

Through the Bible

JAMES II

Zac Poonen

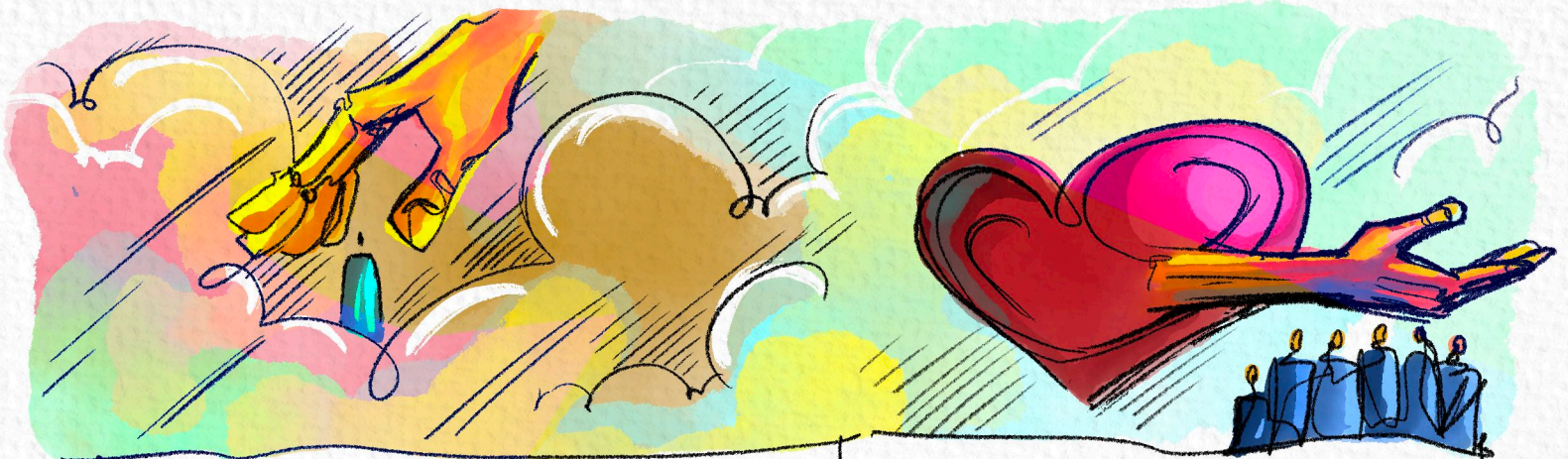


Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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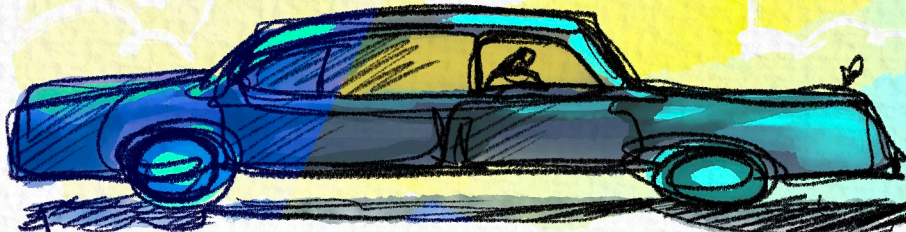
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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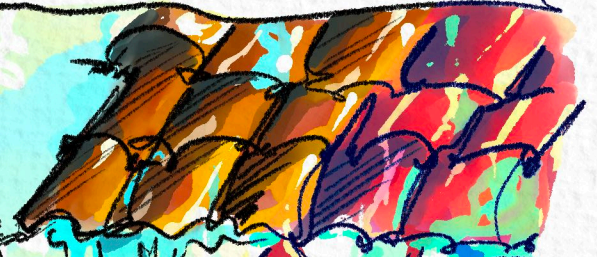


IN 2:12, 13, TELLS US THAT THOSE WHO ARE **MERCILESS** TO OTHERS (FOR ANY REASON) WILL FIND THAT **GOD** WILL SHOW THEM NO MERCY WHEN HE JUDGES **THEM** IN THE **FINAL** DAY.

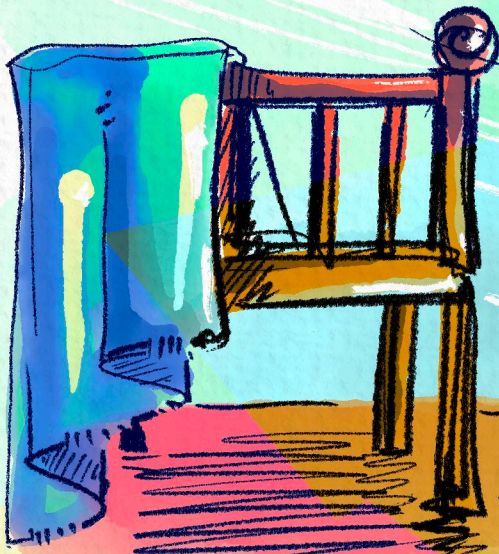
IN 2:14--26, WE ARE TOLD THAT **GENUINE** FAITH WILL ALWAYS PRODUCE A **HELPING** ATTITUDE TOWARDS PEOPLE WHO ARE IN **PHYSICAL** NEED.



NOTE THAT HE IS **NOT** TALKING ABOUT BUYING THE **POOR** BROTHER A **CAR**. HE IS ONLY TALKING ABOUT THE **NECESSITIES** OF LIFE.



IF A BROTHER IS **SHIVERING** IN THE **COLD**, OR HIS HOUSE IS **LEAKING** AND HE CAN'T **SLEEP** PROPERLY AT NIGHT, IT IS NO USE SAYING, "**PRAISE** THE LORD, BROTHER. WE WILL **PRAY** FOR YOU". THERE IS NO NEED TO PRAY THERE. JUST GET HIM A **BLANKET** AND GIVE HIM SOME **MONEY** TO **FIX** HIS **ROOF**.



2:26 WE COULD SAY IS THE CENTRAL VERSE OF THE EPISTLE: "FOR JUST AS THE **BODY** WITHOUT THE **SPIRIT** IS DEAD, SO ALSO **FAITH** WITHOUT **WORKS** IS DEAD."

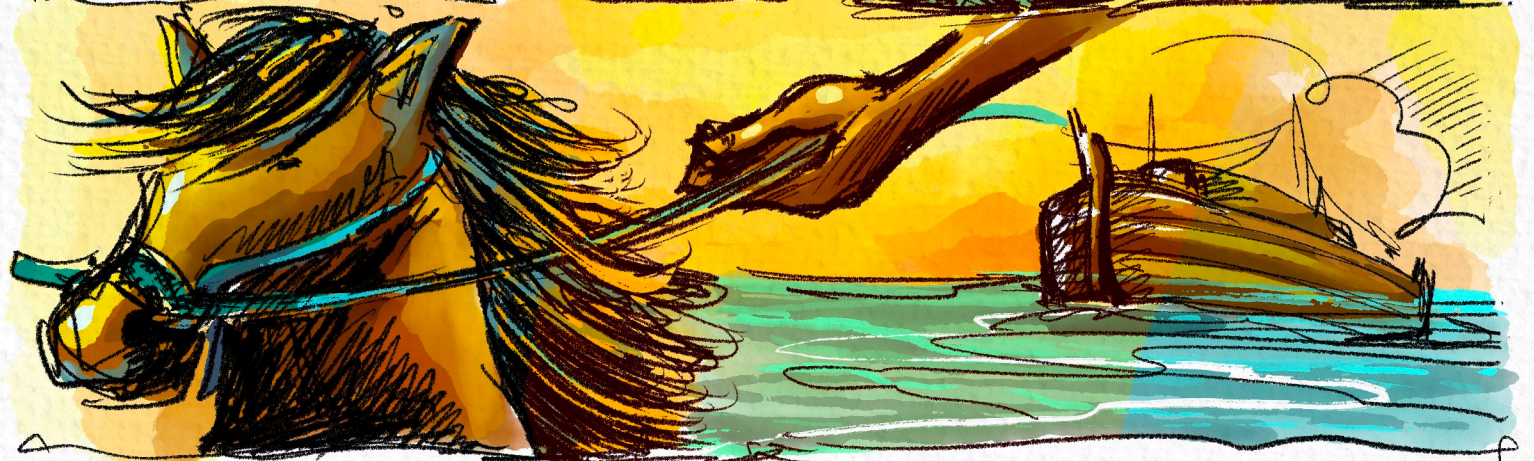
ABRAHAM HAD **FAITH**, BUT HE **PROVED** IT BY OFFERING UP HIS **SON** (2:21). HIS FAITH WAS PROVED BY HIS **WORKS**.





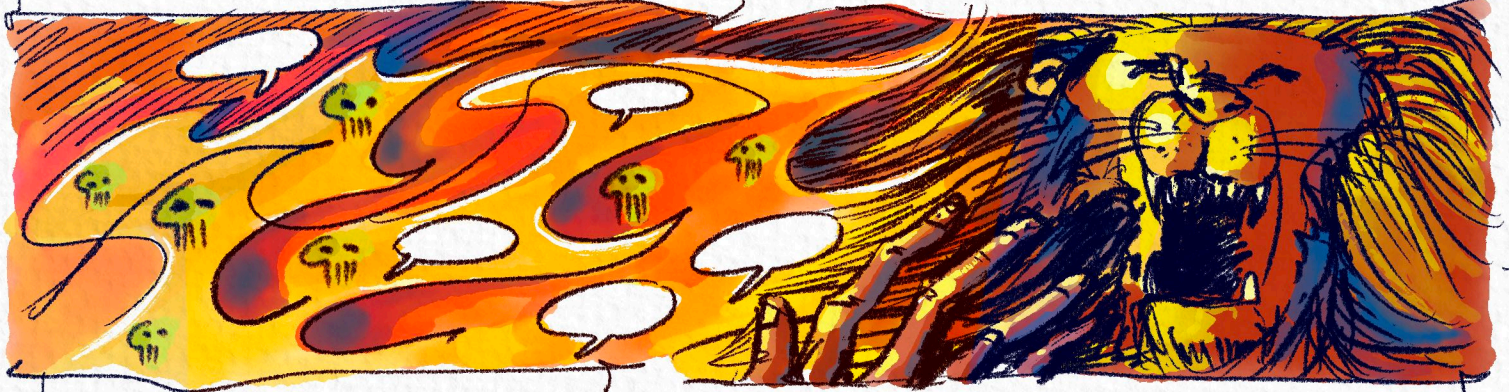
CHAPTER 3 IS THE GREAT CHAPTER IN THE BIBLE ABOUT THE USE OF THE TONGUE.

IF YOU WANT TO BE A SPOKESMAN FOR GOD, YOU MUST FIRST OF ALL, "REMOVE ALL THE WORTHLESS FROM THE PRECIOUS" IN YOUR ORDINARY DAY-TO-DAY CONVERSATION (JEREMIAH 15:19).



THE TONGUE IS LIKE THE BIT THAT IS PUT INTO A HORSE'S MOUTH WITH WHICH THE HORSE CAN BE CONTROLLED AND TURNED IN ANY DIRECTION (3:3).

THE TONGUE IS ALSO COMPARED TO THE RUDDER OF A SHIP (3:4). IT IS A SMALL PIECE AT THE BACK OF THE SHIP THAT TURNS A HUGE SHIP IN THE DIRECTION IT SHOULD GO.



IT'S ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE BODY, BUT WHAT A FIRE IT CAN START (3:5)! MANY BELIEVERS' TONGUES ARE SET ON FIRE WITH THE FIRE OF HELL (3:6).

"NOBODY CAN TAME THE TONGUE" (3:7, 8). IN A CIRCUS, EVEN LIONS AND TIGERS ARE TAMED -- AND SOME MEN EVEN PUT THEIR HEADS INSIDE THE LION'S MOUTH -- AND THE LION DOESN'T BITE THEM OFF.

WE MUST ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO TAME IT IN US. THAT WAS WHY WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT FELL UPON PEOPLE ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, A TONGUE OF FIRE RESTED ON THEIR HEADS. IT'S A GREAT TRAGEDY THAT MANY WHO PREACH THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY ARE MORE EAGER TO GET PEOPLE SPEAK IN OTHER TONGUES THAN TO LEAD THEM TO SPEAK GRACIOUSLY AT ALL TIMES IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE.





HOW CAN WE BLESS GOD IN THE CHURCH-MEETING AND THEN CURSE MEN AFTERWARDS (3:9)?

IN 3:13, JAMES SAYS, "IF YOU ARE A WISE MAN SHOW YOUR WISDOM BY THE GENTLENESS OF YOUR ACTIONS." WISE MEN ARE GENTLE IN THE WAY THEY COMMUNICATE THEIR WISDOM.



IF YOU HAVE SELFISH AMBITION AND WANT TO SHOW THAT YOU ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS, THAT YOU CAN PRAY BETTER THAN OTHERS, OR PREACH BETTER THAN OTHERS, OR THAT YOUR CHURCH IS BETTER THAN THAT OF OTHERS, OR THAT YOU ARE ACCOMPLISHING MORE THAN OTHERS, THEN YOU ARE EARTHLY-MINDED, SOULISH AND DEMONIC (3:15).

WHEN GOD BLESSES SOMEONE'S MINISTRY, OTHERS CAN BECOME JEALOUS OF HIM AND THEN CRITICISE HIM. SUCH PEOPLE ARE INFLUENCED BY DEMONS.



WE CAN DISAGREE WITH THE WRONG DOCTRINES PEOPLE PREACH AND THE UN-CHRISTLIKE METHODS THEY USE -- AND EVEN EXPOSE THOSE ERRORS. BUT WE MUST NEVER JUDGE PEOPLE.

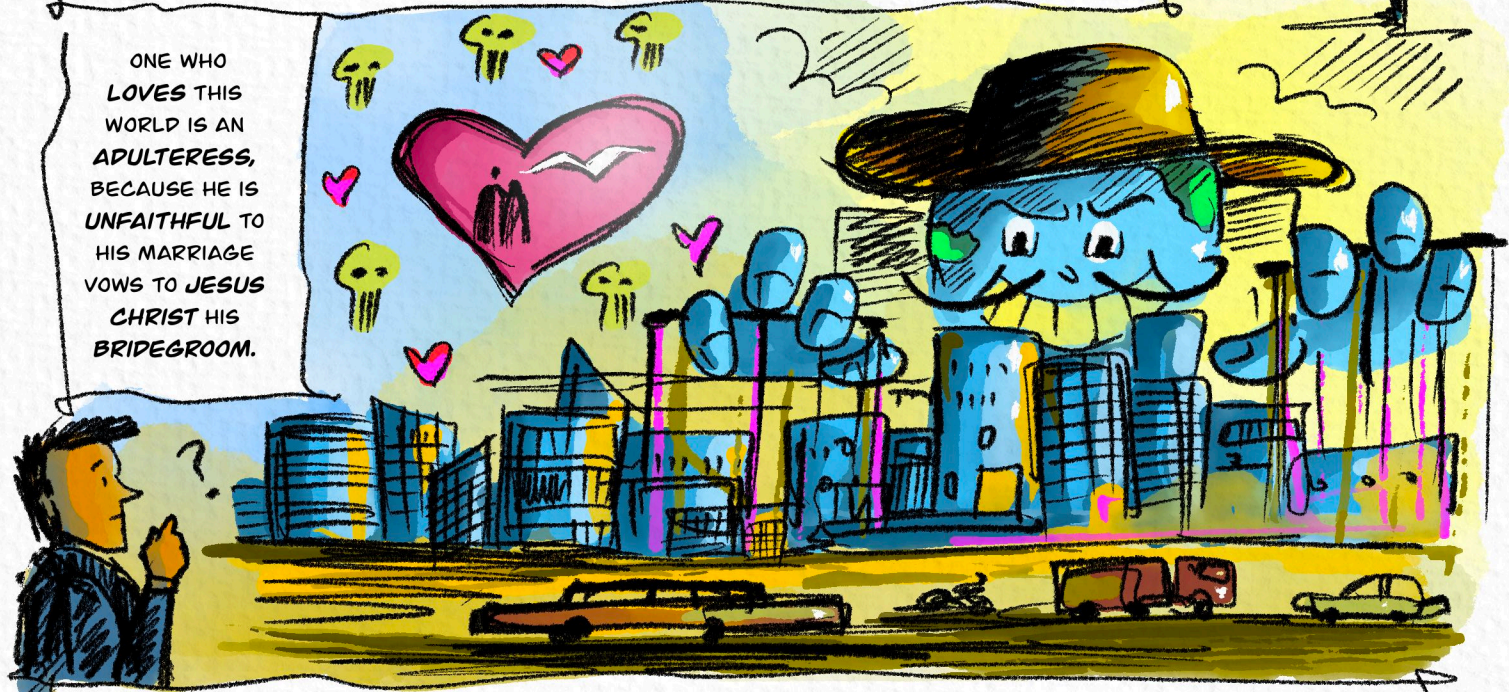
PROVERBS 9:1 SPEAKS OF THE SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM. THOSE PILLARS ARE LISTED HERE (IN 3:17): PURITY, PEACEABLENESS, GENTLENESS, BEING REASONABLE, BEING FULL OF MERCY, BEING UNWAVERING (WITHOUT PARTIALITY) AND BEING WITHOUT HYPOCRISY.



WHERE WE LACK ANY OF THESE, WE ARE URGED IN 1:5 TO PRAY AND ASK GOD FOR THEM AND WE ARE PROMISED THAT GOD WILL GIVE US THESE QUALITIES LIBERALLY.

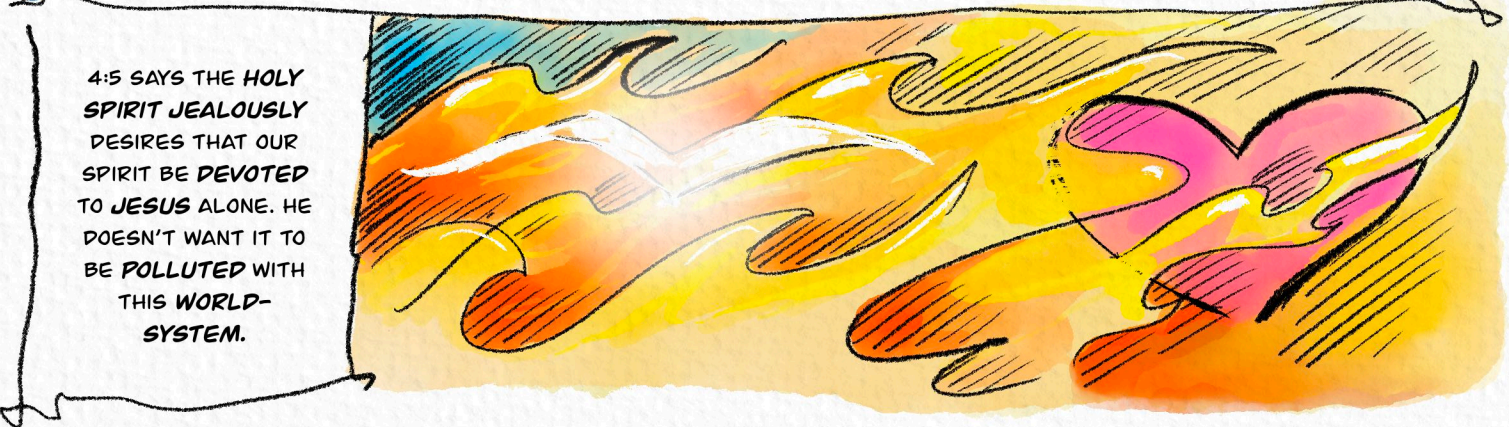


IN 4:4, JAMES SAYS THAT FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD MAKES YOU THE ENEMY OF GOD.



ONE WHO LOVES THIS WORLD IS AN ADULTERESS, BECAUSE HE IS UNFAITHFUL TO HIS MARRIAGE VOWS TO JESUS CHRIST HIS BRIDEGROOM.

FRIENDSHIP OF THIS WORLD DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T HAVE FRIENDS IN THE WORLD. HE IS TALKING HERE ABOUT THE WORLD-SYSTEM, THE PRINCIPLES BY WHICH THIS WORLD OPERATES.



4:5 SAYS THE HOLY SPIRIT JEALOUSLY DESIRES THAT OUR SPIRIT BE DEVOTED TO JESUS ALONE. HE DOESN'T WANT IT TO BE POLLUTED WITH THIS WORLD-SYSTEM.



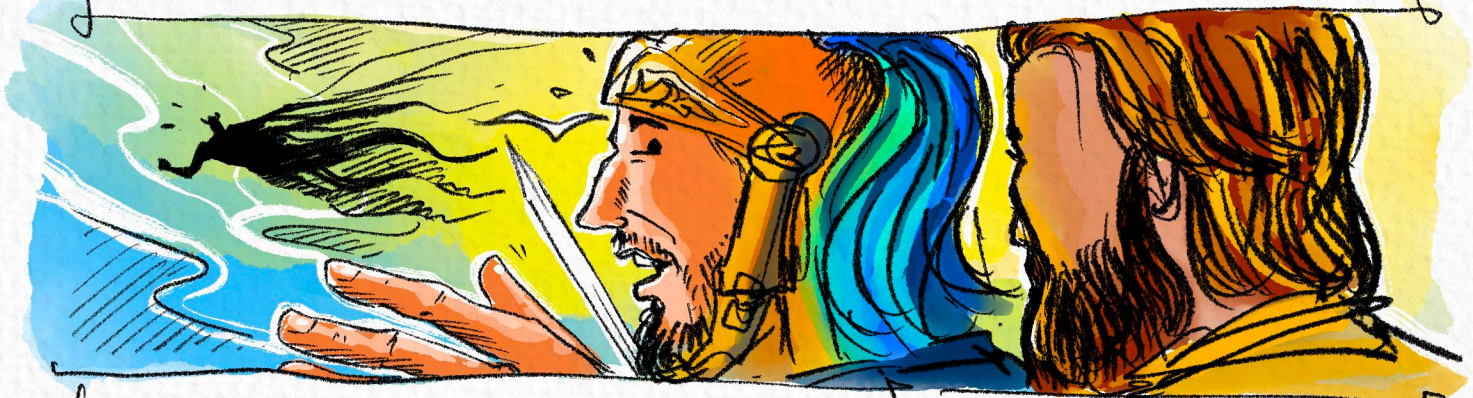
IF WE ARE **HUMBLE**, GOD WILL GIVE US **GRACE** TO KEEP OURSELVES **UNSPOTTED** BY THE **WORLD** (4:6).



BUT IF WE ARE **PROUD**, GOD WILL ALWAYS **RESIST** US. IN OTHER WORDS, IF WE ARE **PROUD**, GOD WILL KEEP ON **PUSHING** US **BACK**. THE **DEVIL** IS **ALREADY** **PUSHING** US **BACK**. THE **LUSTS** IN OUR **FLESH** ARE ALSO **PUSHING** US **BACK**. ON **TOP** OF THAT, IF **GOD** ALSO **STARTS** **PUSHING** US **BACK**, WE WILL HAVE **NO** **HOPE** AT ALL.



BWARE WHEN THOUGHTS OF **PRIDE** AND **SELF-CONGRATULATION** ENTER YOUR **MIND** BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU **ARE**, WHAT YOU **KNOW**, OR WHAT YOU HAVE **ACCOMPLISHED**. GIVE **GOD** THE **GLORY** AND **CREDIT** FOR IT ALL.



IF WE **SUBMIT** TO **GOD** **TOTALLY** **FIRST** AND THEN **RESIST** THE **DEVIL**, HE WILL ALWAYS **FLEE** FROM US. THIS IS **GOD'S** **PROMISE** (4:7).

IF WE **DRAW** **NEAR** TO **GOD**, HE WILL ALWAYS **DRAW** **NEAR** TO **US** (4:8).



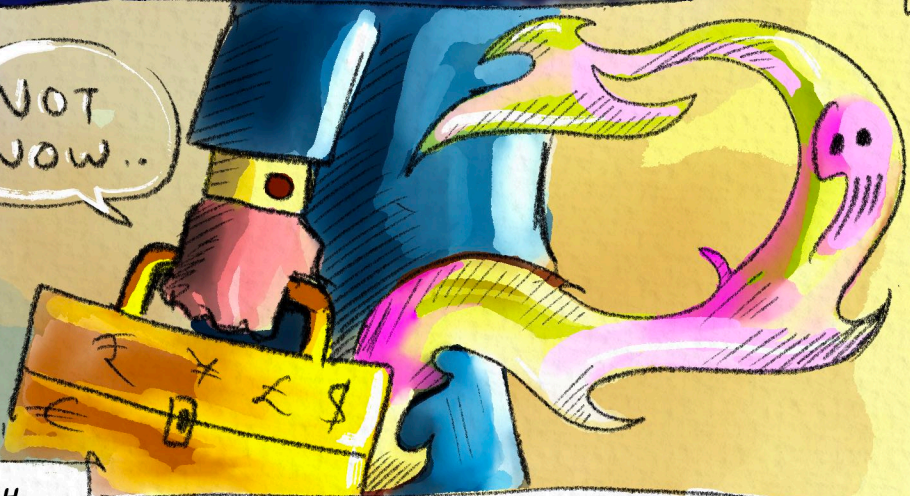
"DON'T SPEAK AGAINST OR **JUDGE** YOUR **BROTHERS**" (4:11).

JAMES THEN GIVES US A NUMBER OF **PRACTICAL** EXHORTATIONS. "**HUMBLE** YOURSELF IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD" (4:10).

● DON'T **BOAST** THAT YOU WILL DO THIS, THAT OR THE OTHER TOMORROW. REMEMBER THAT YOUR LIFE IS IN **GOD'S** HANDS AND IF **GOD** PERMITS YOU TO GO SOMEWHERE OR TO DO SOMETHING, GIVE **HIM** THE **CREDIT** FOR IT (4:13--17).

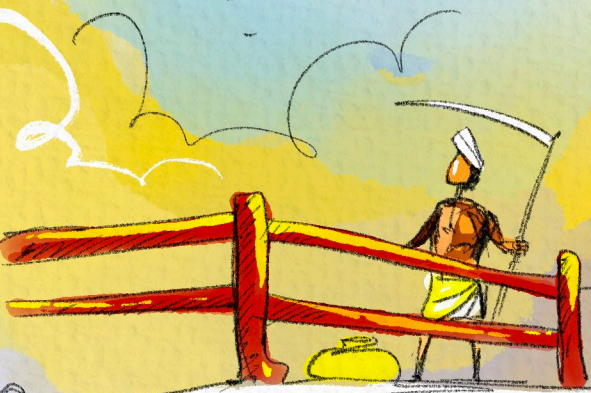


NOT NOW..



THEN JAMES SPEAKS TO THE **RICH** PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH. HE WARNS THEM **NOT** TO TRUST IN THEIR **WEALTH** AND TO ENSURE THAT THEY ALWAYS PAY THEIR **EMPLOYEES** PROPERLY.

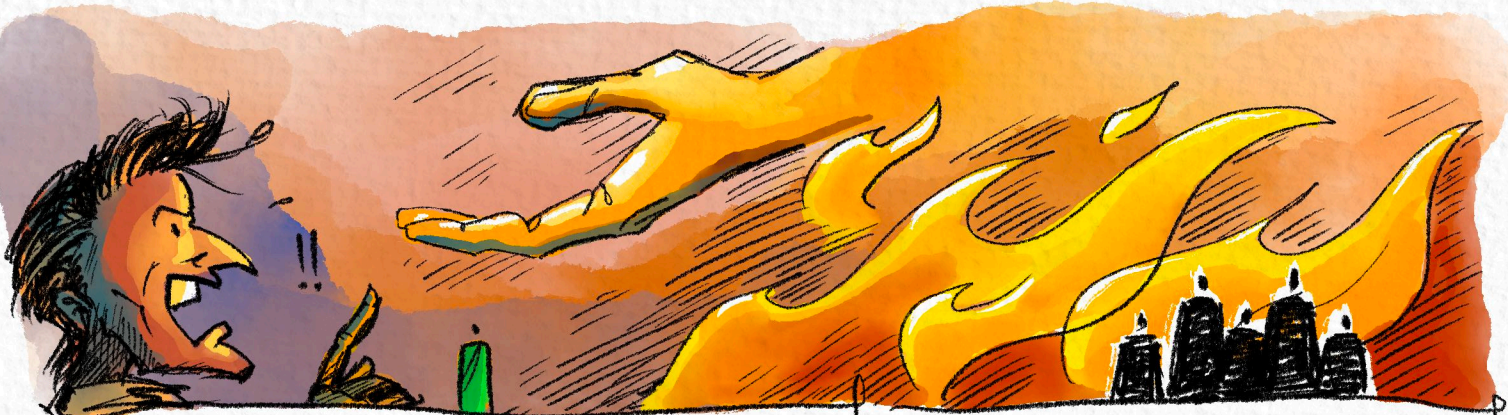
IF WE **DON'T** PAY OUR **SERVANTS** PROPERLY AND **THEREFORE** WE HAVE SOME **MORE** MONEY IN THE BANK, THERE WILL BE A **CURSE** ON THAT MONEY. IT WILL **CONSUME** OUR FLESH ONE DAY (5:3).



THEN JAMES SPEAKS TO THE ONES WHO ARE **SUFFERING**. HE ENCOURAGES THEM TO WAIT **PATIENTLY** FOR THE **COMING** OF THE LORD, LIKE A **FARMER** WAITS FOR THE **HARVEST** (5:7).



BY **PATIENCE** WE CAN **STRENGTHEN** OUR **HEARTS** (5:8).



AND THEN HE SPEAKS TO ALL BELIEVERS SAYING THAT WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE A COMPLAINT AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, FOR GOD WILL JUDGE THOSE WHO COMPLAIN (5:9).

WHEN WE ARE SUFFERING, WE SHOULD LOOK AT THE EXAMPLE OF ALL THE BIBLICAL PROPHETS WHO SUFFERED PATIENTLY (5:10).



THEN JAMES REMINDS US OF THE EXAMPLE OF JOB (5:11). WHAT A LOT HE SUFFERED! AND THEN SEE HOW THE LORD BLESSED HIM FINALLY.

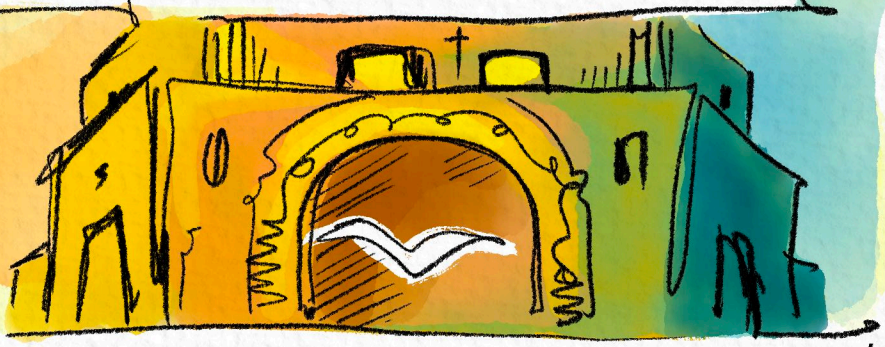


THEN JAMES GIVES A FEW CLOSING INSTRUCTIONS. ALWAYS SPEAK THE TRUTH (5:12).

IF YOU ARE SUFFERING, PRAY. IF YOU ARE CHEERFUL, SING PRAISES TO THE LORD (5:13).



IF YOU ARE SICK, CALL FOR THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH TO COME HOME AND PRAY FOR YOU. LET THEM TAKE A LITTLE OIL (A SYMBOL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT) AND ANOINT YOU..



AND PRAY SOMETHING LIKE THIS, "LORD JESUS, THIS BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF YOUR HOLY SPIRIT. PRESERVE YOUR TEMPLE IN GOOD HEALTH. GIVE HIM A TASTE OF YOUR RESURRECTION POWER IN HIS BODY. AMEN." THE PRAYER OFFERED IN FAITH WILL HEAL THE SICK (5:14, 15).



FAITH

THE **ELDERS** OF COURSE, CAN PRAY ONLY ACCORDING TO "THE **MEASURE OF FAITH** THAT GOD HAS GIVEN HIM" (ROMANS 12:3).

NOT ALL SICKNESS IS DUE TO **SIN**, BUT SOME **SICKNESSES** REMAIN DUE TO **SIN**. IF SUCH A PERSON DOES **NOT CONFESS** HIS SIN, HE WILL **NOT** BE HEALED

AND SOMETIMES PRAYING **ONCE** MAY **NOT** BE ENOUGH. WE MAY HAVE TO PRAY **AGAIN AND AGAIN** LIKE ELIJAH DID (5:17, 18). WHEN THERE WAS NO RAIN IN ISRAEL FOR 3½ YEARS, ELIJAH PRAYED **EARNESTLY SEVEN TIMES**, BEFORE THE **RAIN** CAME (1 KINGS 18:44). THE **CONTEXT** HERE IS PRAYING FOR HEALING.



GRACE

I AM **NOT** SAYING THAT **EVERY** SICKNESS WILL BE **HEALED**. IN SOME INSTANCES, FOR REASONS BEST KNOWN TO **GOD** ALONE, HE DOES **NOT** HEAL.

PAUL WAS **NOT** HEALED OF A **THORN** IN HIS FLESH TO KEEP HIM **HUMBLE**. BUT **GOD** STILL GAVE HIM **GRACE** TO FINISH HIS **COURSE** WITH **JOY** (2 CORINTHIANS 12:7--9).



RUTH

GENERALLY SPEAKING HOWEVER, **GOD** WANTS US TO BE **FIT AND HEALTHY** SO THAT WE CAN **SERVE** HIM. "... THOSE WHO **WAIT UPON** THE **LORD** FOR **STRENGTH** WILL FLY LIKE THE **EAGLES**" (ISAIAH 40:31).

IN A CLOSING WORD, **JAMES** **ENCOURAGES** US TO **WORK WITH** THOSE WE KNOW WHO HAVE **STRAYED** FROM THE **TRUTH** AND TO **DRAW** THEM **BACK** TO THE **LORD** (5:20).