

Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners, taking the steps that we are to take, and doing the work that we must do. His life of suffering and patient endurance after His baptism was also an example to us. And the word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan,



...embraces all humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. By sin, earth was cut off from heaven, and alienated from its communion; but Jesus has connected it again with the sphere of glory. His love has encircled man, and reached the highest heaven. The light which fell on the head of our Savior will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased. DA 113.



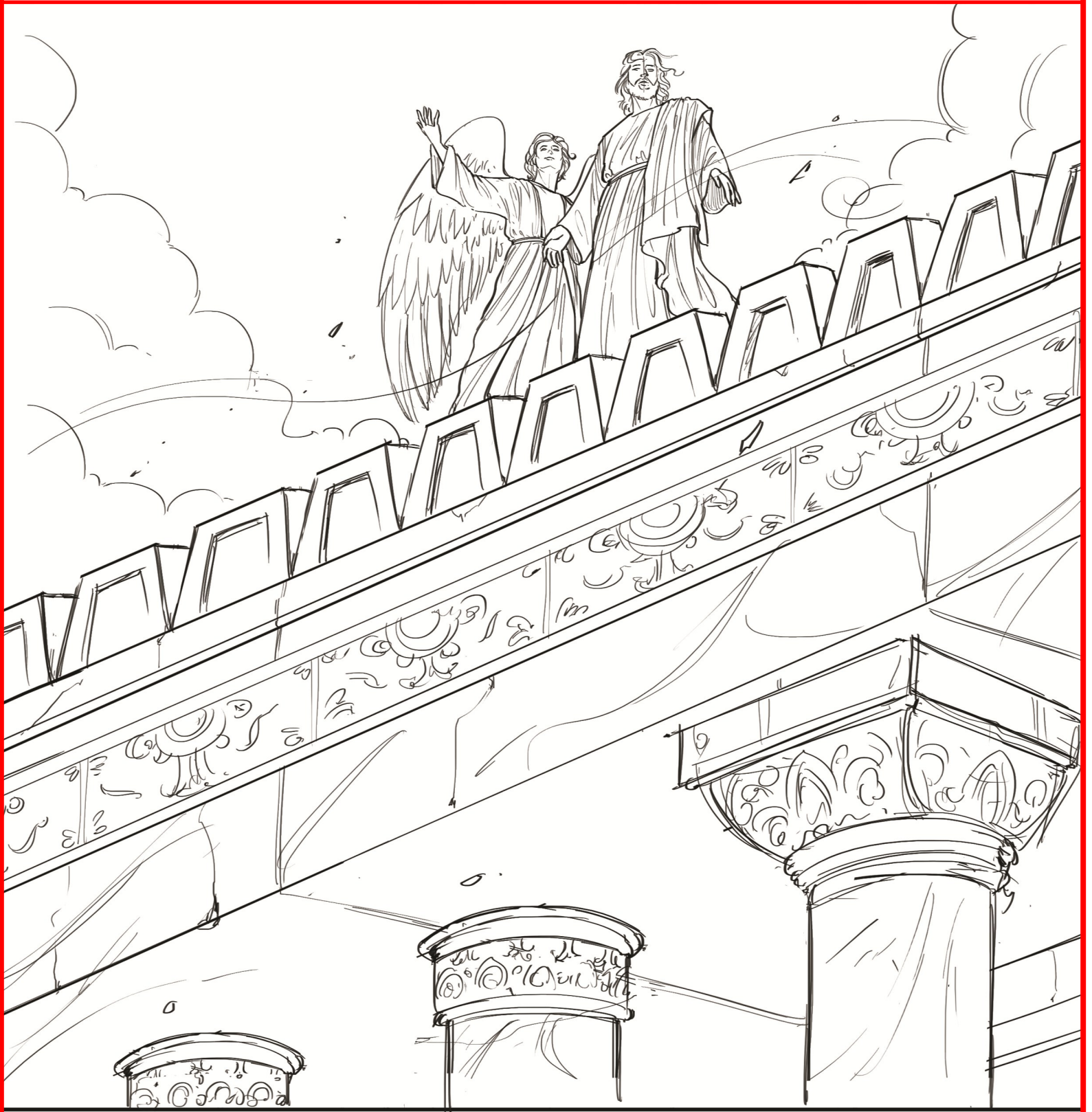
Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord's first great temptation none is more important than Christ's control over His appetites and passions. Only by the inexpressible anguish which Christ endured can we estimate the evil of unrestrained indulgence. His example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God. Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Savior in the wilderness of temptation.



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Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and his worldly ventures. Satan makes him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world that we can rely on is the word of God. When we learn the power of His word, we will not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to have food or to save our lives.



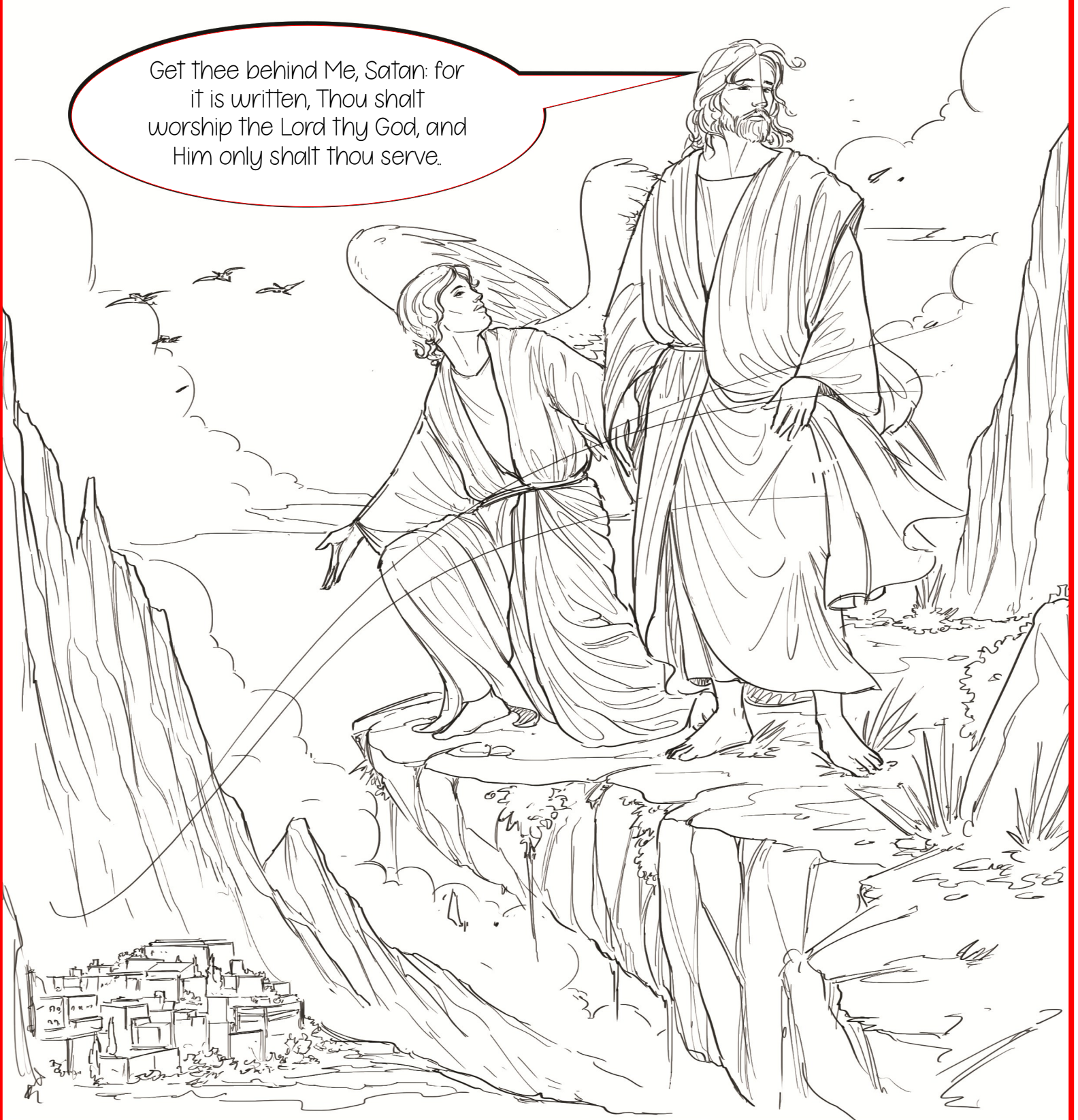
In the contest between Christ and Satan, during the Savior's earthly ministry, the true character of the great deceiver was unmasked! All the energies of apostasy were rallied against the Son of God. Christ was made the mark of every weapon of hell. But He could not be overcome! Not all the power of earth or hell could force Him in the slightest degree to depart from the will of His Father.



The daring blasphemy of his demand that Christ should pay him homage, his presumptuous Satan's wicked demand that Christ should give him honor, his presumptuous boldness in taking Him to the mountain summit, the malicious intent revealed in urging Him to cast Himself down from the dizzying height of the temple, the unsleeping malice that hunted Jesus from place to place, all awakened the indignation of the unfallen universe.



Christ's mission could be fulfilled only through suffering. Before Him was a life of sorrow, hardship, conflict, and a shameful death. Now the tempter offered to yield up the power that he had taken. Christ might have delivered Himself from the dreadful future by surrendering to the supremacy of Satan. But to do this was to yield the victory in the great controversy.



To men, Satan offers riches, pleasures, honor, and happiness if they will acknowledge his supremacy, sacrifice integrity, disregard conscience, and indulge in selfishness. We cannot save ourselves from the tempter's power; but "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runs into it, and is safe." [Proverbs 18:10](#). Satan trembles and flees before the weakest soul who finds refuge in that mighty name. DA 130.4



Beside the doorway stood six large stone water jars, and Jesus told the servants to fill these with water. It was done. Then as the wine was wanted immediately, He said, “Draw it out now, and take it to the governor of the feast.” Instead of the water with which the vessels were filled, fresh grape juice poured out. The ruler of the feast turned to the bridegroom and said, “Every man sets out the good wine at the beginning; and later on, they put out what is worse: but you have kept the good wine until now.”



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As men set forth the best wine first, then afterward that which is worse, so does the world. The gifts which the world offers may please the eye and fascinate the senses, but they prove to be unsatisfying. But the gifts of Jesus are ever fresh and new. The feast that He provides for the soul never fails to give satisfaction and joy. If we abide in Jesus, each new gift increases our capacity to appreciate and enjoy all the blessings of the Lord.



As Jesus sat by the well, He was faint from hunger and thirst. The journey since morning had been long. Now in the heat of noon, His thirst was increased by the thought of the cool, refreshing water so near, yet unreachable to Him; He had no rope nor water jar, and the well was deep. He was a human, and He waited for someone to come to draw water.

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He who seeks to quench his thirst at the fountains of this world will only thirst again. People around the world and unsatisfied and ache for something to supply the need of the soul. Only One can meet that want. The need of the world, is Christ. The divine grace which He alone can impart, is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul.

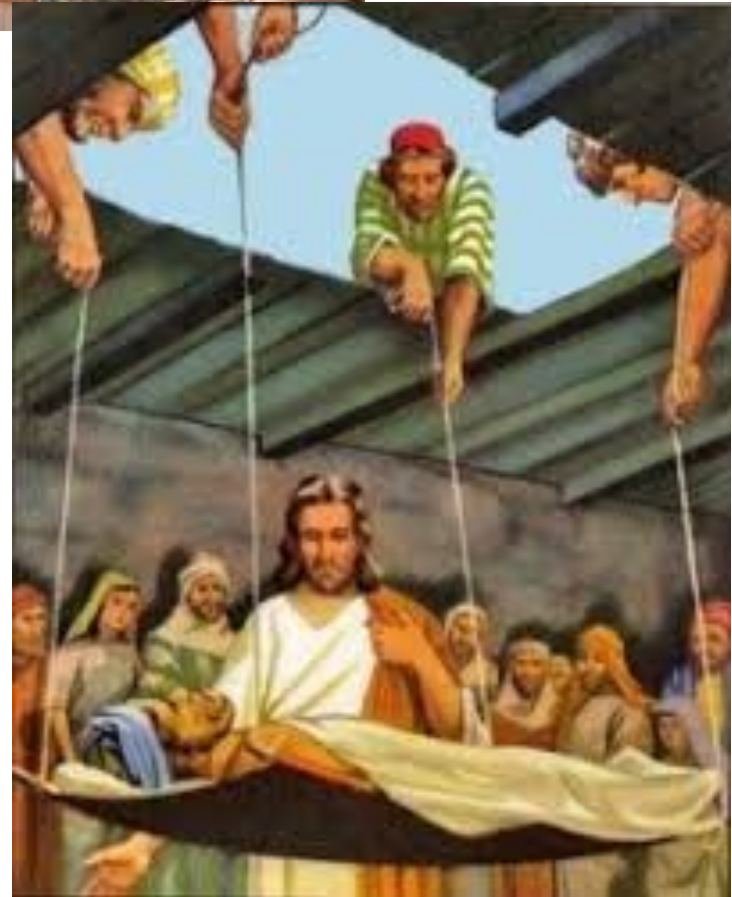


The sick man was lying on his mat, and occasionally lifting his head to gaze at the pool, when a tender, compassionate face bent over him, and the words, “Wilt thou be made whole?” arrested his attention. Jesus does not ask this sufferer to exercise faith in Him. He simply says, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” But the man's faith takes hold upon that word. Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs. Without question he sets his will to obey the command of Christ, and all his muscles respond to his will. Springing to his feet, he finds himself an active man.



Through the same faith we may receive spiritual healing. By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are palsied. Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. There are many who realize their helplessness, and who long for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God; they are vainly striving to obtain it. In despair they cry, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?” Romans 7:24, margin. Let these desponding, struggling ones look up. The Saviour is bending over the purchase of His blood, saying with inexpressible tenderness and pity, “Wilt thou be made whole?” He bids you arise in health and peace. Do not wait to feel that you are made whole. Believe His word, and it will be fulfilled. Put your will on the side of Christ. Will to serve Him, and in acting upon His word you will receive strength.

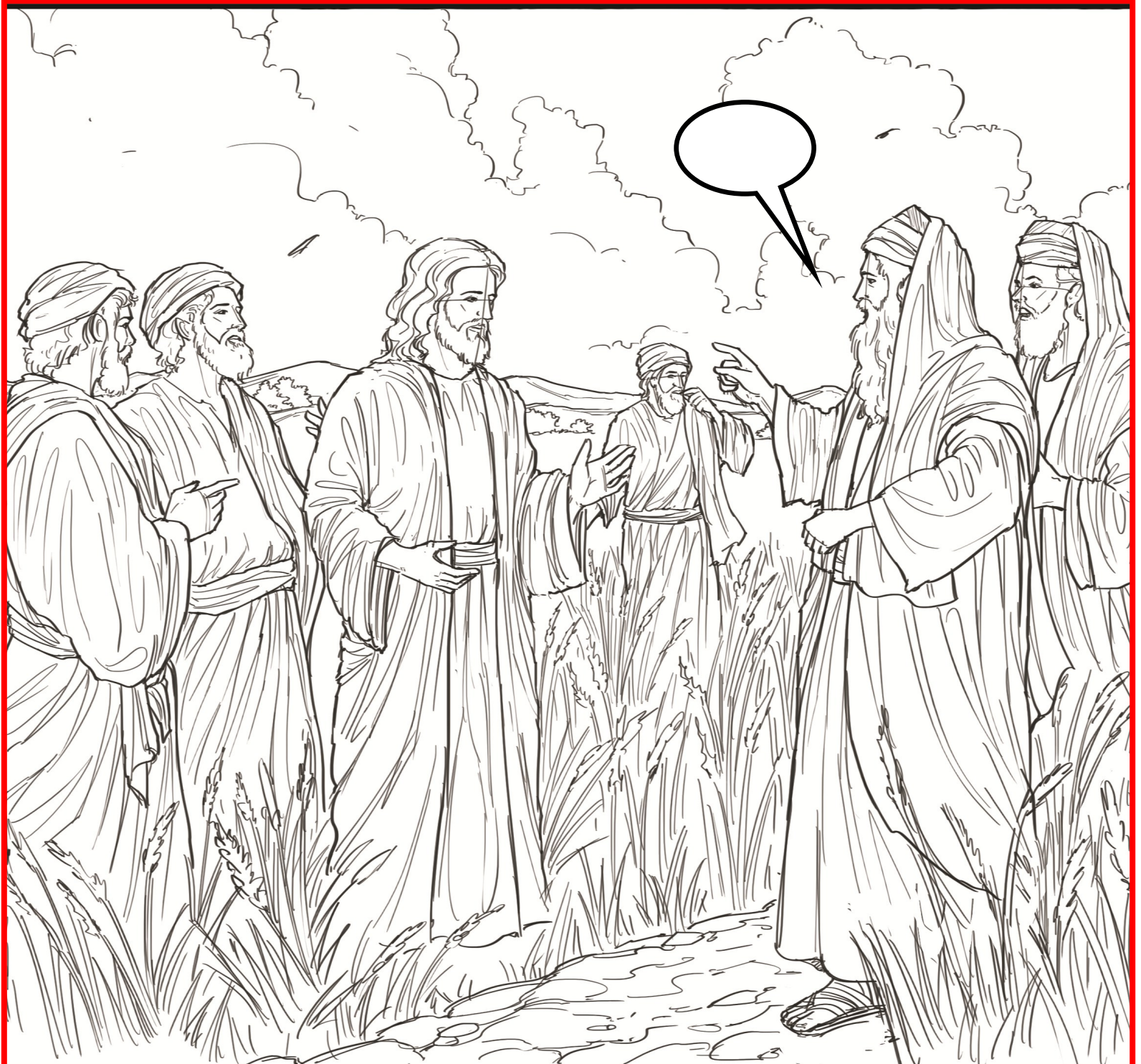






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The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. One Sabbath day, as the Savior and His disciples returned from the place of worship, they passed through a field of ripening grain. While passing through the fields, the disciples began to gather the heads of grain, and to eat the kernels after rubbing them in their hands. But to do this on the Sabbath was held to be an act of desecration.



Christ would teach His disciples and His enemies that the service of God is first of all. The object of God's work in this world is the redemption of man; therefore that which is necessary to be done on the Sabbath in the accomplishment of this work is in accord with the Sabbath commandment.

All things were created by the Son of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.... All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." [John 1:1-3](#). And since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ. DA 281.3



Realizing that their labor was in vain and only death was before them, they remembered who commanded them to cross the sea. Jesus was their only hope. In their helplessness and despair they cried, “Master, Master!” As the disciples grasp their oars to make one last effort, Jesus rises. He stands in the midst of His disciples, while the tempest rages, the waves break over them, and the lightning illuminates His countenance. He lifts His hand, so often utilized for acts of mercy, and says to the angry sea, “Peace, be still.”



When the storms of temptation gather, and the fierce lightnings flash, and the waves sweep over us, we battle with the storm alone, forgetting that there is One who can help us. We trust to our own strength till our hope is lost, and we are ready to die. Then we remember Jesus, and call on Him to save us. Whether on the land or on the sea, if we have the Savior in our hearts, there is no need to be afraid. Living faith in the Redeemer will smooth the sea of life, and will deliver us from danger in the way that He knows to be best.



There was a poor woman who for twelve years had suffered from an incurable disease. But she felt assured that if she could only go to Jesus she would be healed. Her opportunity had finally come. She was in the presence of the Great Physician! Fearful of losing her one chance of relief, she pressed forward, saying to herself,



As Jesus was passing, she concentrated the faith of her life, reached forward, and barely touched the border of His garment. Instantly her pain gave way to perfect health. It is the same way with spiritual things. A token faith which accepts Christ as the Savior of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. We must embrace Him as our personal Savior. A living faith means an increase of vitality and trust, by which we become a conquering power.



A violent tempest had been stealing upon them, and they were unprepared for it. Everyone worked to keep the boat from sinking. Then the weary men gave themselves up for lost. In the storm and darkness, the sea had taught them their own helplessness and they longed for the presence of their Master. When their hearts were subdued, their unholy ambition suppressed, and in humility they prayed for help, it was given to them.



When trouble comes upon us, how often we are like Peter! We look at the waves, instead of keeping our eyes fixed on the Savior. Our footsteps slide, and the proud waters go over our souls. Jesus did not ask Peter come to Him that he should die; He does not call us to follow Him, and then abandon us. “Fear not,” He says; “for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.” [Isaiah 43:1-3](#).



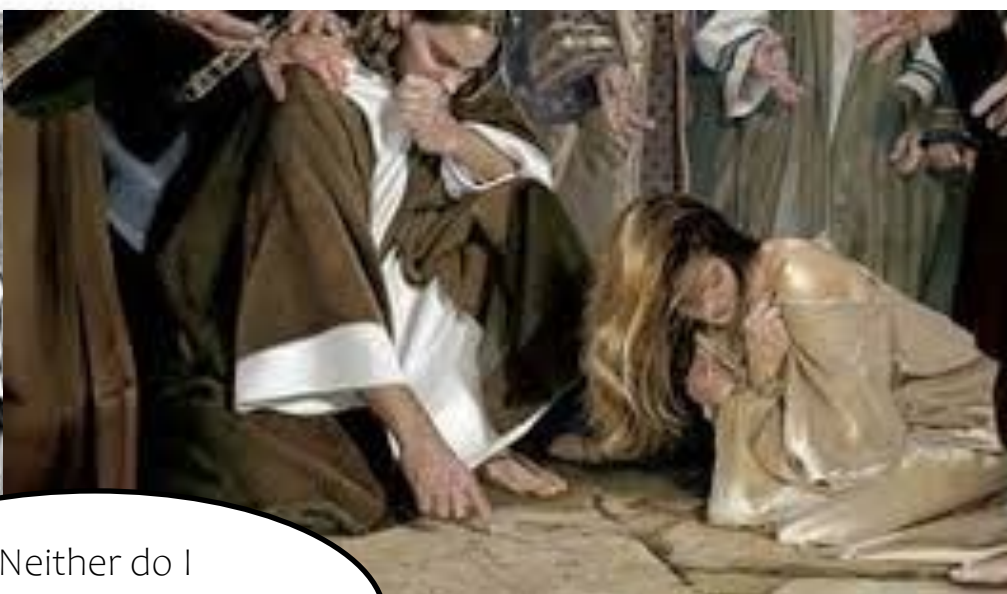
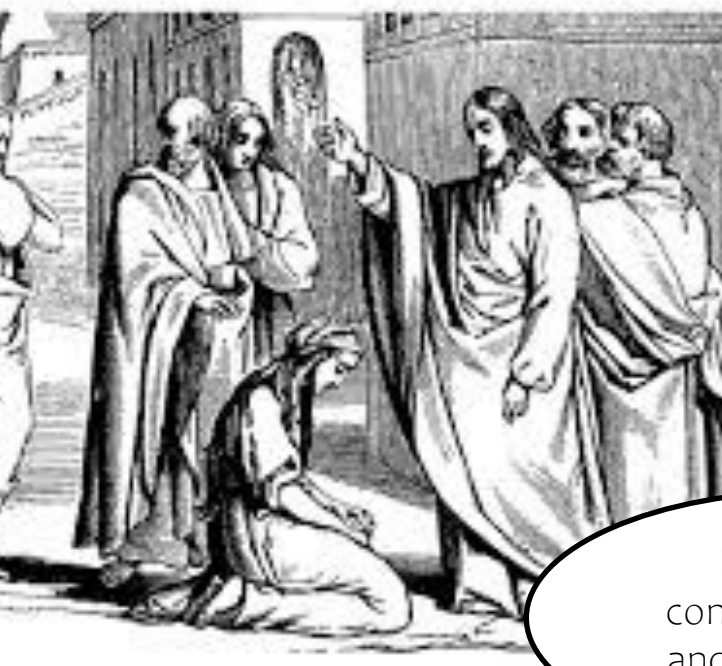
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Neither do I  
condemn you: go,  
and sin no more.”



In His act of pardoning this woman and encouraging her to live a better life, the character of Jesus shines in the beauty of perfect righteousness. He does not minimize sin, nor lessen the sense of guilt, He desires to save not to condemn. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to criticize, quick to recognize remorse, ready to forgive, and encourage the offender in the path of holiness.



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Of all creatures the sheep is one of the most timid and helpless. The shepherd watched his sheep, knowing that it was a threat to his own life. As the shepherd leads his flock over the rocky hills, through forest and wild ravines, to grassy nooks by the riverside, watching them through the lonely nights, shielding them from robbers, and caring tenderly for the sickly and feeble, a strong and tender attachment unites him to the objects of his care. However large the flock, every sheep has its name, and responds to the name at the shepherd's call.



As an earthly shepherd knows his sheep, so does the divine Shepherd know His flock that are scattered throughout the world. Jesus knows us individually, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows us all by name. He knows the very house in which we live, and the name of each occupant. The distress of every one touches His heart. The cry for aid reaches His ear. He cares for each one as if there were not another on the face of the earth.



One mother with her child had left her home to find Jesus. On the way she told a neighbor her errand, and the neighbor wanted to have Jesus bless her children. Thus several mothers came together, with their little ones. When the mothers made known their desire, Jesus heard with sympathy the timid, tearful request. The Savior understood the care and burden of the mothers who were seeking to train their children according to the word of God. He had heard their prayers. He Himself had drawn them into His presence.



The mothers were comforted. They returned to their homes strengthened and blessed by the words of Christ. They were encouraged to take up their burden with new cheerfulness, and to work hopefully for their children. Christ is still the helper of mothers today as when He gathered the little ones to His arms in Judea. The children in our homes are as much the purchase of His blood as were the children of long ago. DA 512.1



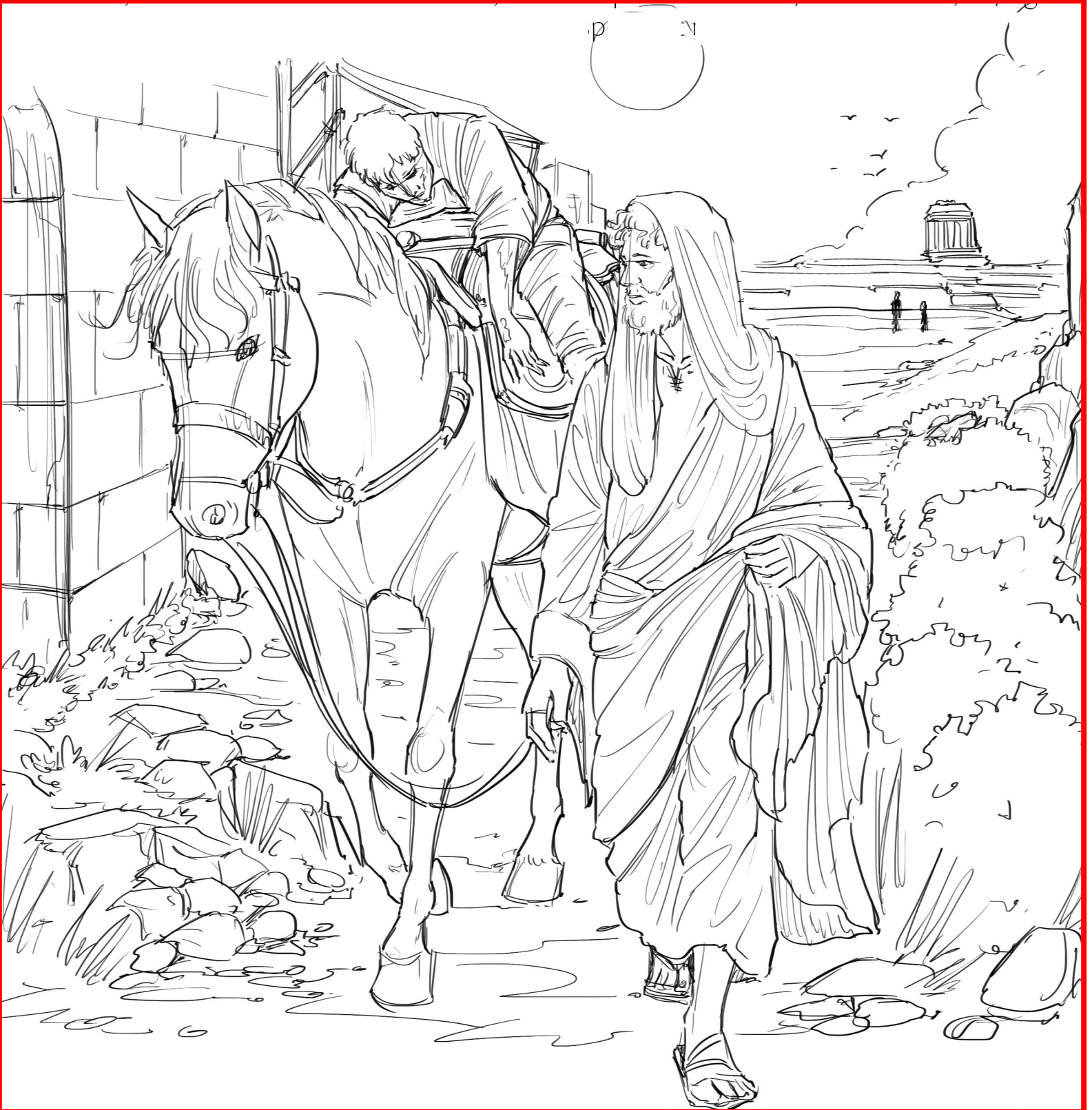
A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. As he lay there, the priest came that way; but he merely glanced toward the wounded man. Then the Levite appeared. Curious to know what had happened, he stopped and looked at the sufferer. He was convicted of what he ought to do; but it was not an agreeable duty. He wished that he had not come that way, so that he need not have seen the wounded man. He persuaded himself that the case was no concern of his.



The angels of heaven look upon the distress of God's family upon the earth, and they are prepared to co-operate with men in relieving oppression and suffering. God in His providence had brought the priest and the Levite along the road where the wounded sufferer lay, that they might see his need of mercy and help. All heaven watched to see if the hearts of these men would be touched with pity for human woe.



The Good Samaritan lifted the wounded stranger on his own beast, and moved slowly so that the stranger might not be jarred, and have increased pain. He took him to an inn, and tenderly cared for him all night. By morning, as the sick man improved, the Samaritan placed him in the care of the inn-keeper, paid the charges, and left a deposit for his benefit, and said to the host, "Take care of him; and if you spend more, when I come again, I will repay you. "



In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of Himself and His mission. Man had been deceived, bruised, robbed, ruined by Satan, and left to perish; but the Savior had compassion on our helpless condition. He left His glory, to come to our rescue. He found us ready to die, but He healed our wounds. He covered us with His robe of righteousness. He sheltered us, and provided for us at His own expense. He died to redeem us.



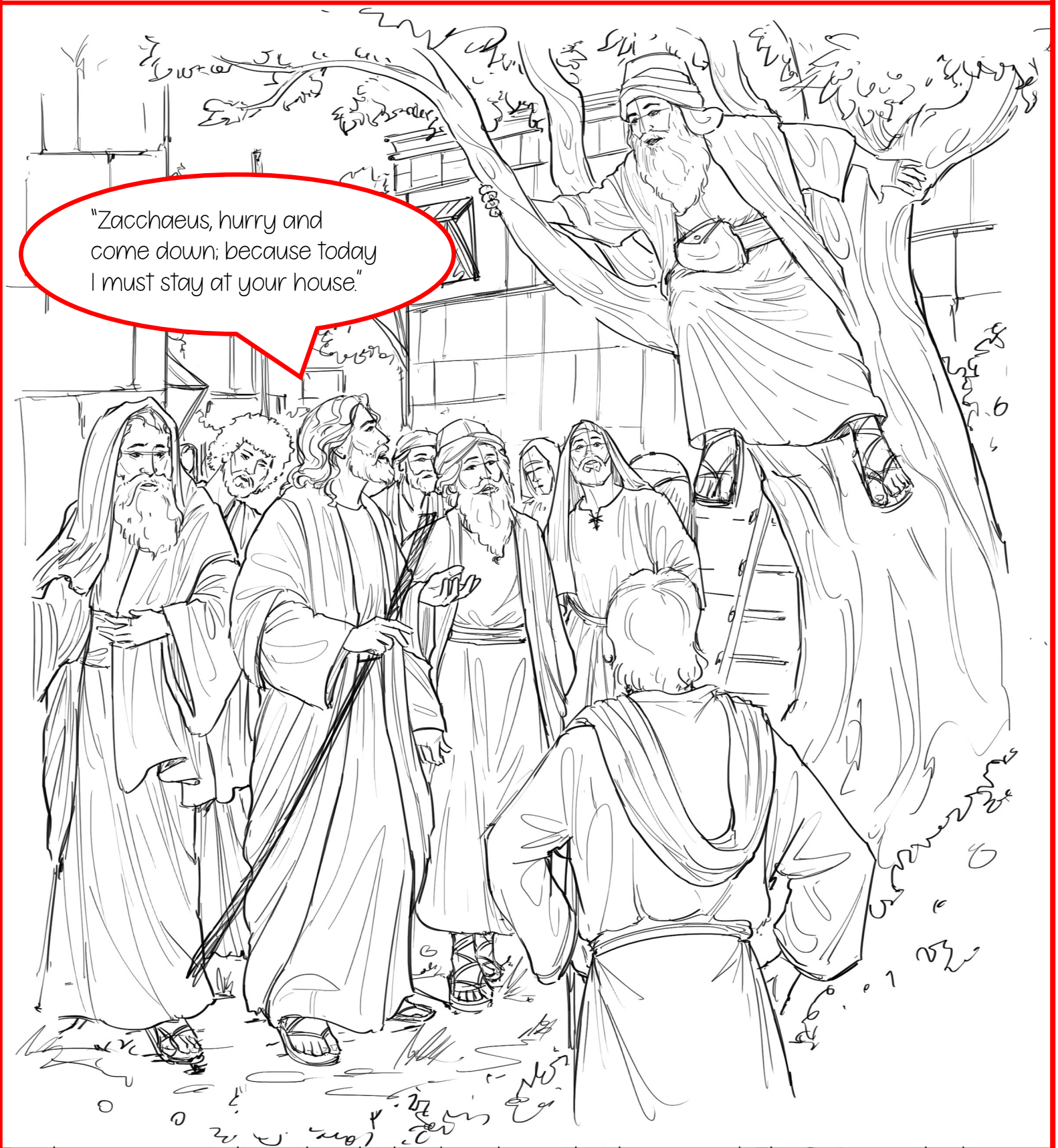
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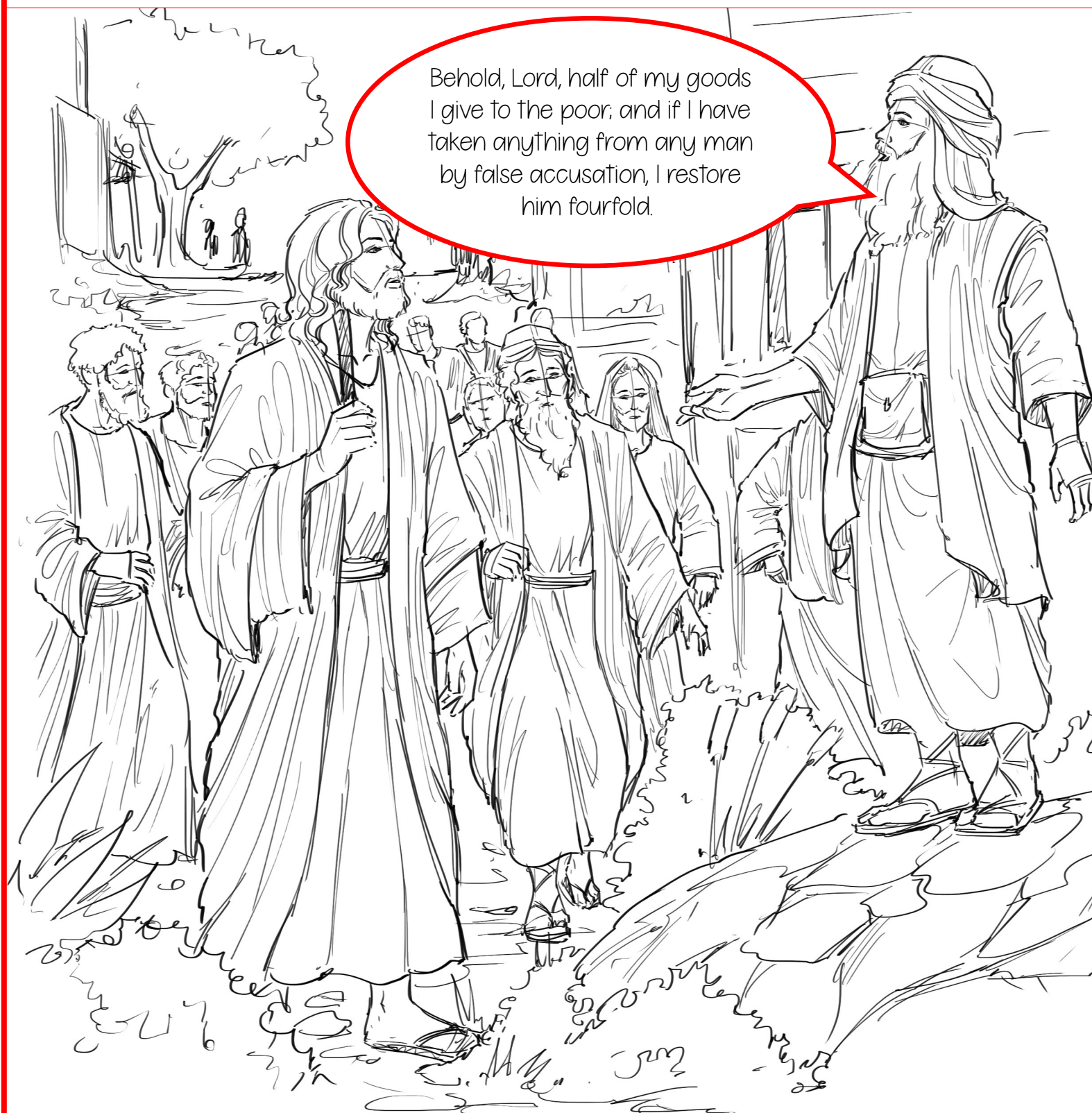
Zacchaeus, was a wealthy customs officer, and hated by his countrymen. But beneath the appearance of worldliness and pride, his heart was open to divine influences. When he realized that Jesus was in town, Zacchaeus determined to see Him. Above the noise, the unspoken desire of Zacchaeus spoke to the heart of Jesus. Suddenly, Jesus looks up and seems to read his soul. Almost doubting his senses, the man in the tree hears the words,



Zacchaeus was not altogether the hardened man that he seemed. The Scriptures had convicted him that his practice was wrong and that he was a sinner. Yet what he had heard of Jesus kindled hope in his heart. Repentance, reformation of life, was possible, even to him!



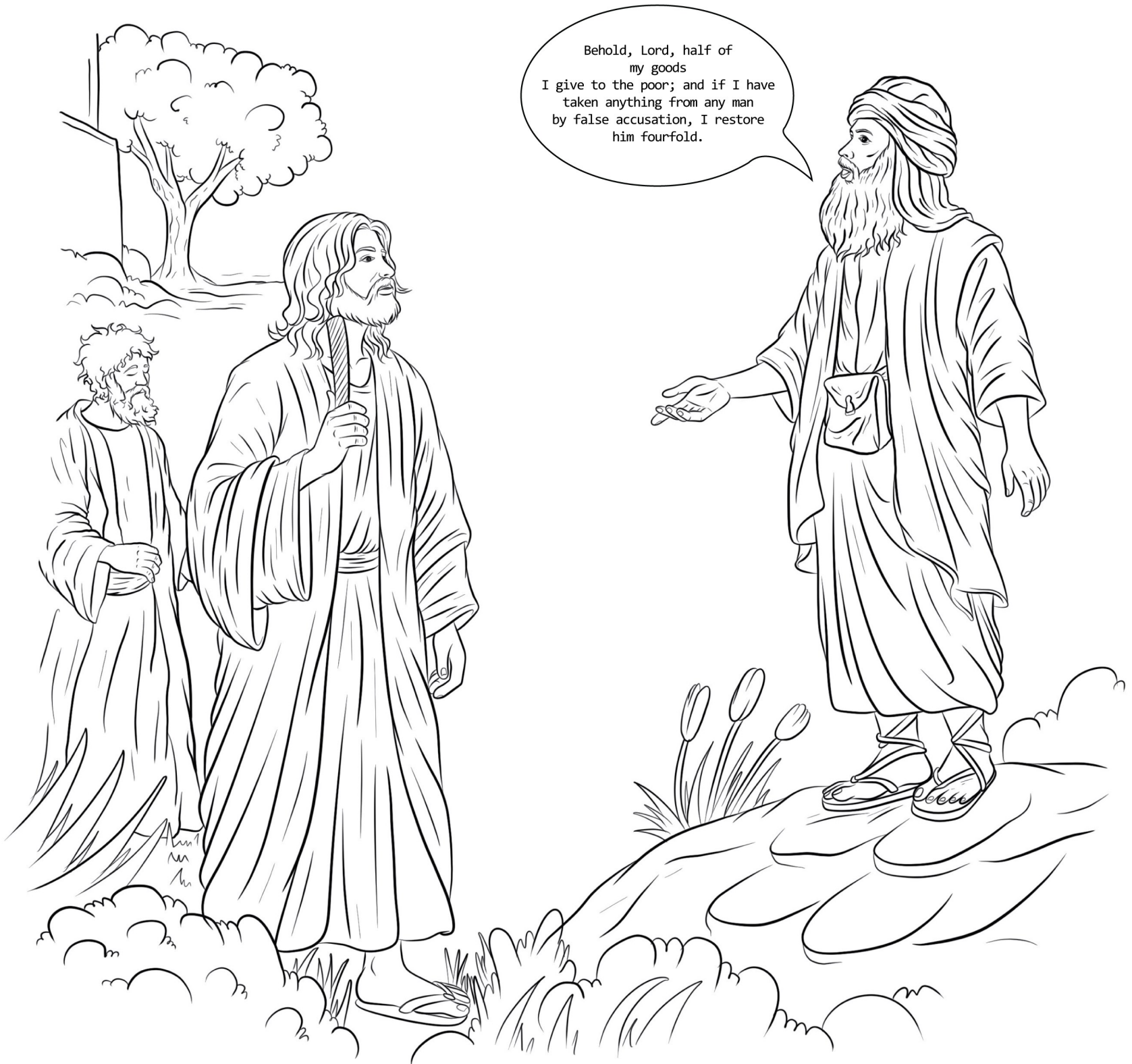
No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven. Zacchaeus had been overwhelmed, amazed, and silenced at the love and condescension of Christ in stooping to him, so unworthy. Now love and loyalty to his new-found Master unseal his lips. In the presence of the multitude, "Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord;



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If we have injured others through any unjust transaction, if we have defrauded any man, even though it is within the law, we should confess our wrong, and make restitution as far as lies in our power. It is right for us to restore not only that which we have taken, but all that it would have accumulated if put to a right and wise use during the time it has been in our possession.



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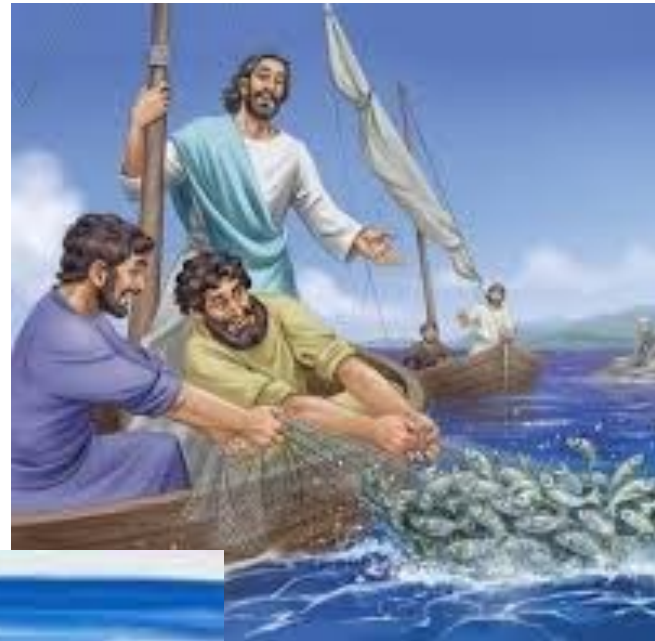
Breaking her box of ointment, Mary poured its contents upon the head and feet of Jesus; then, as she knelt weeping, moistening them with her tears, she wiped His feet with her long, flowing hair. But when Mary heard Judas' words of criticism, her heart trembled within her. Without apology or excuse she was about to shrink away, until she heard the voice of Jesus.



He saw that she was embarrassed and distressed. He knew that in this act of service she had expressed her gratitude for the forgiveness of her sins, and He brought relief to her mind. As the alabaster box was broken, and filled the whole house with its fragrance, so Christ was to die, His body was to be broken; but He was to rise from the tomb, and the fragrance of His life was to fill the whole earth.



The discourse ended, Jesus turned to Peter, and bade him launch out into the sea, and let down his net for a draught. But Peter was disheartened. All night he had taken nothing. “Master,” he said, “we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.” After toiling all night without success, it seemed hopeless to cast the net by day; but Jesus had given the command, and love for their Master moved the disciples to obey. Simon and his brother together let down the net. As they attempted to draw it in, so great was the quantity of fish enclosed that it began to break. They were obliged to summon James and John to their aid. When the catch was secured, both the boats were so heavily laden that they were in danger of sinking.



Before asking them to leave their nets and fishing boats, Jesus had given them the assurance that God would supply their needs. The use of Peter's boat for the work of the gospel had been richly repaid. He who is “rich unto all that call upon Him,” has said, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.” [Romans 10:12](#); [Luke 6:38](#). In this measure He had rewarded the disciple's service. And every sacrifice that is made in His ministry will be recompensed according to “the exceeding riches of His grace.” [Ephesians 3:20](#); [2:7](#).



From the hillside He looked upon the moving multitude, and His heart was stirred with sympathy. . Many had come from far, and had eaten nothing since . But Jesus said, “Give ye them to eat,” and then, turning to Philip, questioned, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” This He said to test the faith of the disciple. morning. Jesus inquired how much food could be found among the company. He who taught the people the way to secure peace and happiness was just as thoughtful of their temporal necessities as of their spiritual need. Many had been standing for hours.



“There is a lad here,” said Andrew, “which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?”



When this was accomplished, Jesus took the food, “and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.” “And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.” Christ never worked a miracle except to supply a genuine necessity, and every miracle was of a character to lead the people to the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.