIST'S BODY. THERE IS NO JEW OR GREEK, FREE MAN OR SLAVE, MALE OR FEMALE IN THE BODY. ALL ARE EQUALLY ACCEPTED BY GOD. AND WE MUST ACCEPT ALL PEOPLE EQUALLY, ONCE THEY HAVE COME TO CHRIST.



GOD DOESN'T LEAVE US THERE -- MERELY JUSTIFIED. HE WANTS TO SANCTIFY US ENTIRELY TOO. AND SO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST THAT WAS IMPUTED TO US, HE THEN IMPARTS TO US, DAY BY DAY, THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT, SO THAT IT BECOMES A PART OF OUR OWN NATURE. THUS WE PRESS ON TO PERFECTION.

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CHILD AND A SLAVE BECAUSE A CHILD CAN'T REALLY EXERCISE OWNERSHIP OF ANYTHING, EVEN IF HE OWNS EVERYTHING (4:1). BUT WHEN HE BECOMES AN ADULT SON, THEN HE CAN EXERCISE HIS OWNERSHIP OF EVERYTHING. UNDER THE LAW GOD TREATED PEOPLE LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN. UNDER GRACE, WE ARE TREATED LIKE ADULT SONS.

WE HAVE TO TEACH A CHILD EVERY LITTLE THING. BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO REMIND AN ADULT TO BRUSH HIS TEETH IN THE MORNING! UNDER THE NEW COVENANT, YOU FIND PRINCIPLES AND NOT DETAILED RULES. WHEN CHRISTIANS TAKE THOSE PRINCIPLES AND MAKE DETAILED RULES OUT OF THEM, THEY BECOME PHARISEES.



IN 4:13, PAUL TELLS US THAT HE PREACHED IN GALATIA FOR THE FIRST TIME BECAUSE HE WAS SICK. HE DIDN'T PLAN TO STAY IN GALATIA INITIALLY, BUT ONLY TO PASS THROUGH. AS THE OLD SAYING GOES, "DISAPPOINTMENTS ARE HIS (GOD'S) APPOINTMENTS."



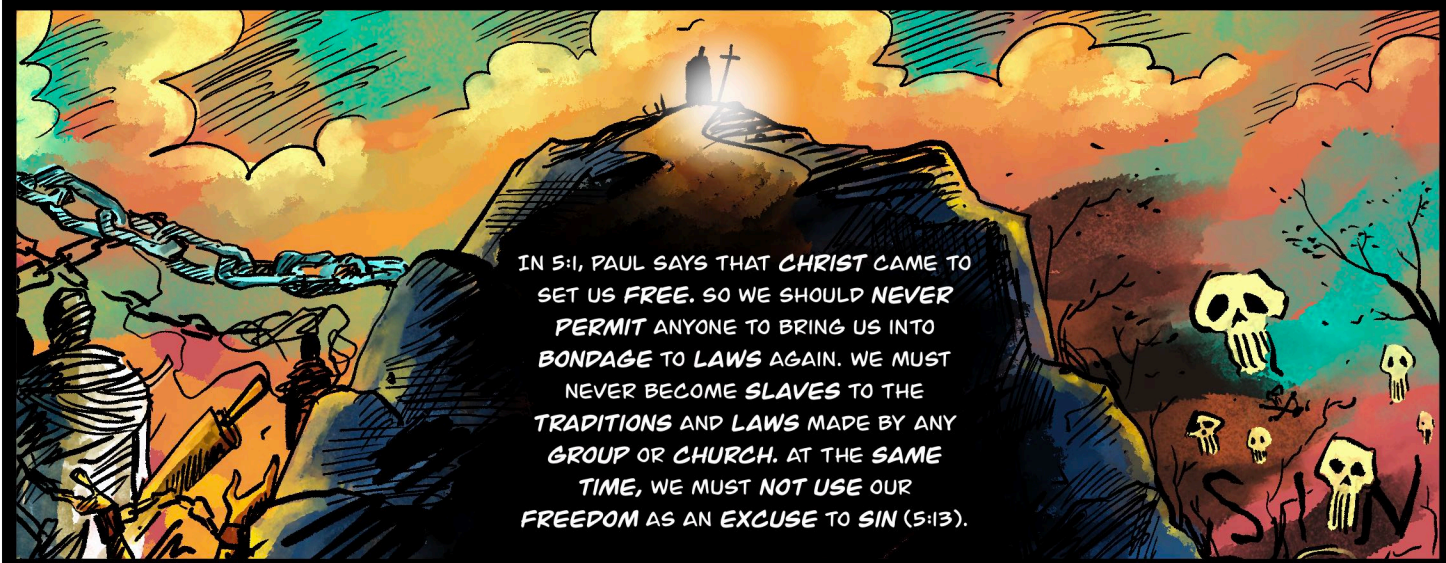
IN 4:19, PAUL COMPARES HIMSELF TO A MOTHER GOING INTO LABOUR TO DELIVER A CHILD. HE IS REFERRING TO THE BURDEN HE HAS IN HIS HEART THAT THE IMAGE OF CHRIST SHOULD BE FORMED IN THE GALATIANS.



AN EMBRYO IN ITS MOTHER'S WOMB LOOKS MORE LIKE A TADPOLE THAN A HUMAN BEING, WITH A BIG HEAD AND A SMALL BODY THAT LOOKS LIKE A TAIL. BUT AFTER NINE MONTHS IT COMES OUT OF THE WOMB AS A PERFECTLY SHAPED BABY.



PAUL IS SAYING "YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE CHRIST AT ALL. THE DIVINE SEED IS THERE IN YOU, BUT THINGS ARE DISPROPORTIONATE"



IN 5:1, PAUL SAYS THAT CHRIST CAME TO SET US FREE. SO WE SHOULD NEVER PERMIT ANYONE TO BRING US INTO BONDAGE TO LAWS AGAIN. WE MUST NEVER BECOME SLAVES TO THE TRADITIONS AND LAWS MADE BY ANY GROUP OR CHURCH. AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST NOT USE OUR FREEDOM AS AN EXCUSE TO SIN (5:13).



THE ONLY RIGHT WAY TO BE FREE FROM THE LAW IS TO BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. OTHERWISE WE WILL SINK LOWER THAN THE LAW AND LIVE IN SIN. BUT IF WE WALK ACCORDING TO THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT, THEN WE WILL NOT DESCEND TO THE LEVEL OF THE FLESH.

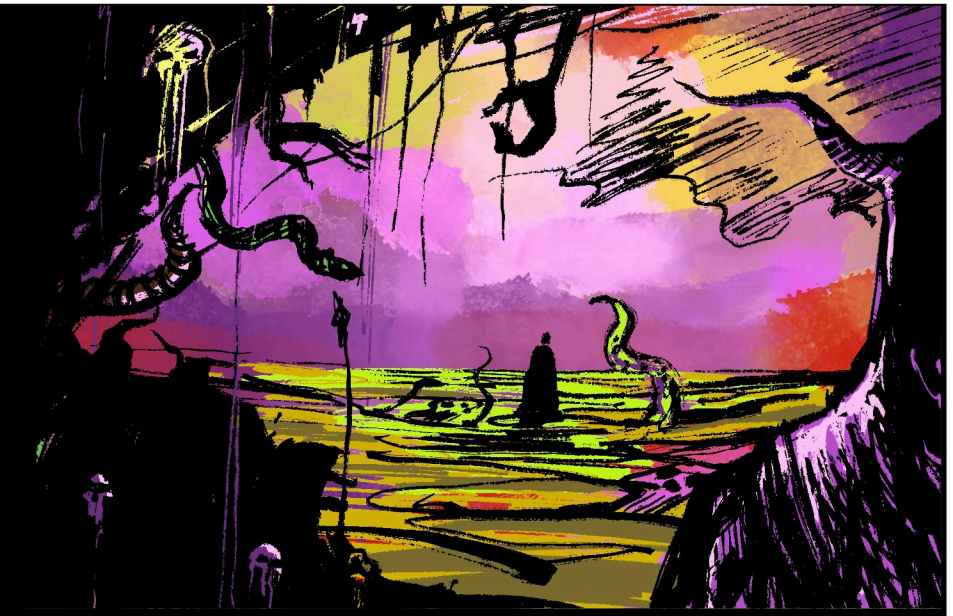


LOOK AT THESE THREE LEVELS OF LIFE AS THE THREE FLOORS OF A BUILDING. IF YOU ARE NOT LIVING ON THE THIRD FLOOR (LED BY THE SPIRIT), AND YOU DESTROY THE SECOND FLOOR (LED BY THE LAW), YOU WILL DESCEND TO THE FIRST FLOOR (LED BY THE FLESH). IF YOU SAY, "I AM NOT LED BY THE LAW BECAUSE JESUS HAS ABOLISHED THE LAW," THEN YOU BETTER BE LED BY THE SPIRIT. OTHERWISE, YOU WILL DESCEND TO THE LEVEL OF THE FLESH.



THIS IS WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MULTITUDES OF BELIEVERS. THEY HAVE READ IN GALATIANS THAT WE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW. BUT THEY DO NOT LIVE ACCORDING TO THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT. THE RESULT IS THEY LIVE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH. THAT IS WHY WE FIND CHRISTIAN LEADERS TODAY DOING THINGS MUCH WORSE THAN WHAT PEOPLE DID WHO LIVED UNDER THE LAW. THE LAW IS NECESSARY FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT WANT TO BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE HOLY SPIRIT THEN DESCRIBES WHAT LIFE IN THE FLESH IS LIKE (5:19--21): **IMPURITY, IDOLATRY (WORSHIP OF MONEY AND PEOPLE), ENMITY, STRIFE, JEALOUSY, OUTBURSTS OF ANGER, DISPUTES, DISSENSIONS, FACTIONS, ETC.** ARE THESE FOUND ONLY AMONG UNBELIEVERS? NO. EVEN SO-CALLED "BELIEVERS" INDULGE IN THESE SINS. WHY? BECAUSE THEY THREW AWAY THE LAW BEFORE ENTERING INTO A LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. SUCH WILL NOT INHERIT GOD'S KINGDOM (5:21).



ON THE OTHER HAND, THOSE WHO ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT WILL BRING FORTH IN THEIR LIVES THE **FRUIT OF "LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL"** (5:22, 23). IF WE LIVE BY THE SPIRIT, LET US ALSO WALK BY THE SPIRIT.

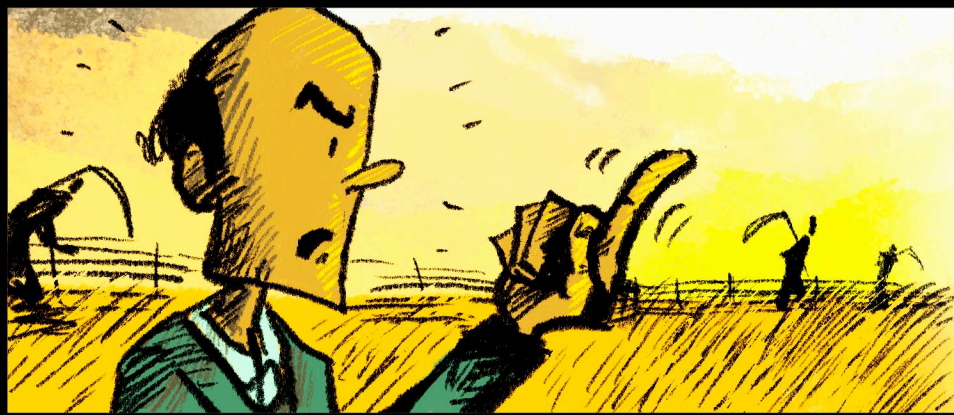
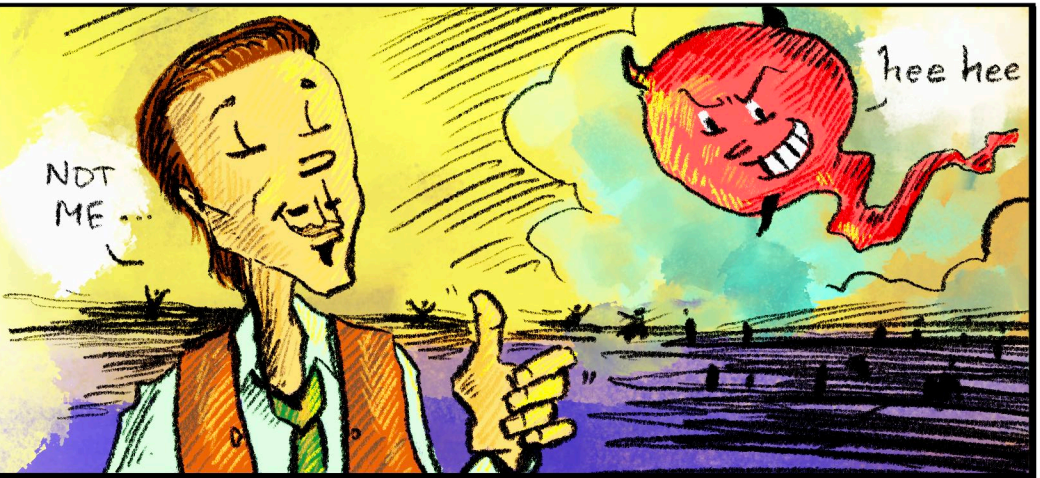


IN CHAPTER 6:1, PAUL SAYS, "IF YOU SEE A BROTHER WHO HAS FALLEN AWAY FROM THIS STANDARD OF LIFE THAT I AM DESCRIBING, DON'T CRITICISE HIM. IF YOU ARE A SPIRITUAL MAN, GO AND HELP HIM. YOU COULD ALSO FALL LIKE HE DID." THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN HELP SOMEONE WHO HAS FALLEN IS THE ONE WHO RECOGNISES THAT HE TOO CAN FALL IN THE SAME WAY. IF HE DOESN'T RECOGNISE THIS, HE LACKS 'THE SPIRIT OF GENTLENESS' THAT CAN RESTORE BACKSLIPPEN BELIEVERS.

HERE ... HOLD THIS...

WE MUST BEAR THE BURDENS OF OTHERS IF WE ARE TO FULFIL THE LAW OF CHRIST. THERE IS A BALANCE HOWEVER HERE, FOR IT SAYS: "BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS" AND THEN IT SAYS, "EACH PERSON MUST BEAR HIS OWN BURDEN" (6:2, 5). SO WE MUST NEVER SEEK TO PUT OUR BURDENS ON OTHERS.

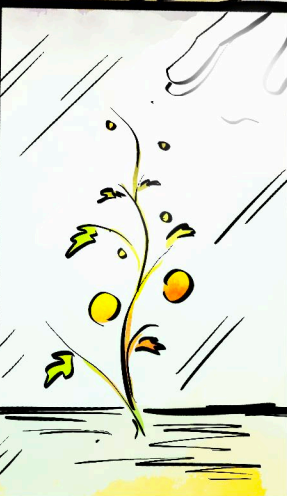
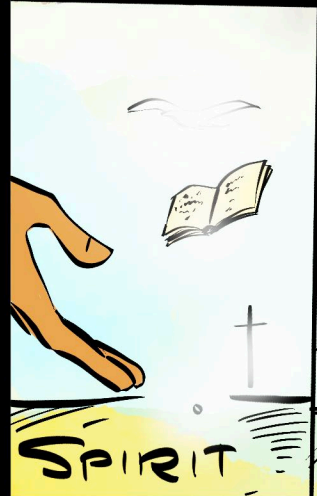
IN 6:3, PAUL WARNS HAUGHTY BELIEVERS, "IF ANYONE THINKS THAT HE IS SOMEBODY GREAT COMPARED TO OTHER BELIEVERS, HE IS ACTUALLY A NOBODY." HE WILL BE USELESS IN GOD'S SERVICE. IF YOU SEE A BROTHER FALL, DON'T THINK THAT YOU ARE SUPERIOR TO HIM IN ANY WAY. YOU HAVE THE SAME FLESH AS HE HAS. GOD'S MERCY AND GRACE KEPT YOU FROM FALLING. YOU SHOULD NEVER FORGET THAT.



PAUL GOES ON TO SAY, "EXAMINE YOUR OWN WORK AND SEE WHAT GOD HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THROUGH YOU." IN 1 CORINTHIANS 11:28, WE ARE COMMANDED TO EXAMINE OURSELVES -- OUR LIFE. HERE WE ARE COMMANDED TO EXAMINE OUR WORK. MANY BELIEVERS CRITICISE OTHERS WHEN THEY THEMSELVES HAVEN'T ACCOMPLISHED EVEN 1% OF WHAT THOSE OTHERS HAVE DONE FOR THE LORD.



IN 2:20, HE SAYS THAT HE HIMSELF WAS CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST. IN 5:24, HE SAYS THAT THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH ITS PASSIONS AND DESIRES. THEN HERE IN 6:14, HE SAYS THAT THROUGH THE CROSS OF CHRIST, THE WORLD WAS CRUCIFIED TO HIM AND HE WAS CRUCIFIED TO THE WORLD. SELF, THE FLESH AND THE WORLD -- ALL THREE -- WERE CRUCIFIED.



THERE IS A CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN LIVING IN THE SPIRIT, AND WALKING THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

IN 6:7, 8, WE ARE REMINDED THAT EVERYONE WILL REAP WHATEVER HE SOWS. THOSE WHO SOW TO THE FLESH WILL DIE ETERNALLY, WHEREAS THOSE WHO SOW TO THE SPIRIT WILL REAP ETERNAL LIFE.