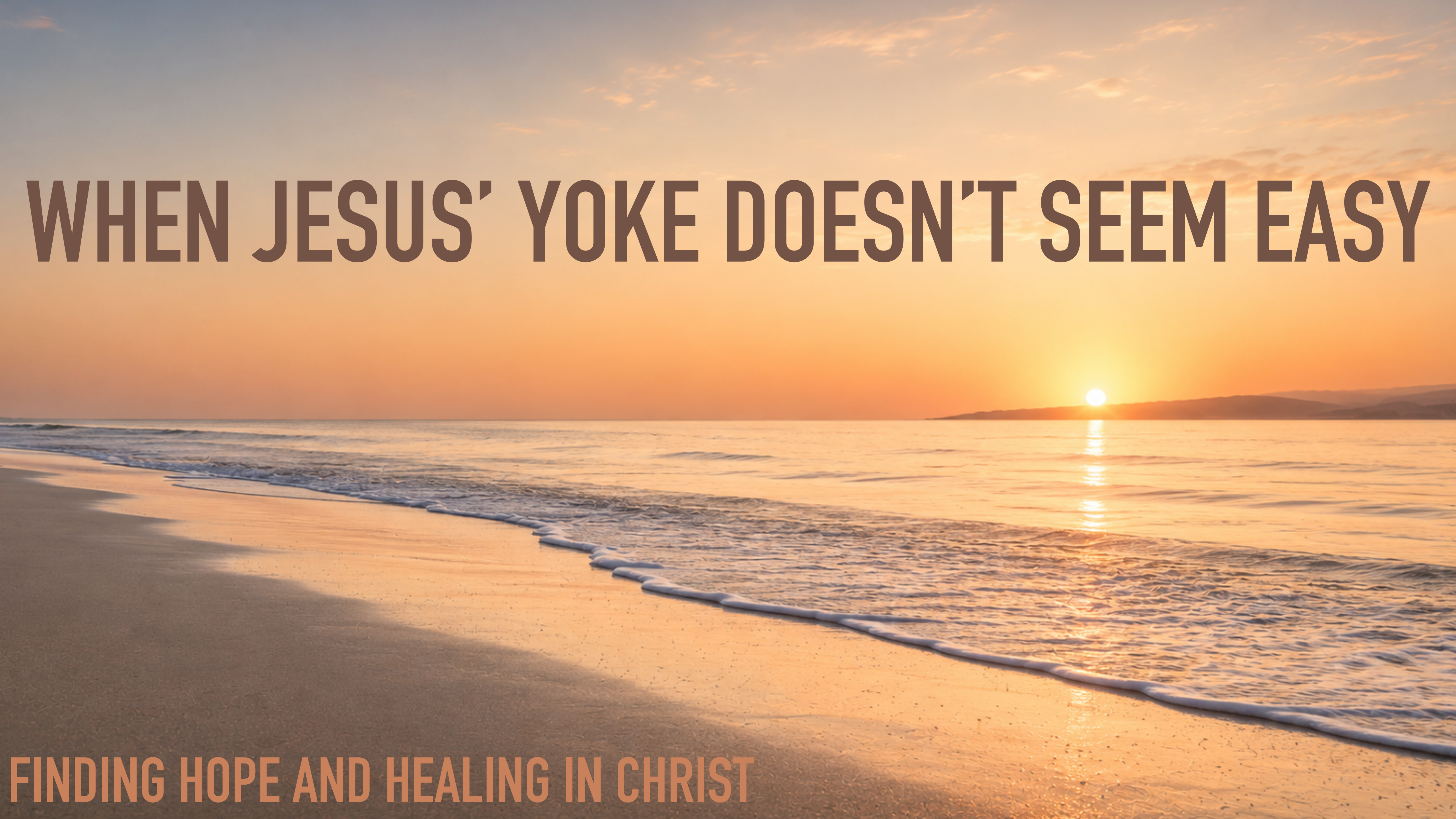
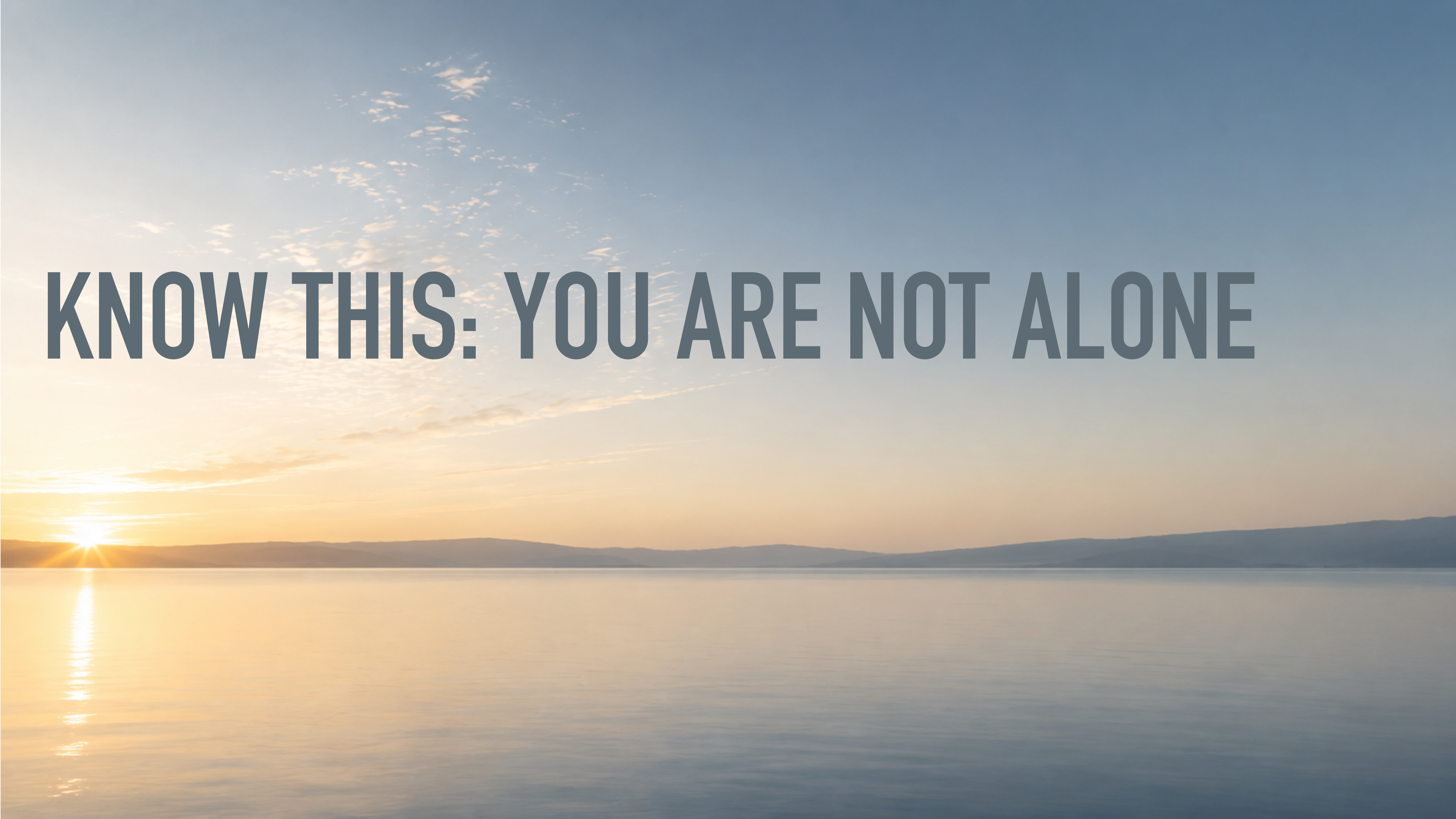




WHEN JESUS' YOKE DOESN'T SEEM EASY

FINDING HOPE AND HEALING IN CHRIST



KNOW THIS: YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Maybe you feel alone...

- **Elijah** felt alone after the contest with the prophets of Baal and he fled from Jezebel.
- **Job** felt alone even in the presence of his "friends."

...others are walking with you

Maybe you feel overwhelmed...

- **Moses** felt overwhelmed when the people came to him to solve their disputes.
- **Joshua** felt overwhelmed after he took over for Moses and was immediately tasked with entering Canaan.

...others are walking with you

Maybe you are being opposed...

- **Nehemiah** was opposed by Jerusalem's neighbors who tried to hinder the building project.
- **Ezekiel** was opposed by false prophets who countered his prophetic message by providing words of false comfort.

...others are walking with you

Maybe you have been betrayed...

- **David** was betrayed by his own son who initiated a coup against him.
- **Joseph** by his brothers, by Potiphar's wife, and by the cupbearer who forgot him.

...others are walking with you

Maybe you have been hurt...

- **Paul** was hurt repeatedly over the course of his ministry, physically and emotionally.
- **Stephen** was hurt and martyred for his faith.

...others are walking with you

Maybe you have been rejected...

- **Jeremiah** was rejected and known as the weeping prophet because of the sorrow this caused him.
- **Samuel** was rejected as the leader of the people as they demanded a king to be like the other nations.

...others are walking with you

Maybe you feel discounted...

- **Timothy** was discounted because he was young and in the ministry.
- **David** was discounted because he was the youngest of his brothers and because he was merely a shepherd boy asking to face a giant warrior.

...others are walking with you

Most importantly, Jesus felt all this...

- He felt **alone** in Gethsemane and on the cross. He felt **overwhelmed** after John's death when the crowds didn't let him mourn. He was **opposed** by the religious leaders. He was **betrayed** by a friend. He was **hurt** at the crucifixion. He was **rejected** by his own. He was **discounted** as being just a carpenter from Nazareth.

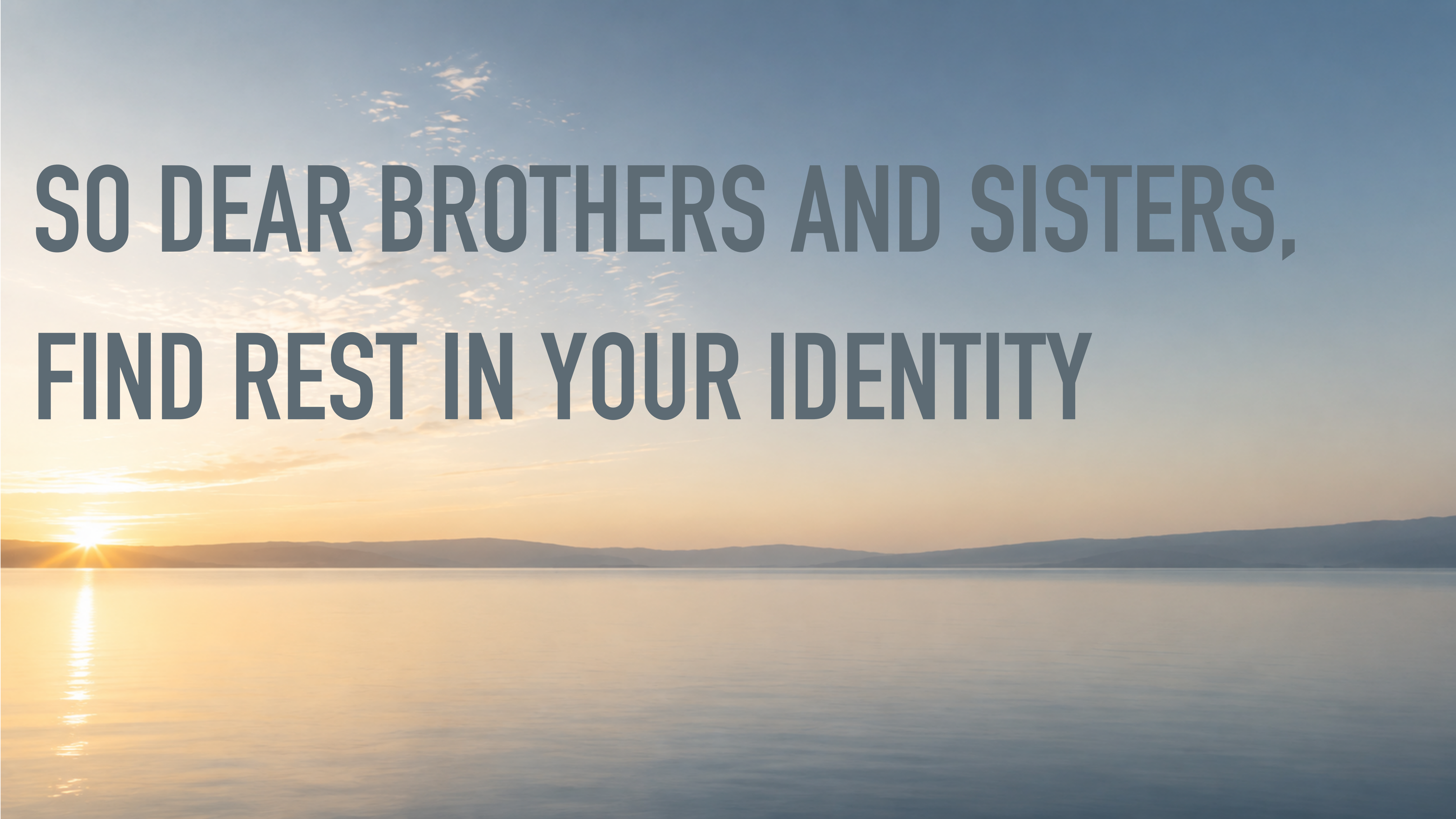
...and *HE* is walking with you

He was despised and rejected by people, one who experienced pain and was acquainted with illness; people hid their faces from him; he was despised, and we considered him insignificant.

Isaiah 53:4, NET

For we do not have a high priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help.

Hebrews 4:15-16, NET



**SO DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,
FIND REST IN YOUR IDENTITY**

You bear the very image of God

God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:2, NET

You were bought with a price

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NET

You are God's cherished possession

Now, this is what the LORD says, the one who created you, O Jacob, and formed you, O Israel: "Don't be afraid, for I will protect you. I call you by name, you are mine."

Isaiah 43:1, NET

You are a new creation

So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—look, what is new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17_{,NET}

You are a beloved child of God

But to all who have received him—those who believe in his name—he has given the right to become God's children.

John 1:12,_{NET}

You are God's friend

"I no longer call you slaves, because the slave does not understand what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because I have revealed to you everything I heard from my Father."

John 15:15, NET

You are an object of God's joy

The LORD your God is in your midst; he is a warrior who can deliver. He takes great delight in you; he renews you by his love; he shouts for joy over you."

Zephaniah 3:17_{,NET}



**SO DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,
FIND REST IN YOUR PURPOSE**

You were set apart for a purpose

"Before I formed you in your mother's womb I chose you. Before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations."

Jeremiah 1:5, NET

You are to glorify God

So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31_{,NET}

You are to imitate Christ's humility

He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD really wants from you: He wants you to carry out justice, to love faithfulness, and to live obediently before your God.

Micah 6:8, NET

You are here to do good works

For we are his creative work, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we can do them.

Ephesians 2:10, NET

You are a royal priest

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9, NET

You are Christ's worker

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest-ready fields."

Matthew 9:37-38, NET

You are in a vital ministry to kids

"And whoever welcomes a child like this in my name welcomes me."

Matthew 18:5_{,NET}

**SO DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,
FIND REST IN GOD'S PROMISES**

God is with you

“When you pass through the waters, I am with you; when you pass through the streams, they will not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not harm you.”

Isaiah 43:2, NET

You are never alone

“The LORD is indeed going before you—he will be with you; he will not fail you or abandon you. Do not be afraid or discouraged!”

Deuteronomy 31:8, NET

God will not forget your works

For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love you have demonstrated for his name, in having served and continuing to serve the saints.

Hebrews 6:10_{,NET}

God's plans are never thwarted

"I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

Job 42:2, NET

God completes his work

For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6, NET

God will uphold you

Don't be afraid, for I am with you! Don't be frightened, for I am your God! I strengthen you—yes, I help you—yes, I uphold you with my victorious right hand!

Isaiah 41:10, NET

God is ever-compassionate for you

The LORD's loyal kindness never ceases; his
compassions never end. They are fresh every
morning; your faithfulness is abundant!

Lamentations 3:22-23, NET

God will renew you

But those who wait for the LORD's help find renewed strength; they rise up as if they had eagles' wings, they run without growing weary, they walk without getting tired.

Isaiah 40:31, NET

God will give you rest

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry."

Matthew 11:28-30, NET

A serene sunset scene with the sun low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the calm water. The sky is a mix of soft orange and pale blue, with wispy clouds. In the background, a range of low mountains is visible under the twilight sky.

**SO DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,
FIND REST IN GOD'S POWER**

Christ's strength is available to you

I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13,_{NET}

God is an ever-present help

God is our strong refuge; he is truly our helper in times of trouble.

Psalms 46:1_{NET}

God is exceedingly able

Now to him who by the power that is working within us is able to do far beyond all that we ask or think, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21, NET

Nothing is too hard for God

““Oh, Sovereign LORD, you did indeed make heaven and earth by your mighty power and great strength. Nothing is too hard for you!””

Jeremiah 32:17_{,NET}

God owns it all

O LORD, you are great, mighty, majestic, magnificent, glorious, and sovereign over all the sky and earth! You, LORD, have dominion and exalt yourself as the ruler of all.

1 Chronicles 29:11, NET

God has infinite understanding

Our Lord is great and has awesome power;
there is no limit to his wisdom.

Psalms 147:5_{NET}

God is our sustainer

For all things in heaven and on earth were created in him—all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers—all things were created through him and for him. He himself is before all things and all things are held together in him.

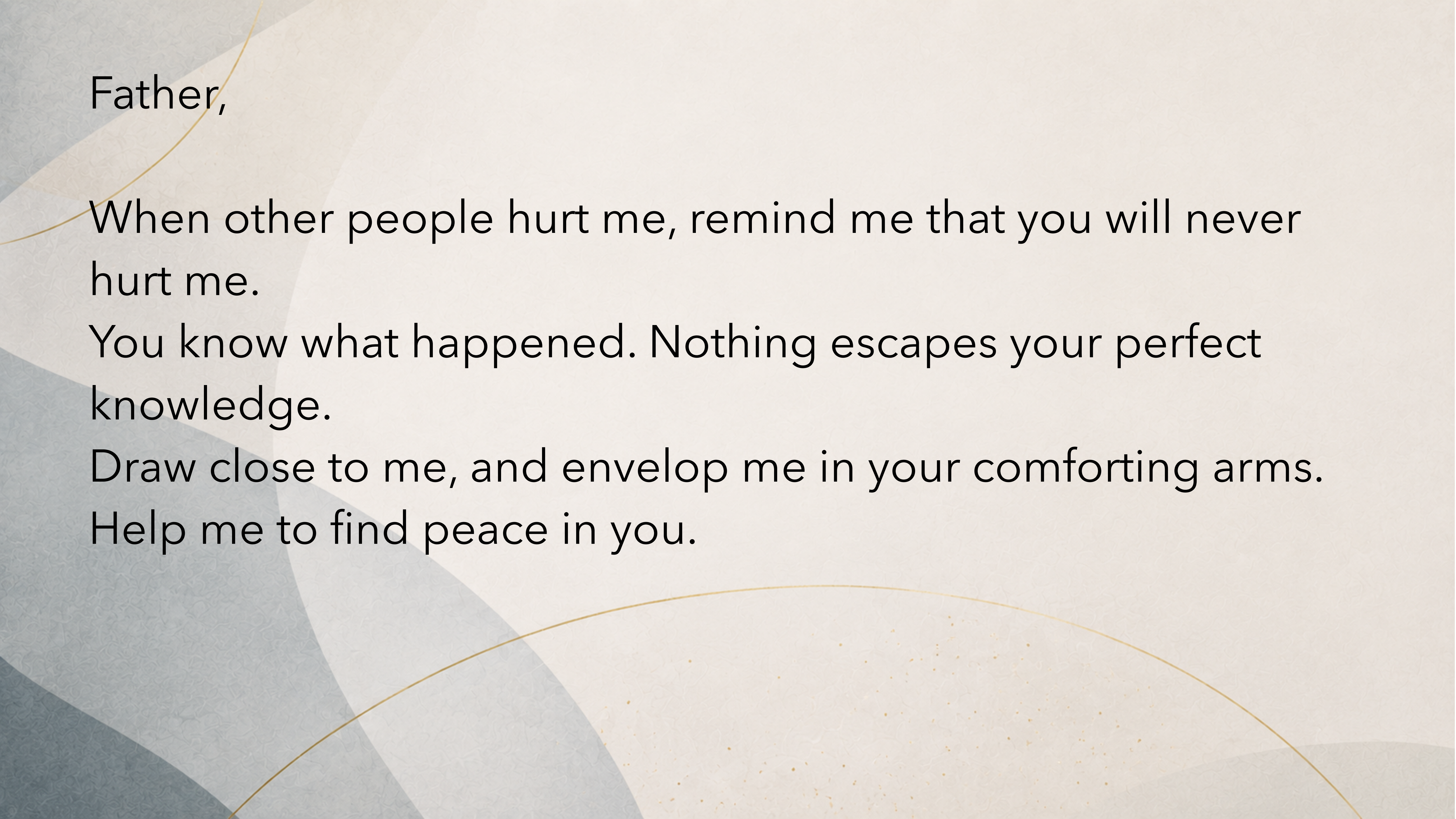
God perfects his power in weakness

But he said to me, "My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." So then, I will boast most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me.

2 Corinthians 12:9, NET



PRAYER



Father,

When other people hurt me, remind me that you will never hurt me.

You know what happened. Nothing escapes your perfect knowledge.

Draw close to me, and envelop me in your comforting arms.
Help me to find peace in you.

When other people discount me, remind me that I am never insignificant to you.

You know me perfectly. You call me your own.

Guide me to find my worth in you and in no other.

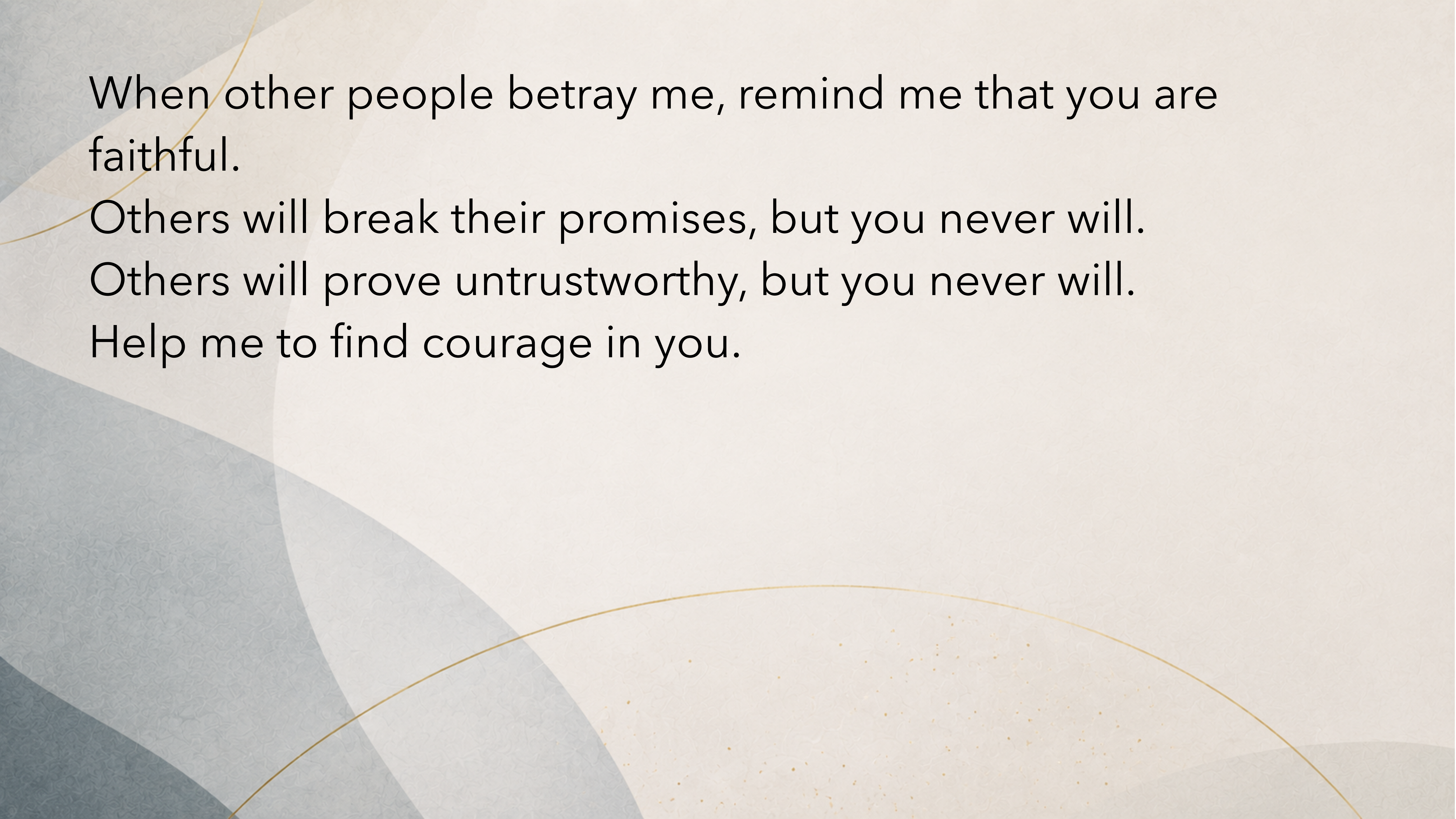
Help me to find my worth in you alone.

When other people oppose me, remind me that you are for me.

I don't need to win the approval of others; I have your acceptance in full.

I don't need to defend myself before others; you are my advocate.

Help me to find security in you.



When other people betray me, remind me that you are faithful.

Others will break their promises, but you never will.

Others will prove untrustworthy, but you never will.

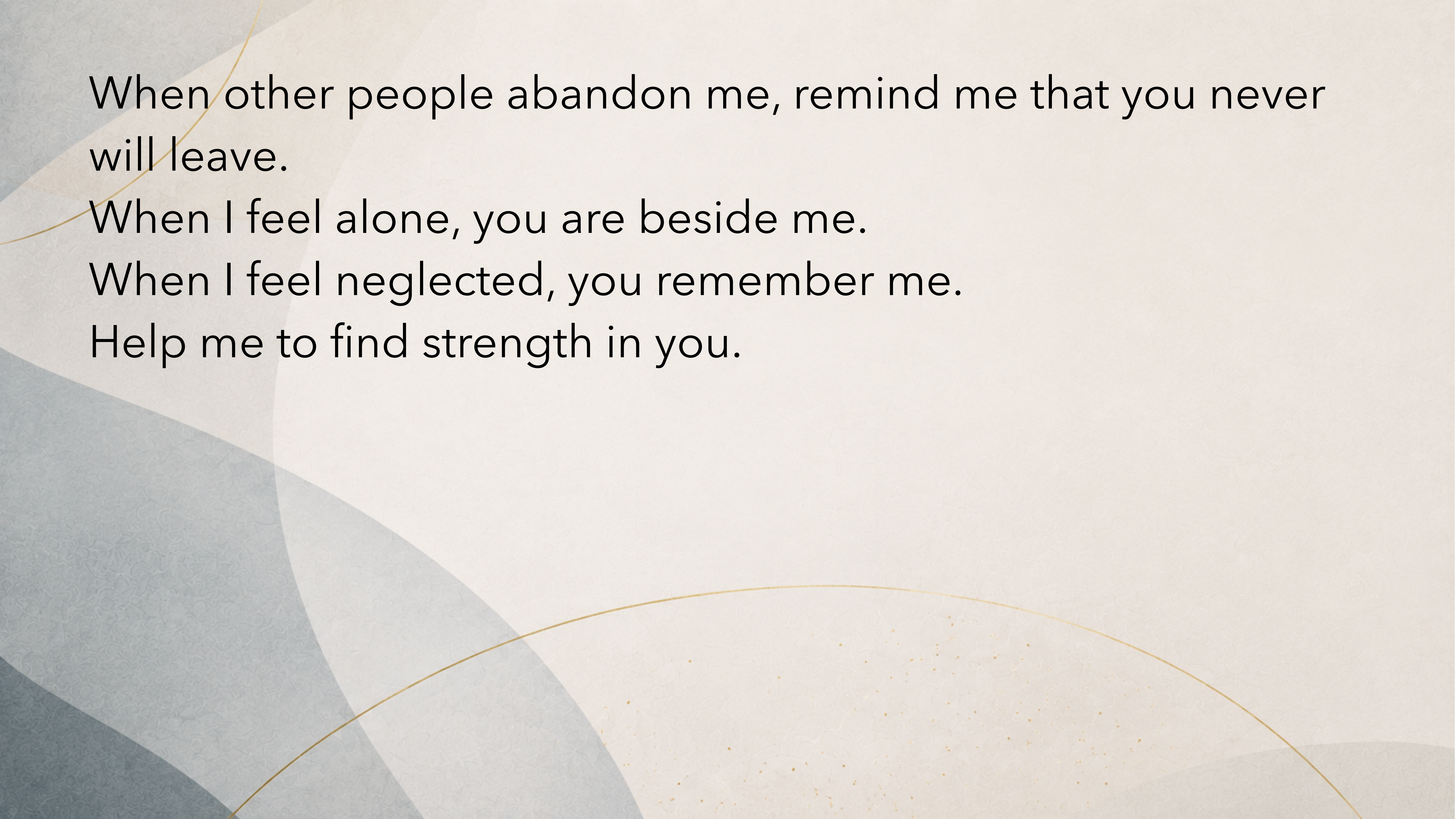
Help me to find courage in you.

When other people reject me, remind me that you accept me fully.

I don't need to earn your love. I don't need to perform.

You accept me fully without qualification because of Christ.

Help me to find confidence in you.

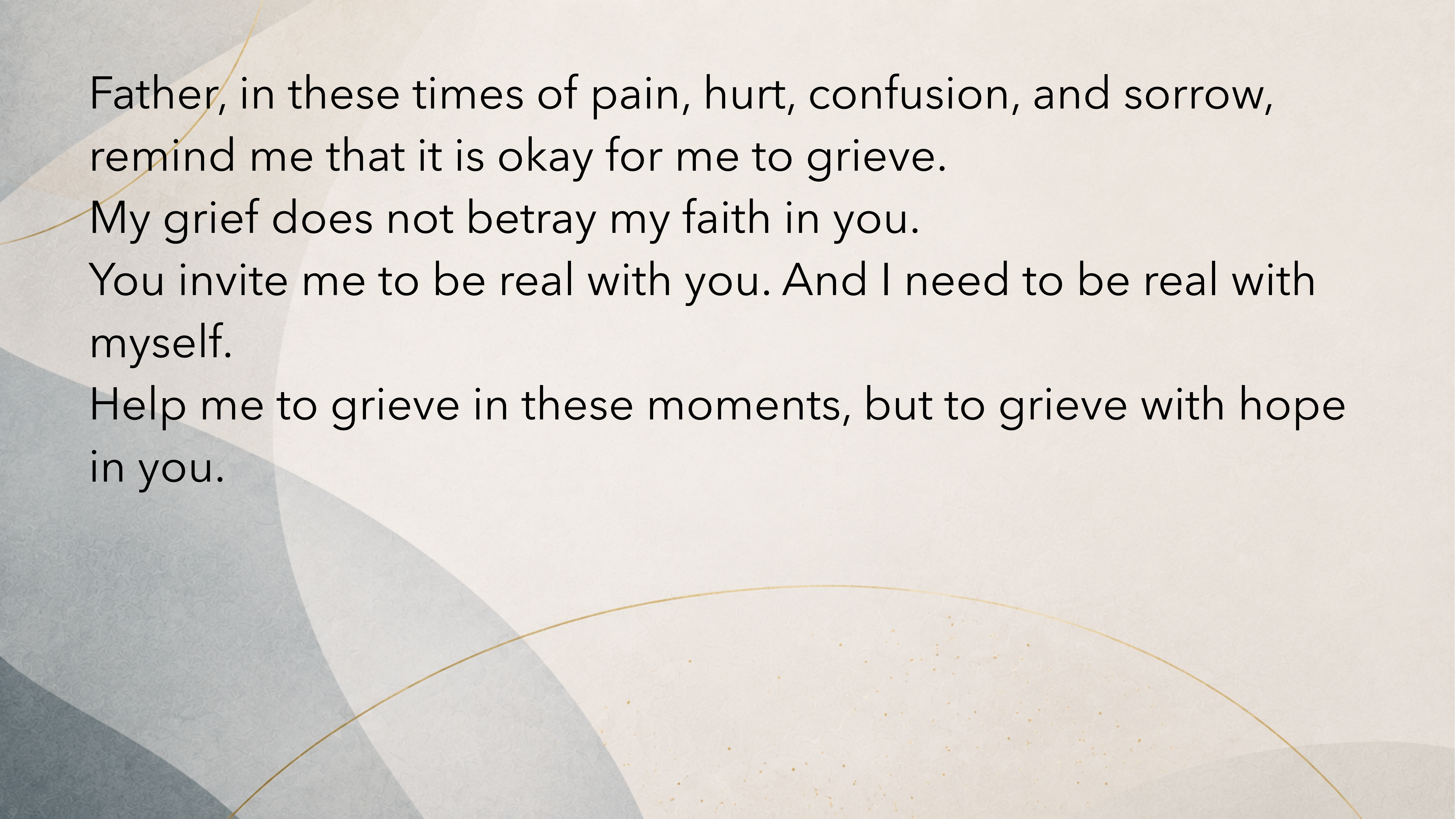


When other people abandon me, remind me that you never
will leave.

When I feel alone, you are beside me.

When I feel neglected, you remember me.

Help me to find strength in you.



Father, in these times of pain, hurt, confusion, and sorrow,
remind me that it is okay for me to grieve.

My grief does not betray my faith in you.

You invite me to be real with you. And I need to be real with
myself.

Help me to grieve in these moments, but to grieve with hope
in you.

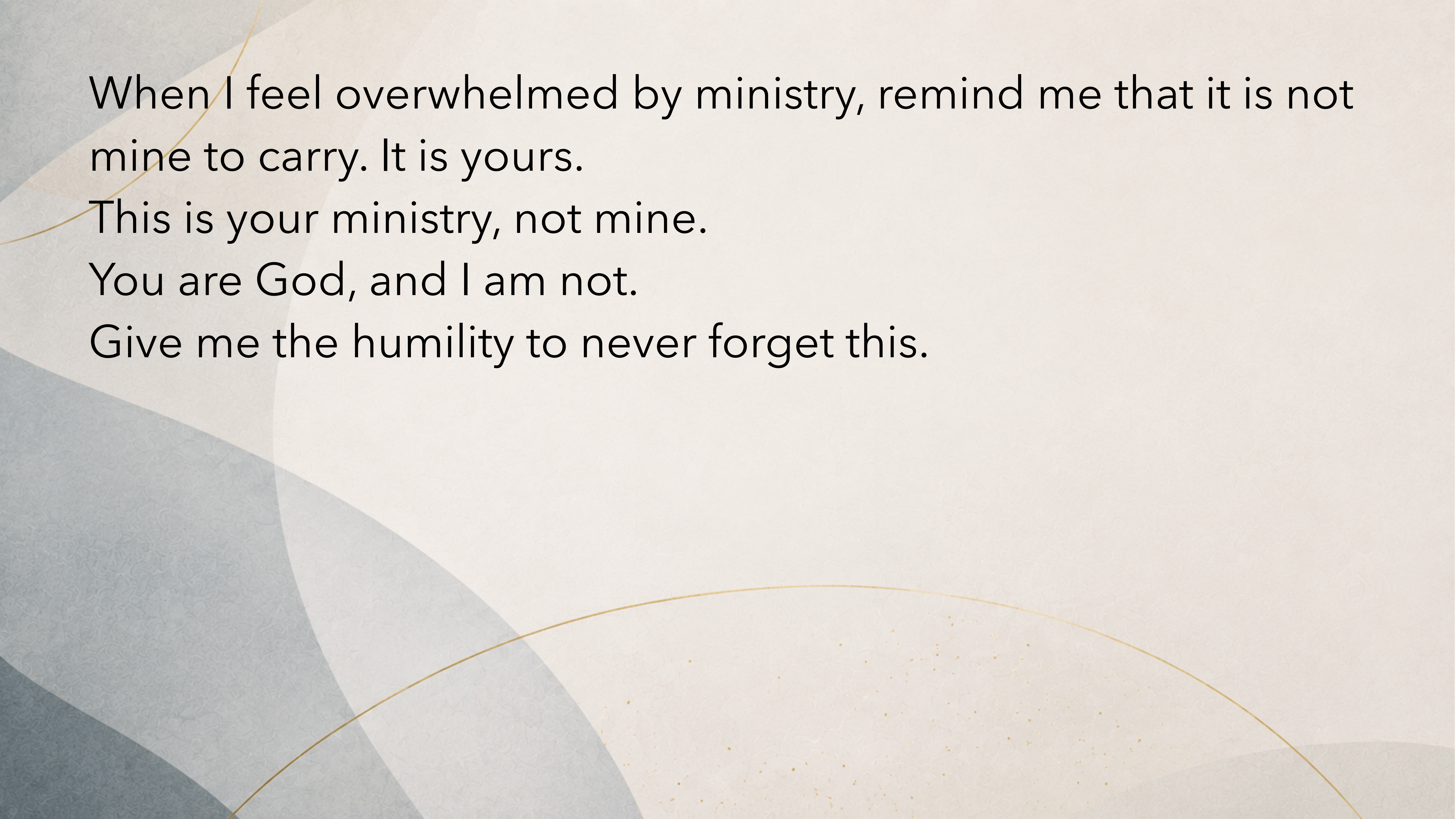
Remind me that ministry is something I offer to you as worship.

It does not define me. It does not give me value.

Before I am a ministry leader, I am your child.

My identity is secure in Christ.

Help me to remember this always.



When I feel overwhelmed by ministry, remind me that it is not mine to carry. It is yours.

This is your ministry, not mine.

You are God, and I am not.

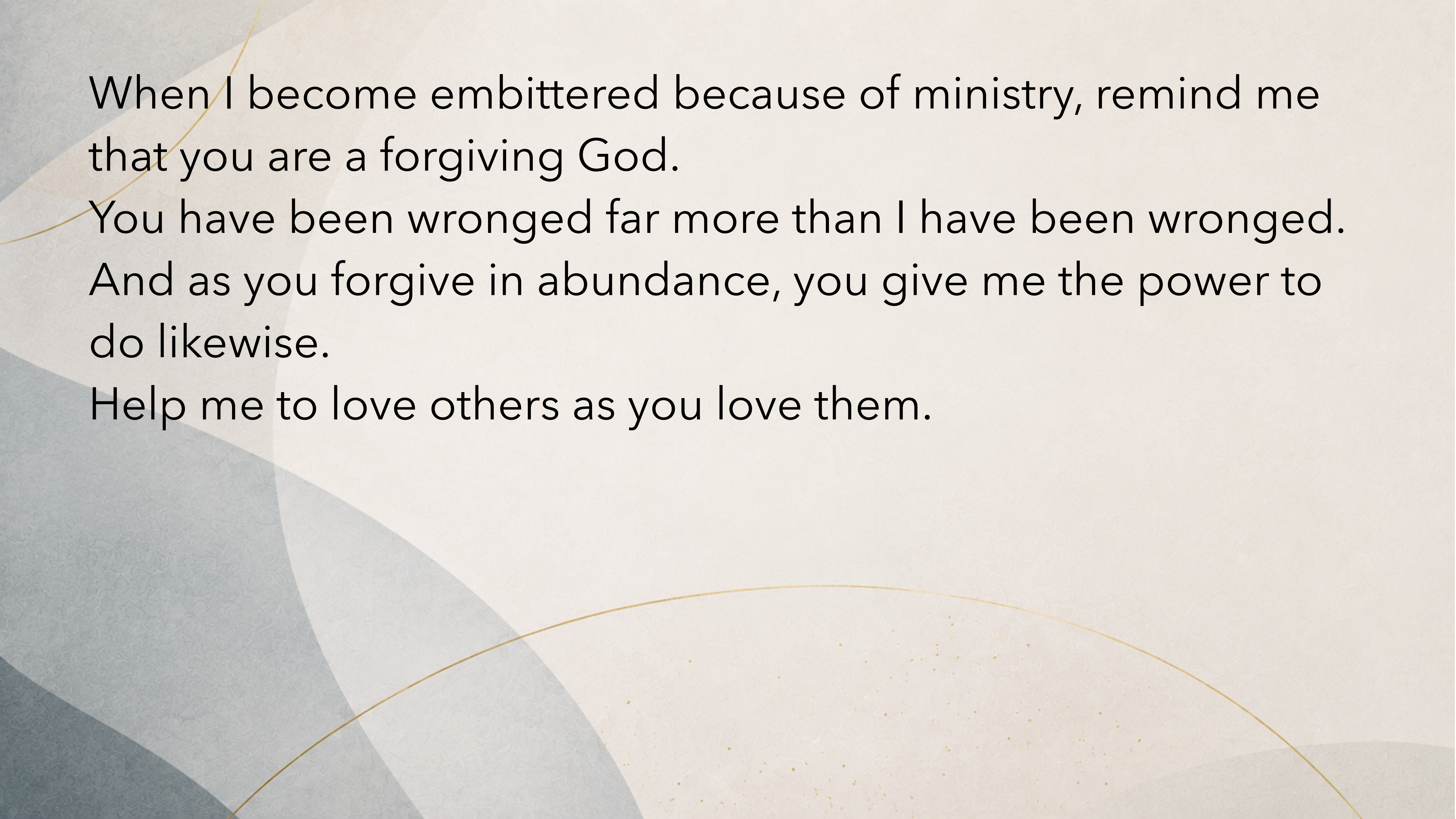
Give me the humility to never forget this.

When I feel inadequate for ministry, remind me that you are more than sufficient.

You have not called me to this task without equipping me to complete it.

You have given me your Spirit, and your Spirit is sufficient.

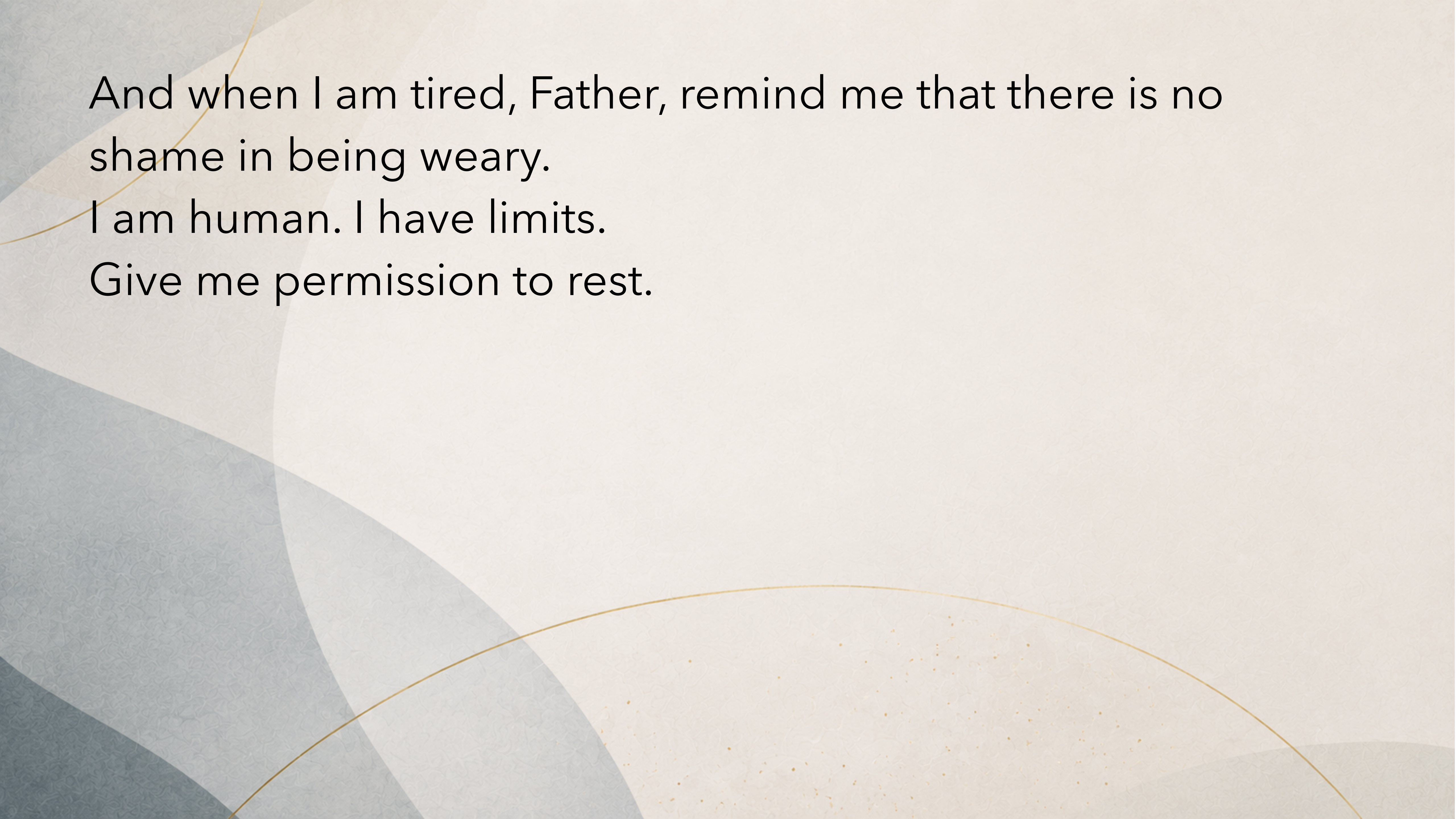
Give me the courage to rely on you.



When I become embittered because of ministry, remind me
that you are a forgiving God.

You have been wronged far more than I have been wronged.
And as you forgive in abundance, you give me the power to
do likewise.

Help me to love others as you love them.



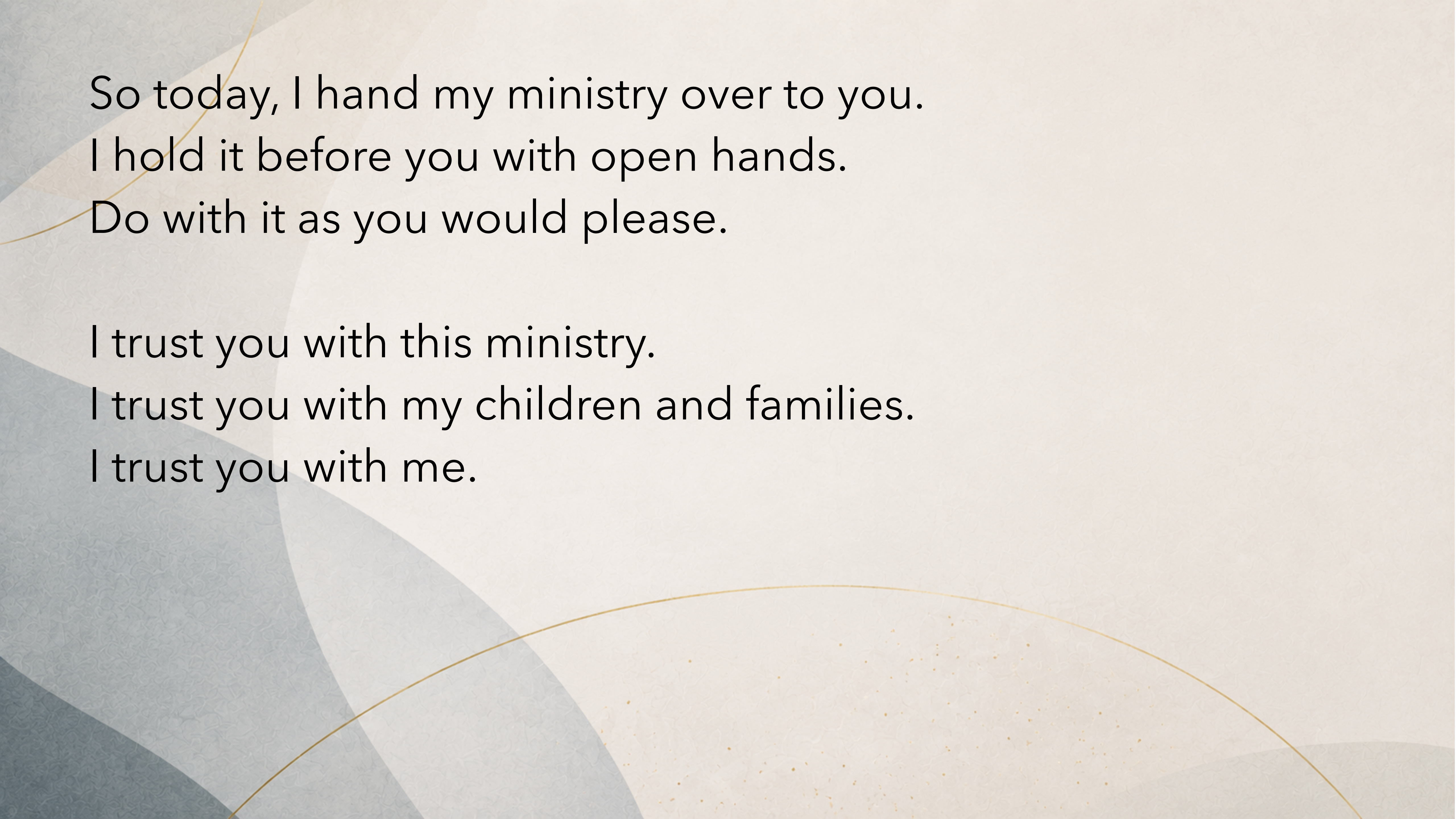
And when I am tired, Father, remind me that there is no
shame in being weary.

I am human. I have limits.

Give me permission to rest.

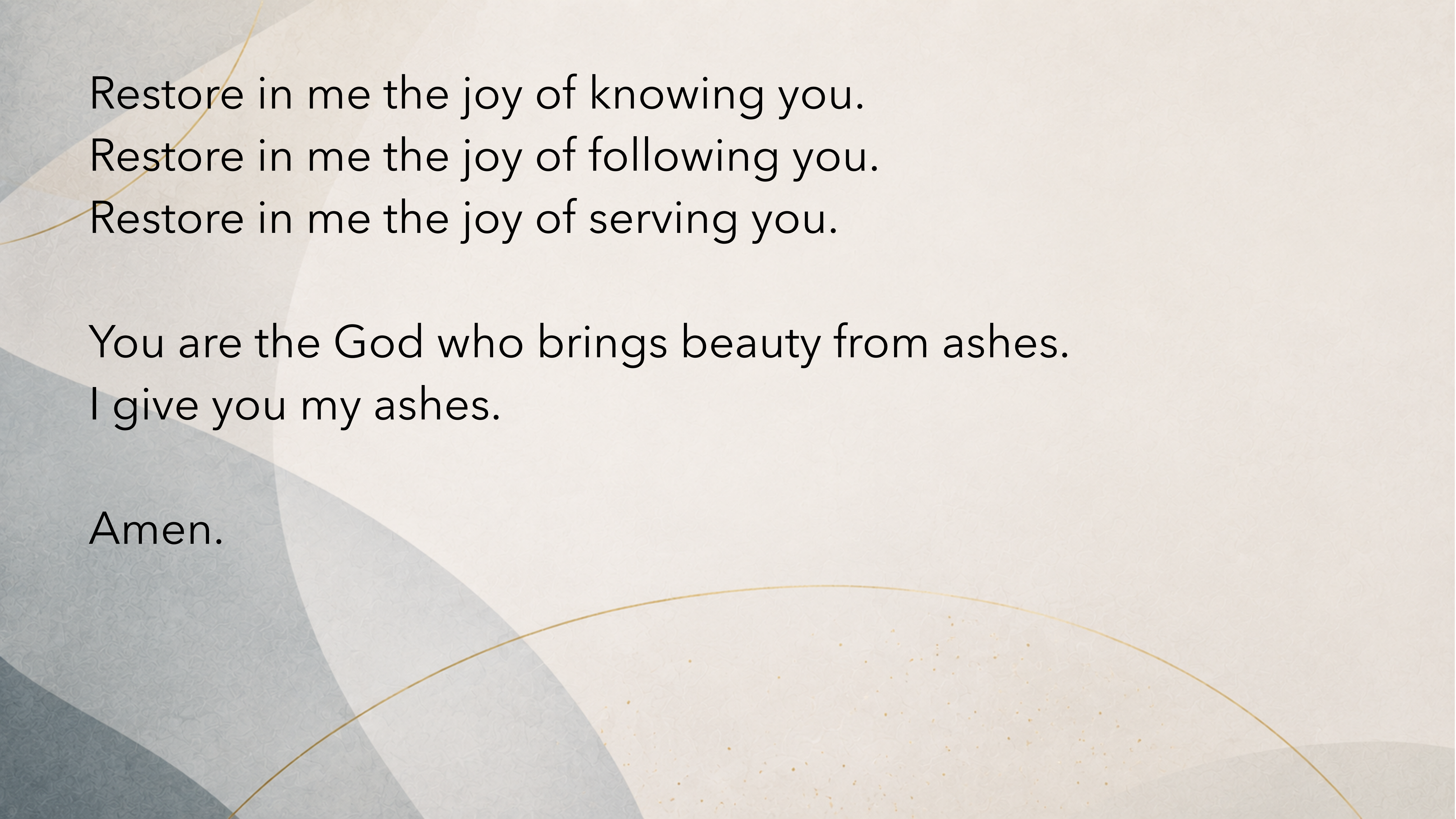
Father, I don't know what tomorrow will offer.
I don't know what successes and failures ministry will bring.
I don't know if or when I will see the fruit you are producing.
But I know that every day matters.

I know that my service to you is not in vain.
I know that you are in control.
I know that you have plans that cannot be thwarted.
And I know that one day, I will see more clearly what you have
been doing.



So today, I hand my ministry over to you.
I hold it before you with open hands.
Do with it as you would please.

I trust you with this ministry.
I trust you with my children and families.
I trust you with me.



Restore in me the joy of knowing you.
Restore in me the joy of following you.
Restore in me the joy of serving you.

You are the God who brings beauty from ashes.
I give you my ashes.

Amen.