

Dead Faith Doesn't Work

James 2:14-26



¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” ¹⁹ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰ You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Doers of the word

Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves... Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (1:22, 27)

Faith without deeds?

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?

Dead faith doesn't work

- Doesn't work in doing godly deeds
- Doesn't work in bringing salvation

Nice talk

¹⁵ Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

God's love in action

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:17-18)

I was hungry

I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me. (Matthew 25:42-43)

Correct belief

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” ¹⁹ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Demons believe

What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God! (Luke 4:34)

What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me! (Luke 8:28)

Correct belief—plus!

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. (Deut 6:4-7)

Dead Faith Doesn't Work

- **Nice talk:** warm words; no help.
 - ★ Hungry people can't eat speech.
- **Correct belief:** accurate doctrines;
no love, no loyalty, no obedience.
 - ★ Demons know many truths.

Living Faith Works

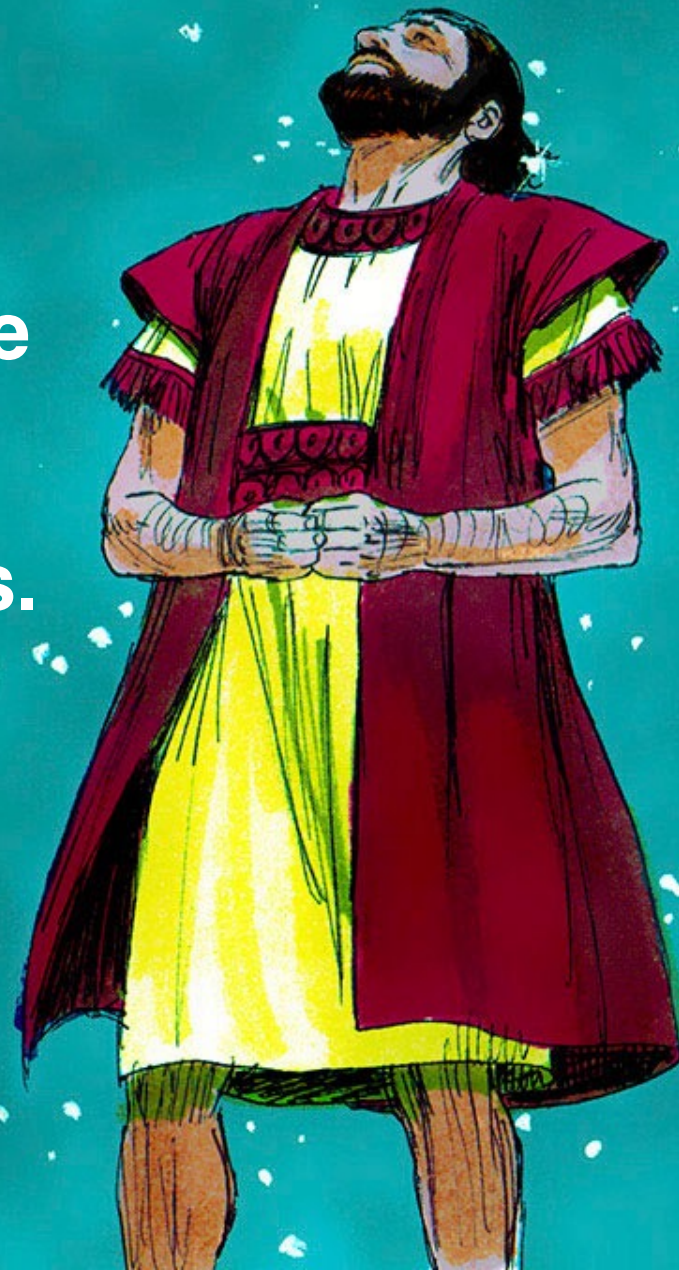
Right with God through active faith

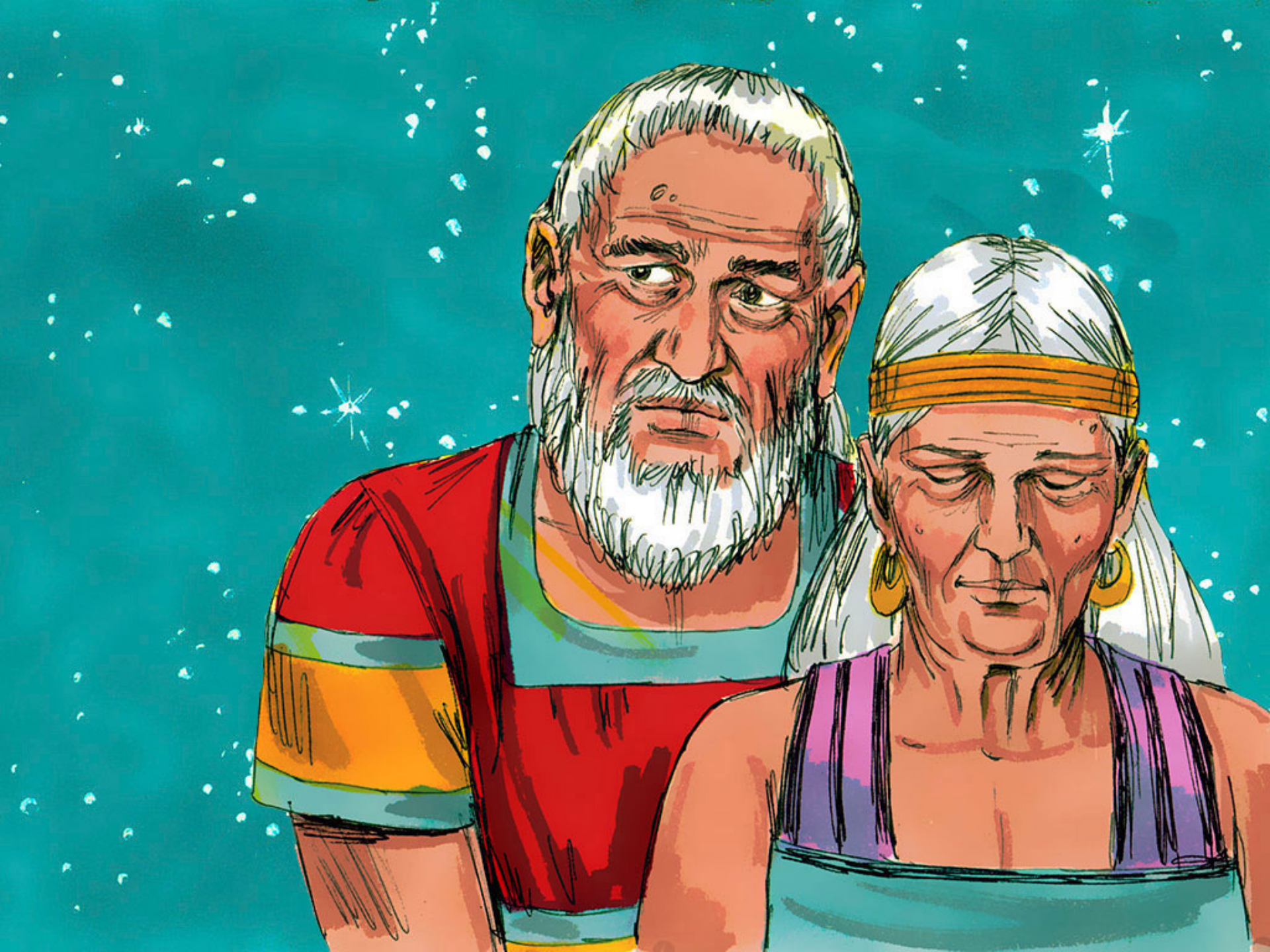
- **Trust God:** love, obey, sacrifice
 - ★ Lofty patriarch: Abraham
- **Entrust self:** commit, risk, join
 - ★ Lowly prostitute: Rahab

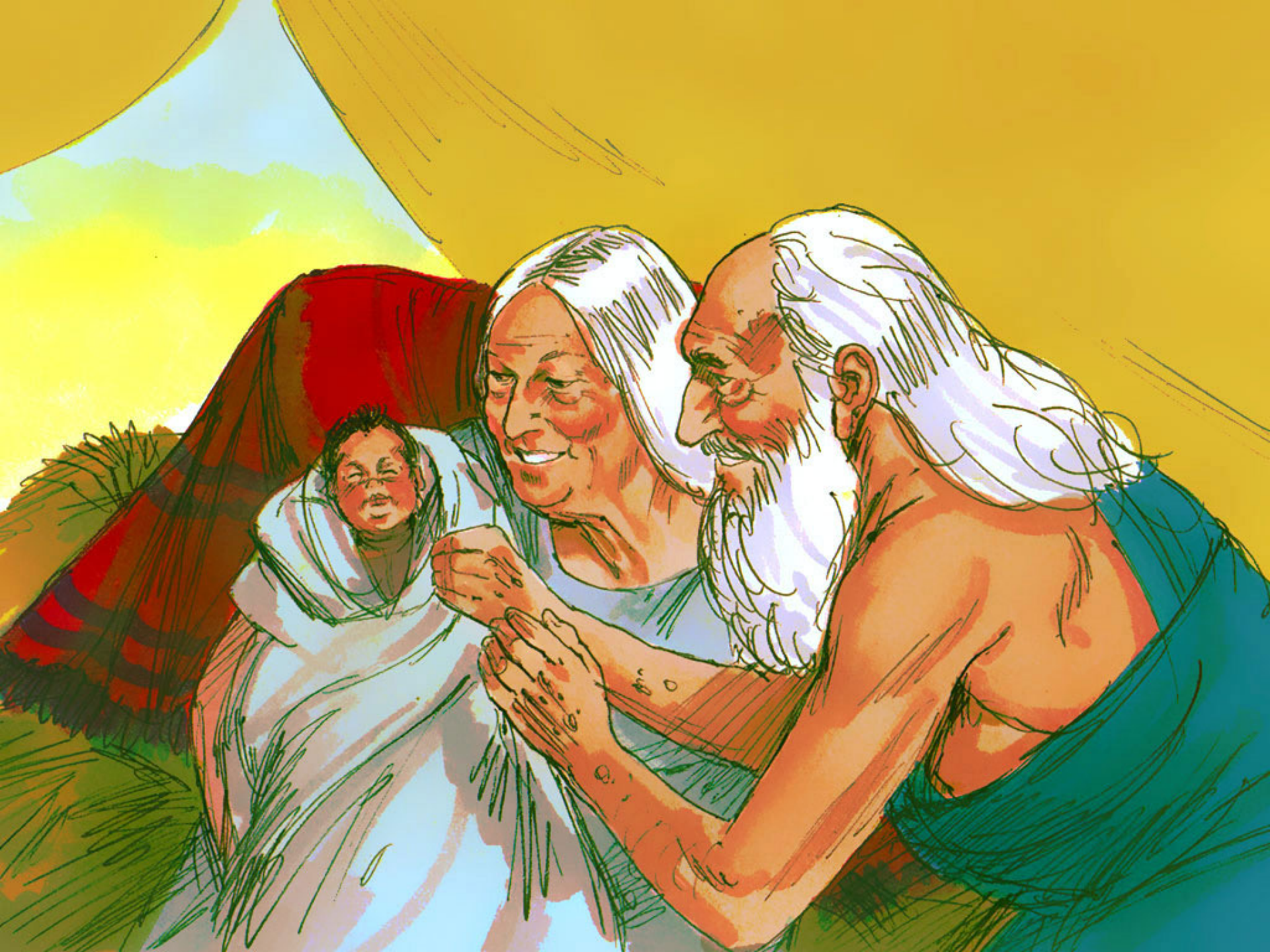
Abraham

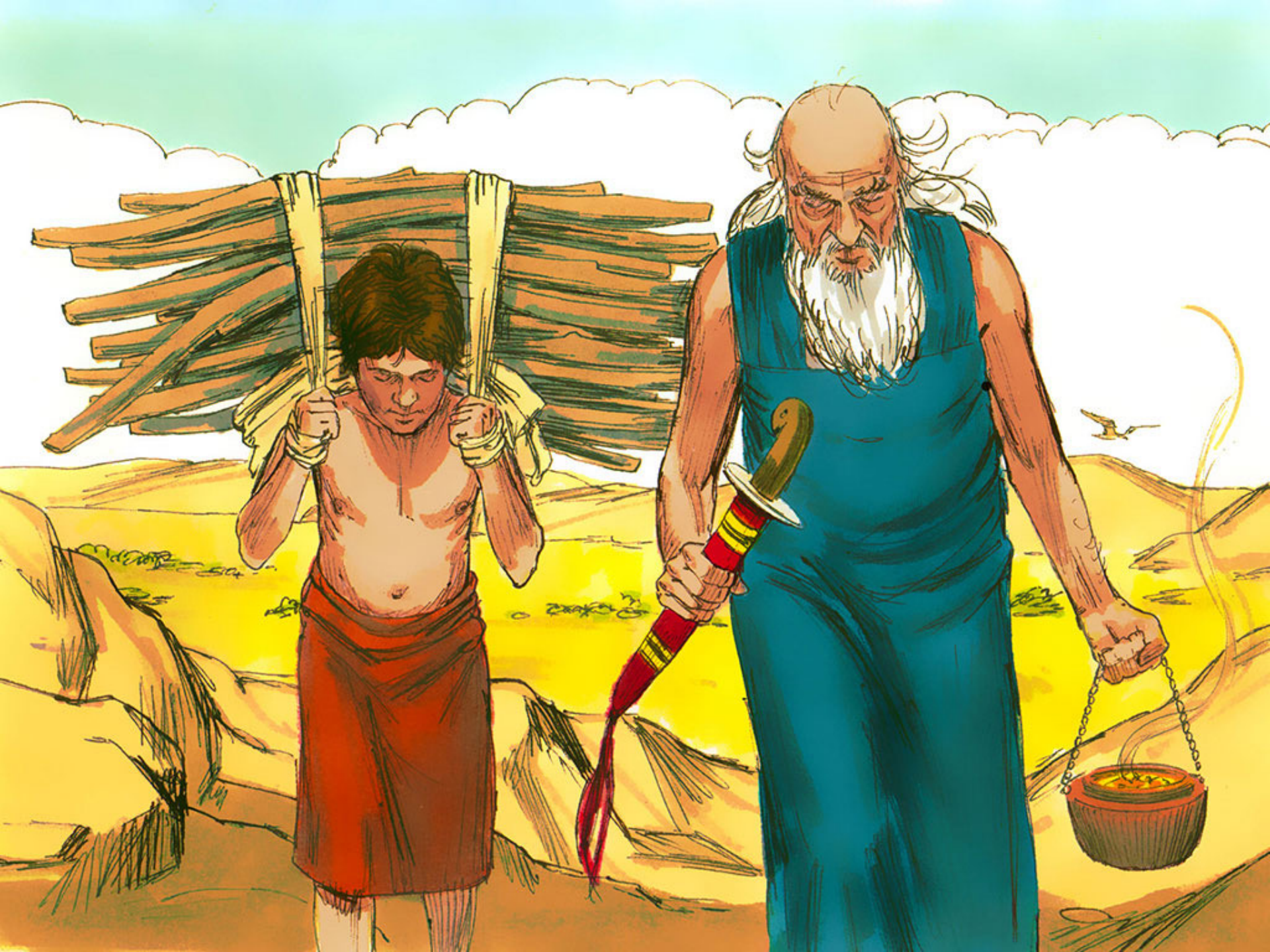
²⁰ You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

**Abram believed
the LORD, and he
credited it to him
as righteousness.**





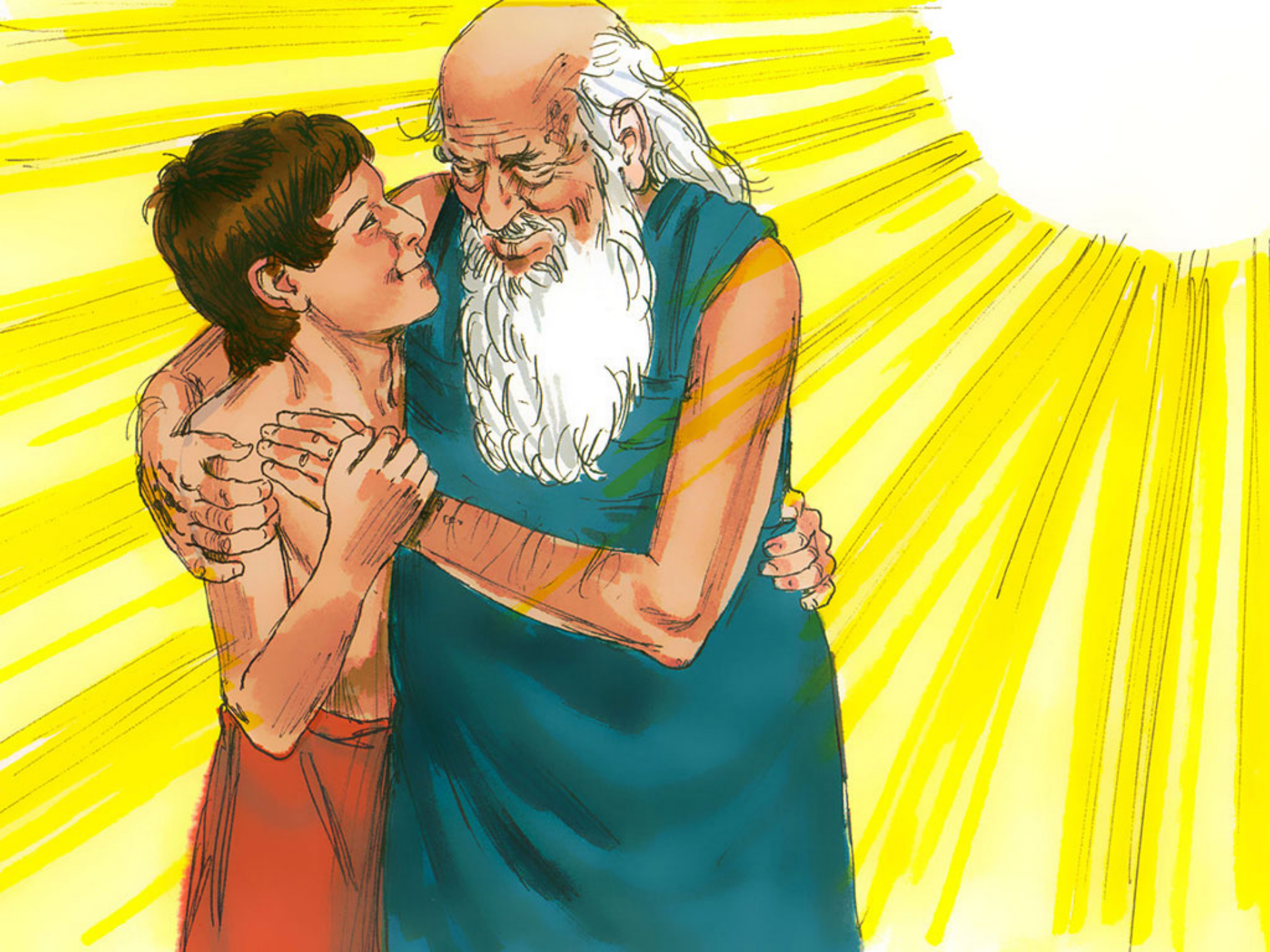












Faith in action

²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

- Faith and actions are inseparable.
- Living faith matures in action.

Living Faith Works

The scripture was fulfilled that says,
“Abraham believed God, and it was
credited to him as righteousness,”
and he was called God’s friend. (2:23)

What if Abraham said, “I believe God,”
but didn’t obey God nor leave Ur nor
offer Isaac?

Contradiction?

You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. (2:24)

A person is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (Romans 3:28)

Does James contradict Paul?

Paul's target

- Paul combats legalists who seek salvation in rituals and law-keeping.
- “Faith apart from works” in Paul describes living faith that trusts Jesus, not one's own merit.

A person is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (Rom 3:28)

James' target

- James combats careless “believers” who are all talk, no walk, who show favoritism and neglect the poor.
- “Faith alone” in James means head knowledge, cold heart, idle hands.

A person is justified by works and not by faith alone. (James 2:24)

Paul teaches works

By grace you have been saved, through faith... For we are Gods workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **to do good works** (Ephesians 2:8-10)

The **obedience** of faith (Romans 1:5)

Faith **working** through love (Gal 5:6)

Work produced by faith (1 Thess 1:3)

James teaches grace

God **gives generously** to all without finding fault. (1:5) Every good and perfect **gift** is from above... He chose to give us **birth** through the word of truth. (1:17-18) Have **faith** in Jesus Christ (2:1). **Mercy** triumphs over judgment! (2:13) God gives **grace** to the humble. (4:6) The Lord is full of **compassion and mercy**. (5:11)

Errors about salvation

To escape the error of **salvation by works**, we have fallen into the error of **salvation without obedience**. (A. W. Tozer)

- Paul stressed: works don't save.
- James stressed: saved people obey.
- Paul and James agreed: Jesus saves by grace through faith—active faith!

Living faith works

It is absolutely vital to understand that the main point is not that works must be **added to** faith but that genuine faith **includes** works.
(Douglas Moo)

Living Faith Works

Right with God through active faith

- **Trust God:** love, obey, sacrifice
 - ★ Lofty patriarch: Abraham
- **Entrust self:** commit, risk, join
 - ★ Lowly prostitute: Rahab

Living Faith Works

In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? (2:25)









The LORD your God is God
in heaven above and on the
earth below.



If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land.













Living Faith Works

In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? (2:25)

What if Rahab said, “I believe God will win,” but refused to protect the spies?

By faith!

By faith Abraham obeyed... By faith he went to live in the land of promise...

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac... He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead. (Hebrews 11:8-19)

By faith!

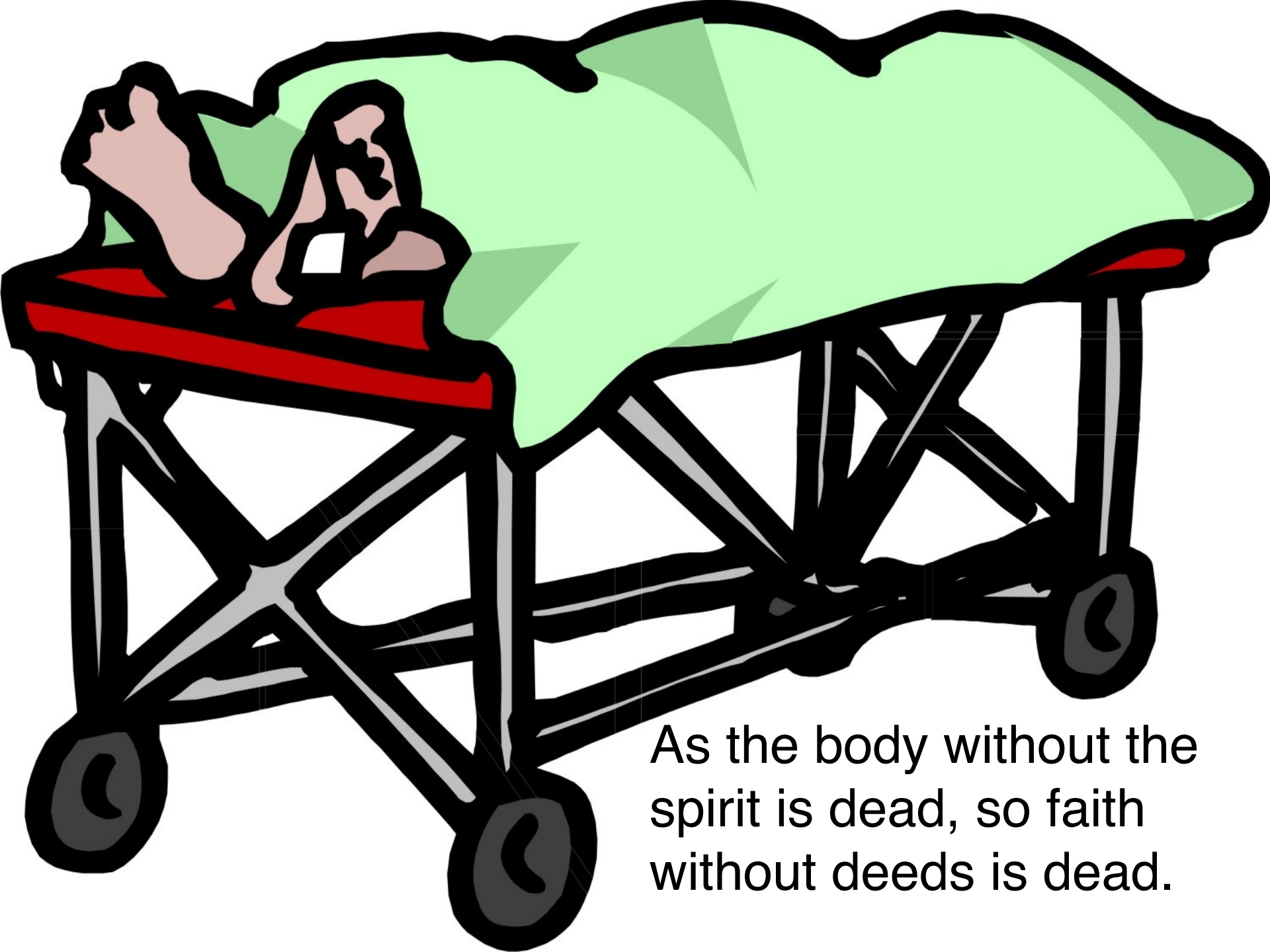
By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. (Hebrews 11:31)

Can dead faith save?

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds?

Can such faith save him? ... Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by deeds, is dead... faith without deeds is

useless... **As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.**



As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

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