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There's No Thief Like Fear

Dee Casper

www.paconference.org/CORE

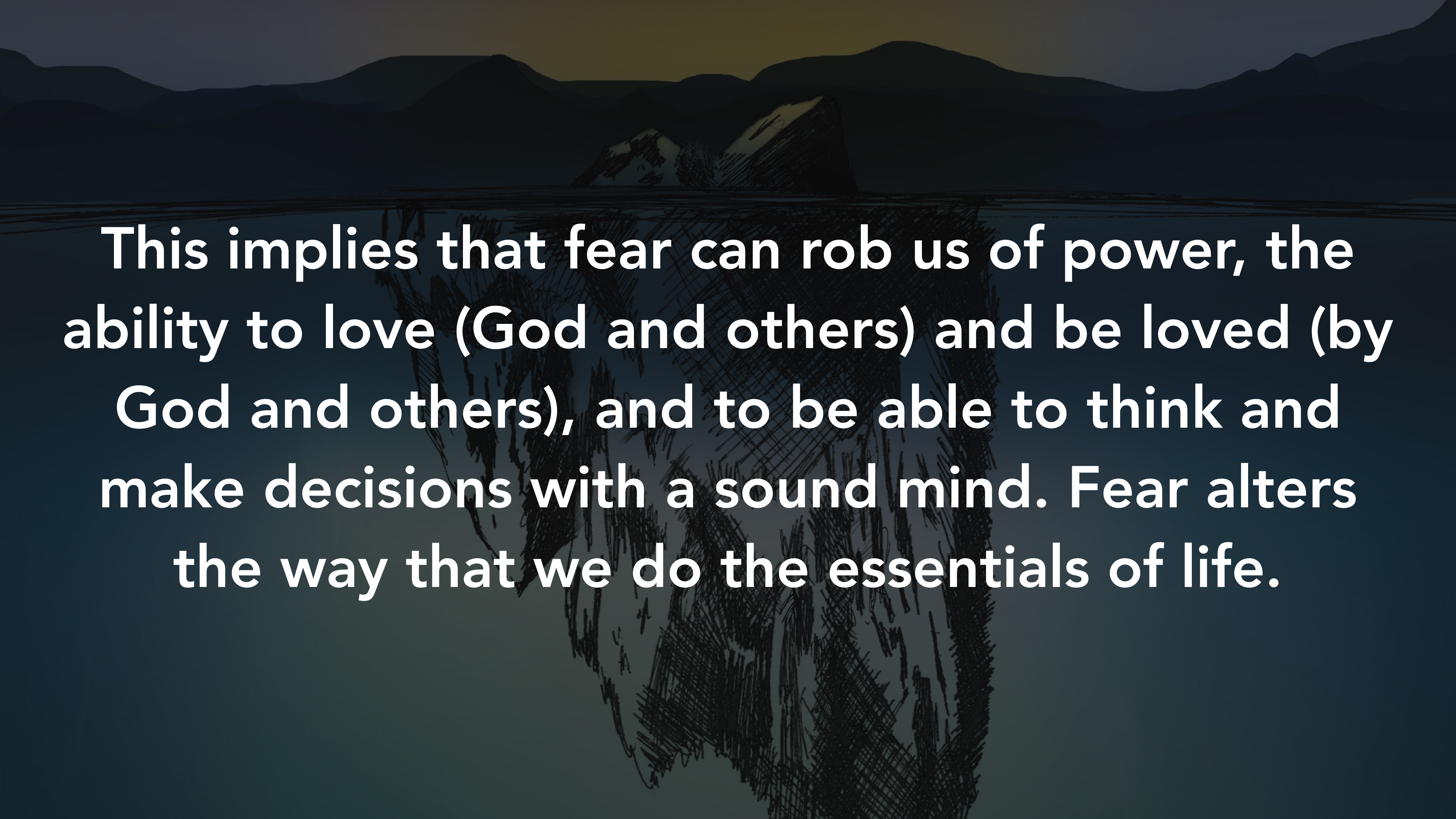


Why I'm passionate about this topic.

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the scene. The mountains are silhouetted against a dark sky, and the water reflects the mountains and the sky. The overall tone is somber and reflective.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power
and of love and of a sound mind.

-2 Timothy 1:7

The background is a dark, moody landscape. In the foreground, there's a body of water that reflects the sky and the distant mountains. The mountains are silhouetted against a dark, overcast sky. The overall tone is somber and reflective.

This implies that fear can rob us of power, the ability to love (God and others) and be loved (by God and others), and to be able to think and make decisions with a sound mind. Fear alters the way that we do the essentials of life.



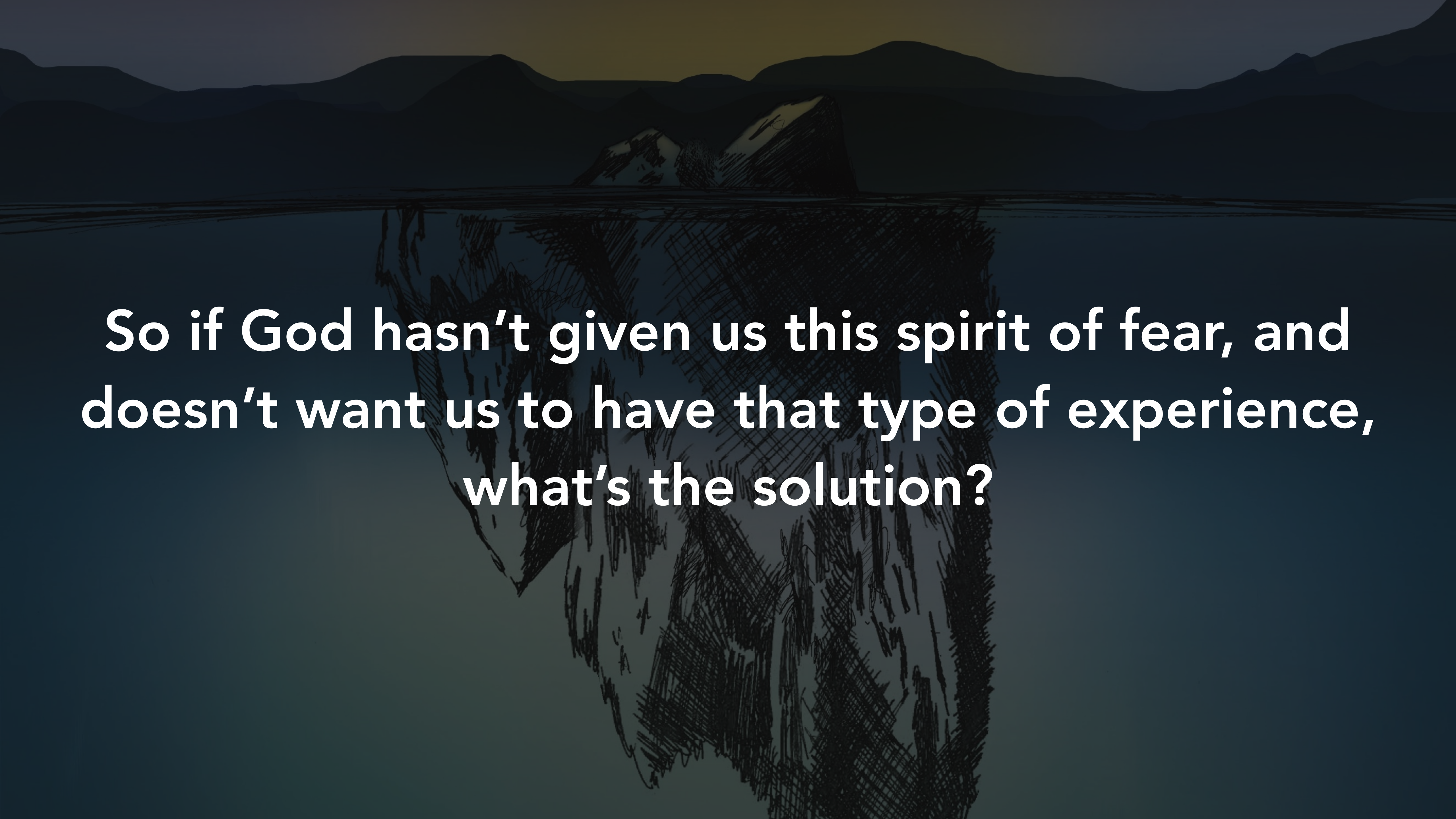
Fear leads us to make bad decisions:

People of the Gadarenes sending Jesus away (Luke 8)

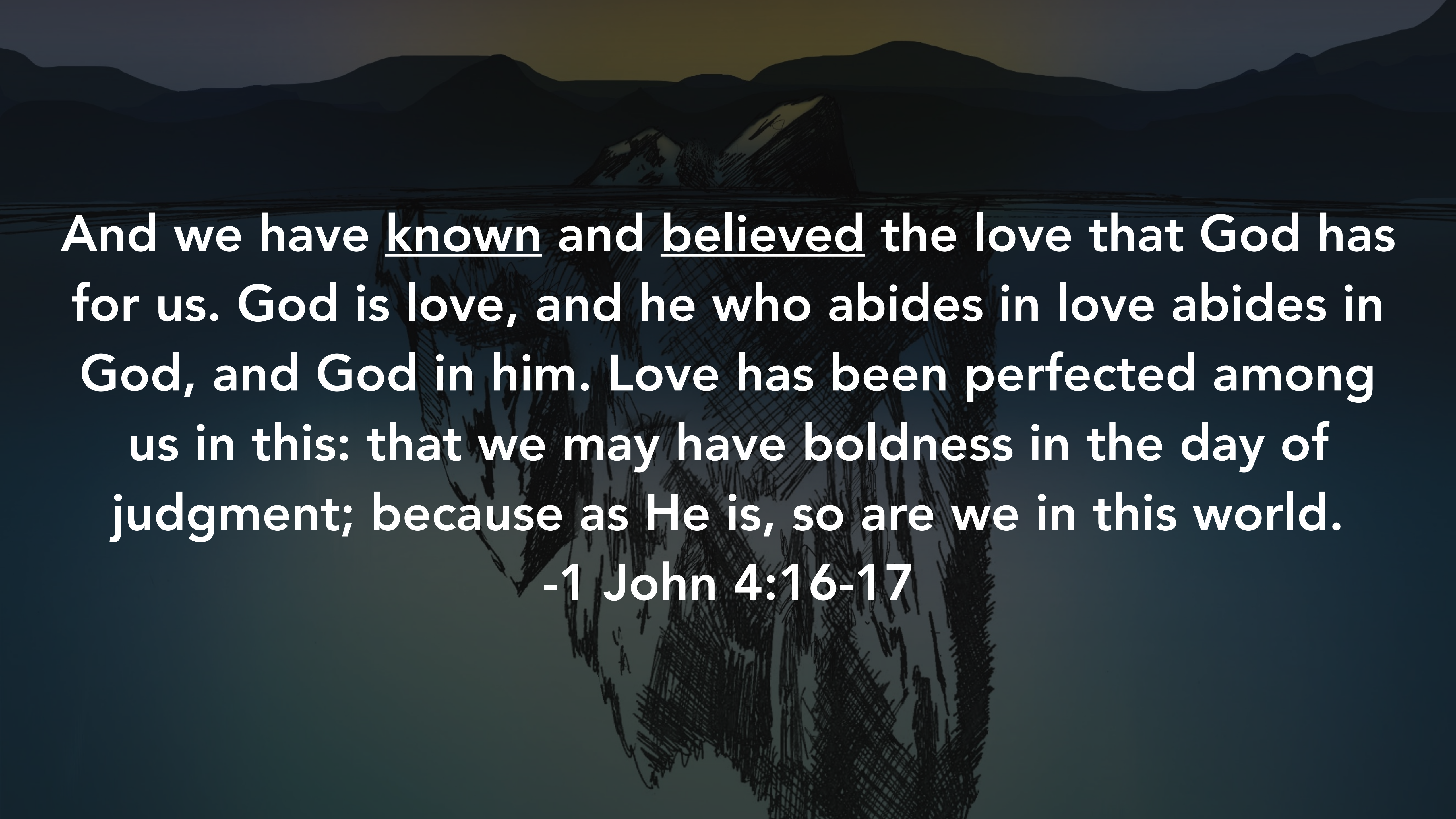
Basically the entire life of King Saul from his first fall
onward (Much of 1 Samuel)

Elijah running from God and His call right after calling
down fire from heaven (1 Kings 19)

Peter denying Christ (John 18)

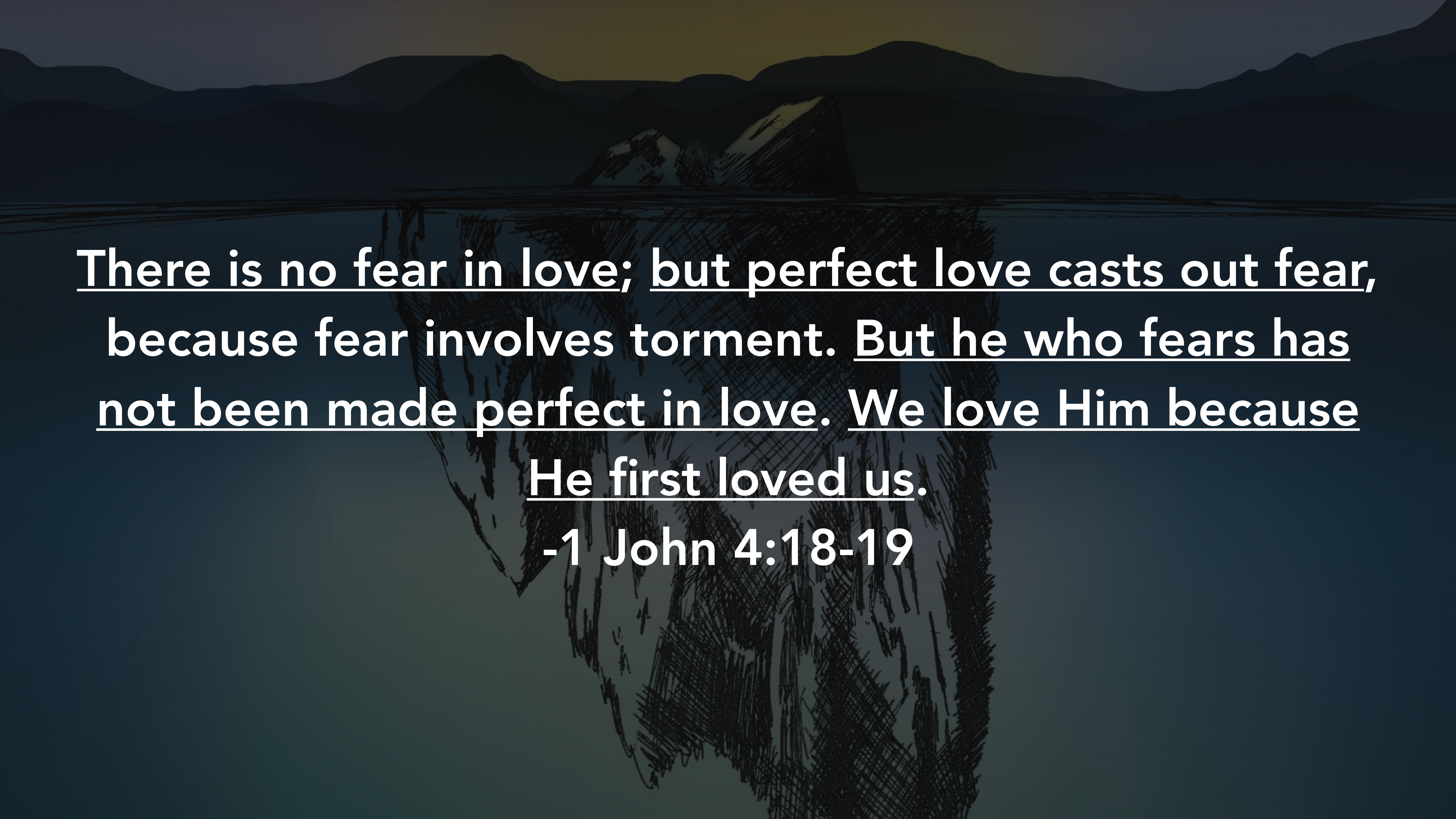


So if God hasn't given us this spirit of fear, and
doesn't want us to have that type of experience,
what's the solution?

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the sky. The text is overlaid on this background.

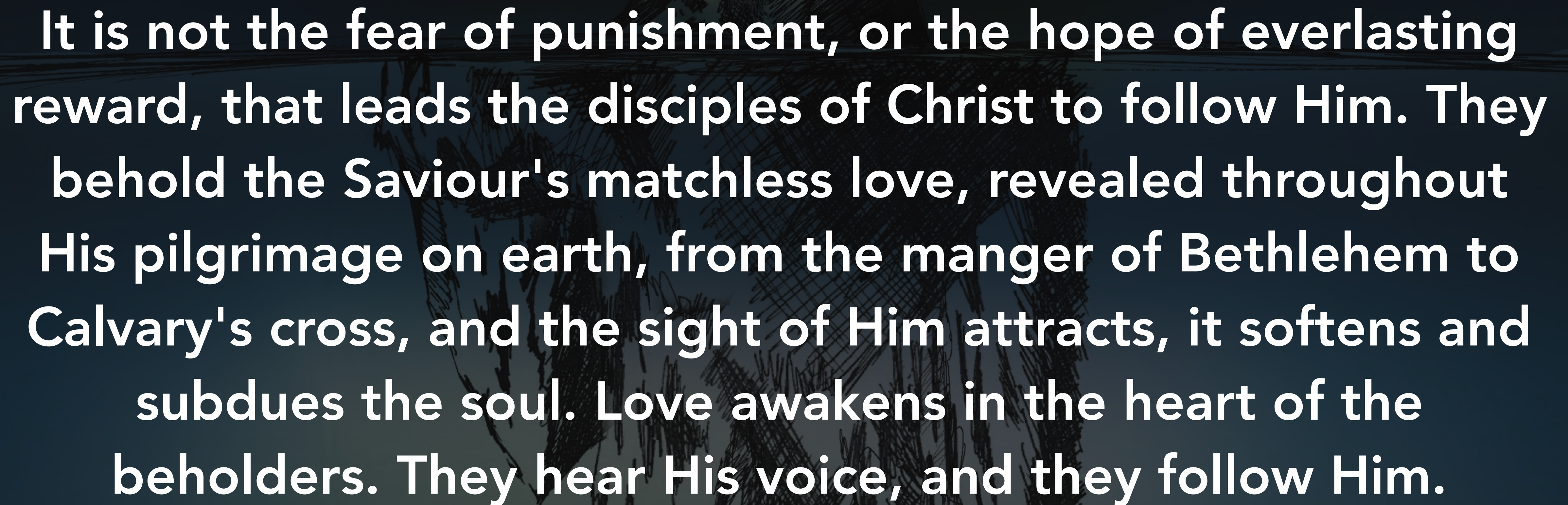
And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

-1 John 4:16-17



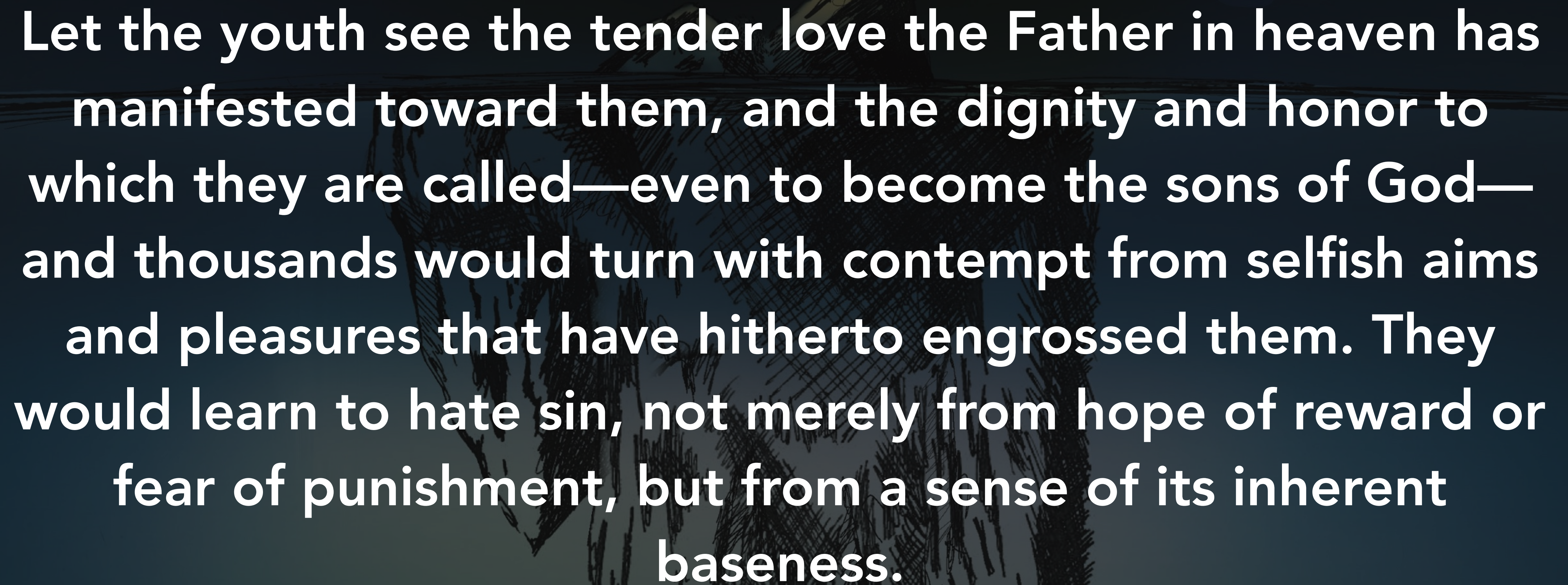
There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,
because fear involves torment. But he who fears has
not been made perfect in love. We love Him because
He first loved us.

-1 John 4:18-19

The background of the image is a dark, moody landscape. It features a range of mountains in the distance, their peaks silhouetted against a slightly lighter, hazy sky. In the foreground, there is a body of water, possibly a lake or a wide river, which reflects the dark tones of the mountains and the sky. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues, greys, and blacks, creating a somber and contemplative atmosphere. The text is overlaid on this background, centered horizontally and vertically.

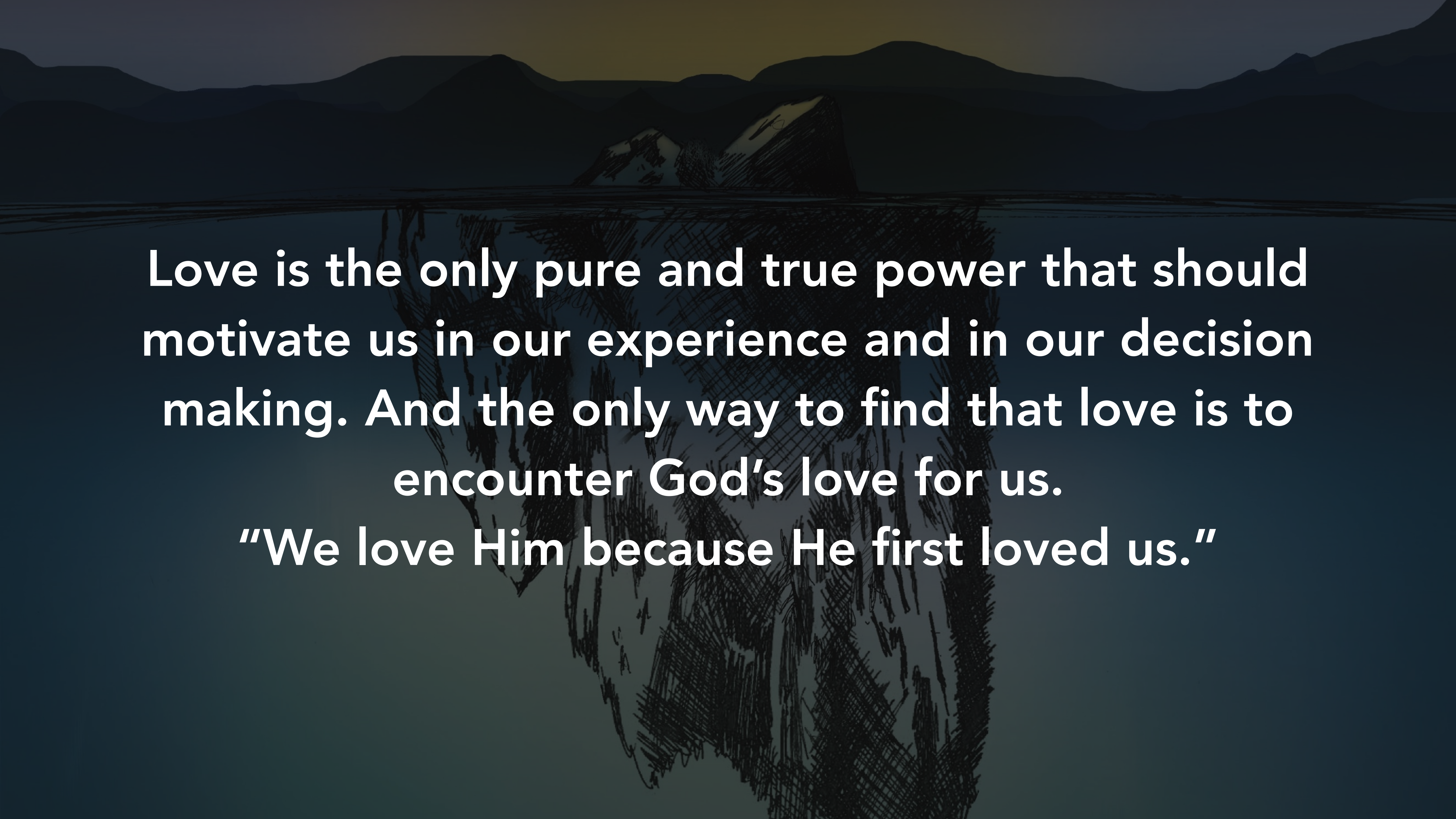
It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on earth, from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary's cross, and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholders. They hear His voice, and they follow Him.

-Desire of Ages 480.3

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the sky. The text is overlaid on this background.

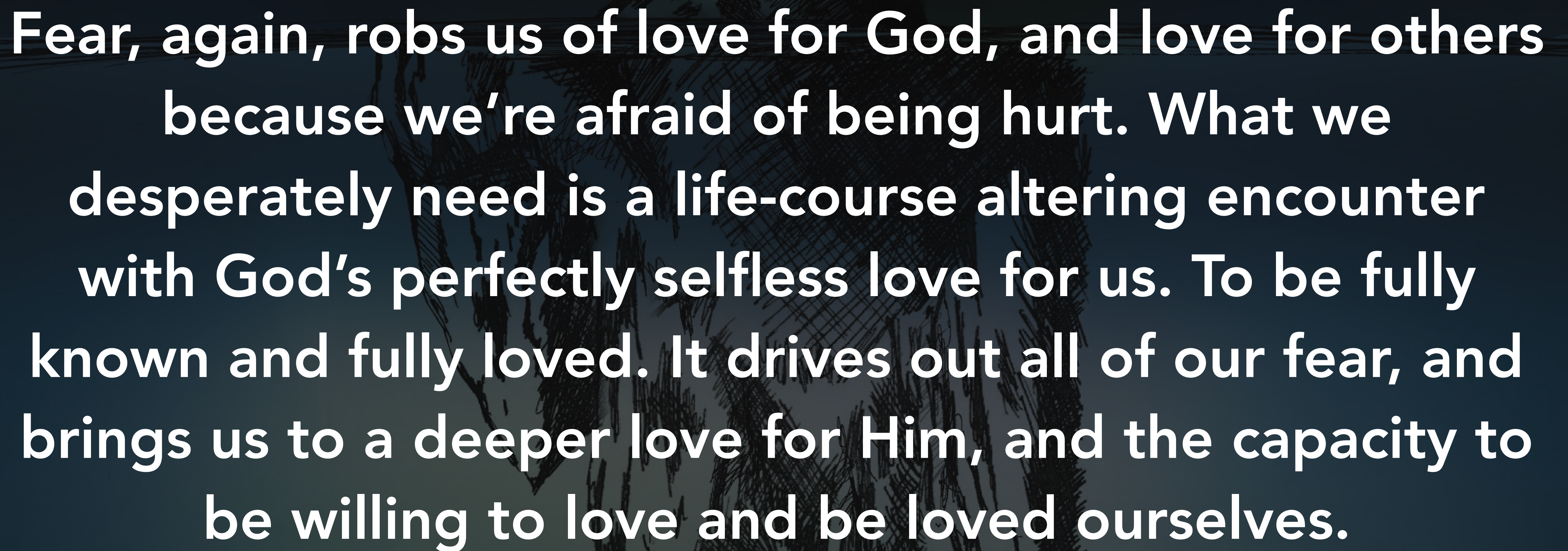
Let the youth see the tender love the Father in heaven has manifested toward them, and the dignity and honor to which they are called—even to become the sons of God—and thousands would turn with contempt from selfish aims and pleasures that have hitherto engrossed them. They would learn to hate sin, not merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment, but from a sense of its inherent baseness.

-From Eternity Past 436.3

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the scene. The mountains are silhouetted against a dark sky, and the water in the foreground shows a clear reflection of the mountains and the sky. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Love is the only pure and true power that should motivate us in our experience and in our decision making. And the only way to find that love is to encounter God's love for us.

"We love Him because He first loved us."



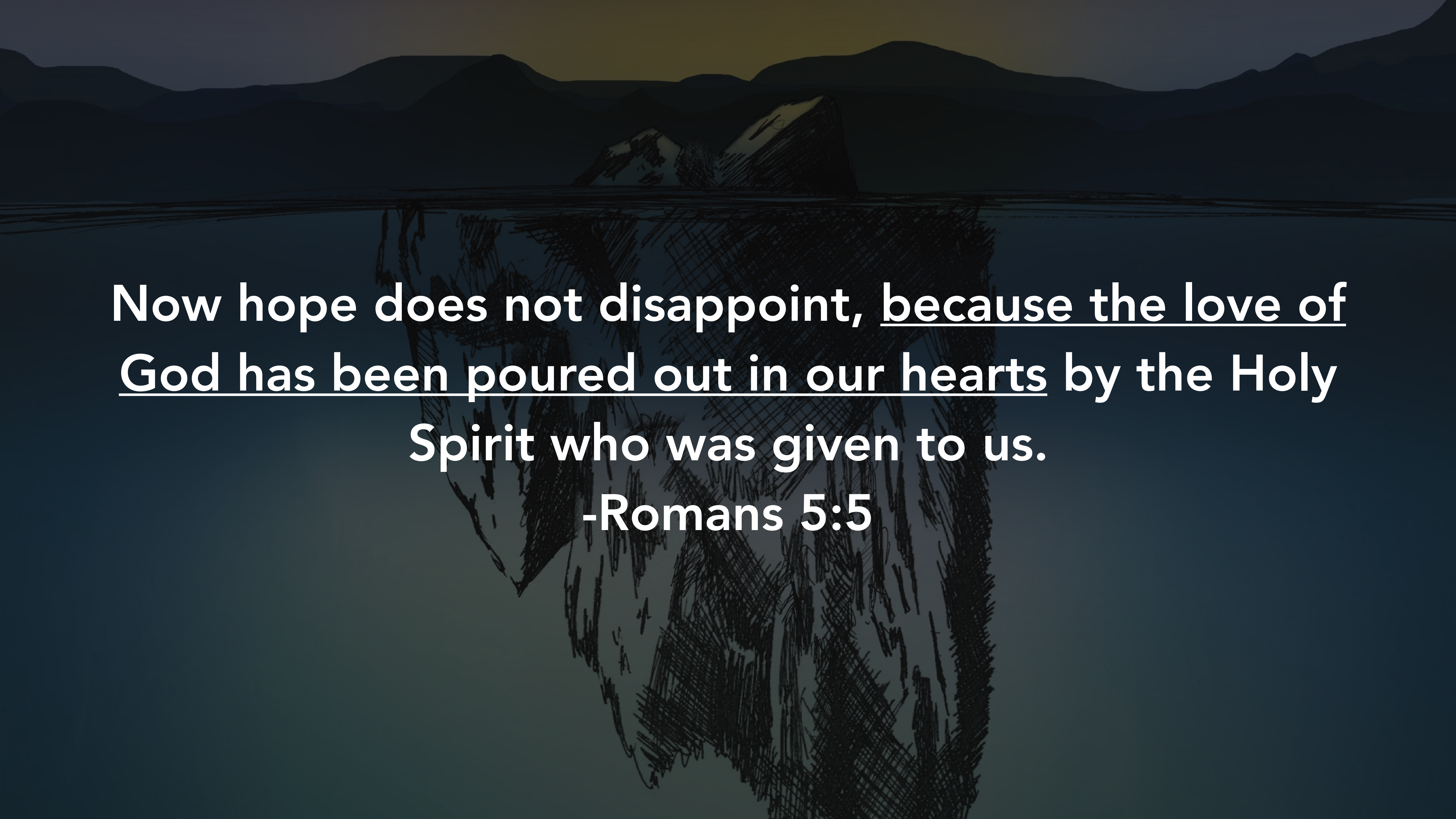
Fear, again, robs us of love for God, and love for others because we're afraid of being hurt. What we desperately need is a life-course altering encounter with God's perfectly selfless love for us. To be fully known and fully loved. It drives out all of our fear, and brings us to a deeper love for Him, and the capacity to be willing to love and be loved ourselves.



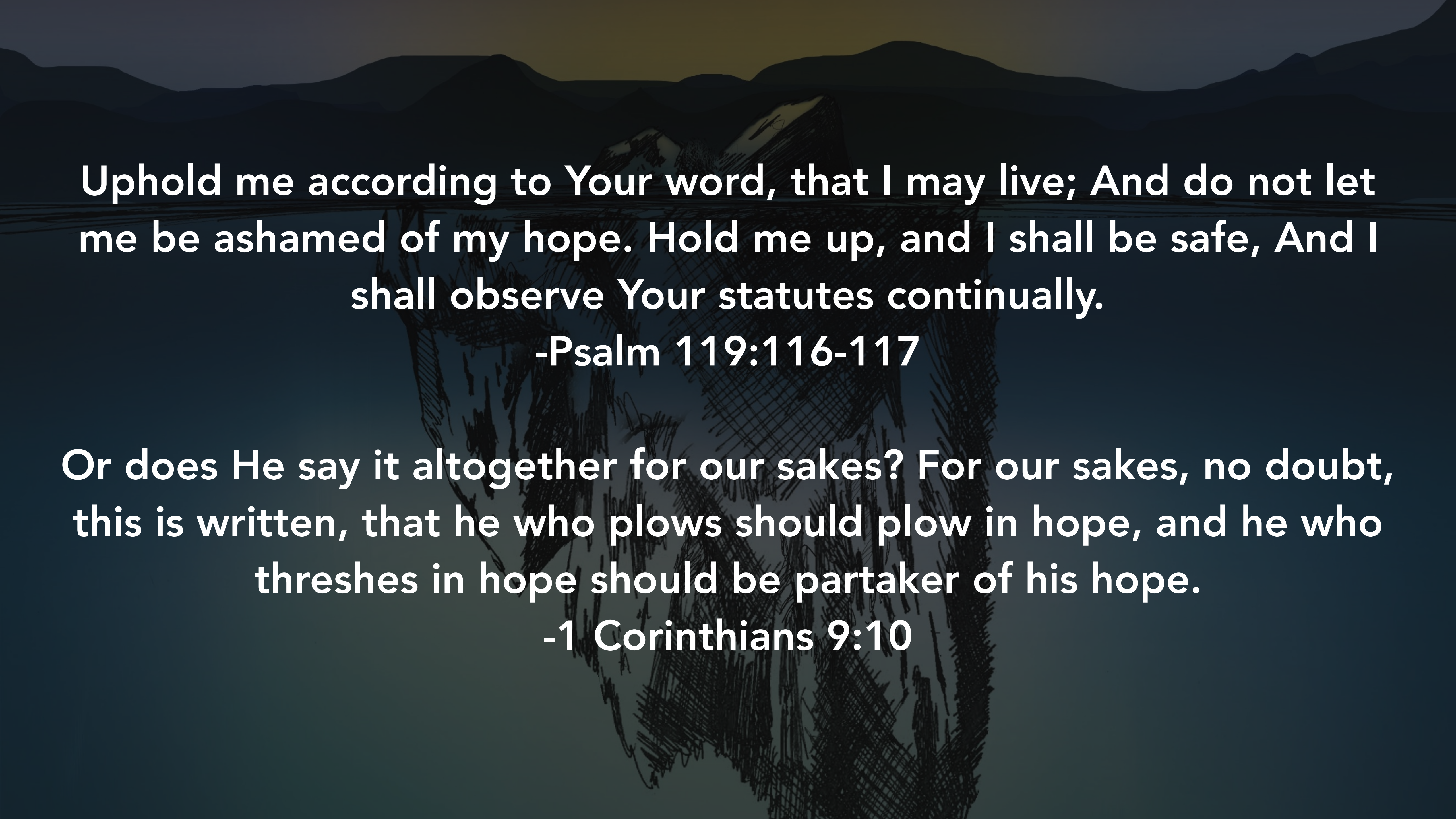
A sad example of a friend who left the faith:

Me: "I wrestle to understand the appeal of atheism. It completely denies the intrinsic value of a person."

Them: "What makes it so appealing is that you don't have to deal with the fear of having hope and then end up being disappointed anymore."

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the sky. The scene is rendered in a sketchy, painterly style with muted colors. The mountains in the background are dark and silhouetted against a slightly lighter sky. The water in the foreground is dark and reflects the sky and mountains, creating a sense of depth and tranquility. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of
God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy
Spirit who was given to us.
-Romans 5:5



Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope. Hold me up, and I shall be safe, And I shall observe Your statutes continually.

-Psalm 119:116-117

Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

-1 Corinthians 9:10

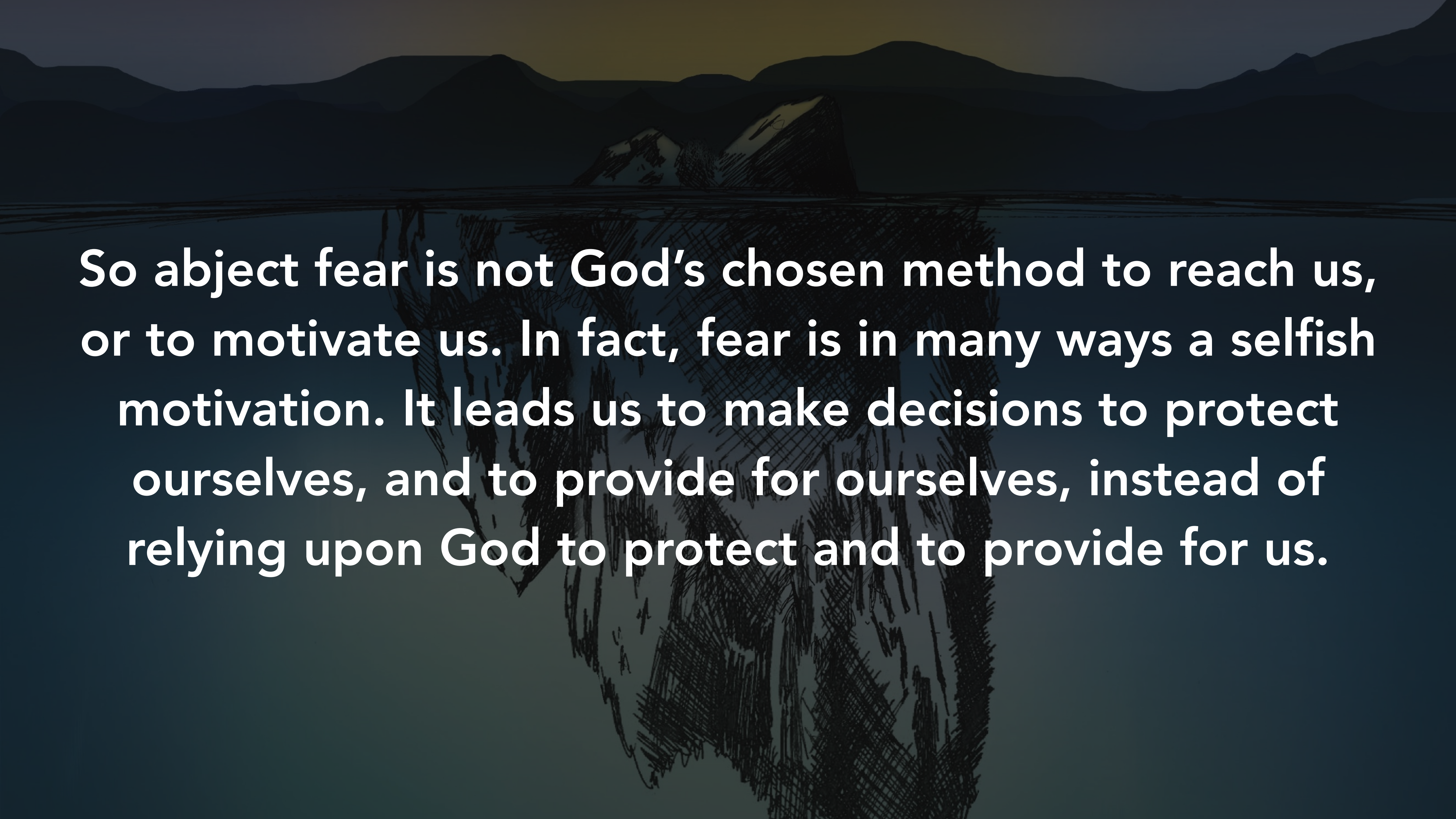


And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

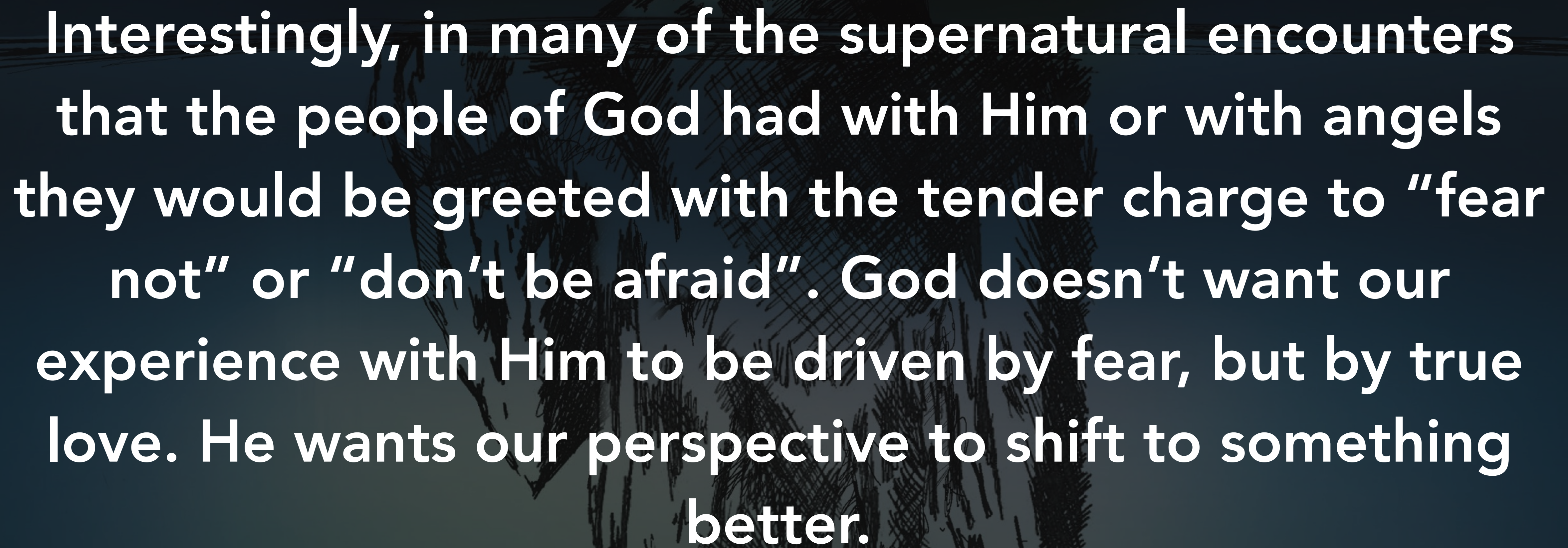
-Galatians 6:9

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

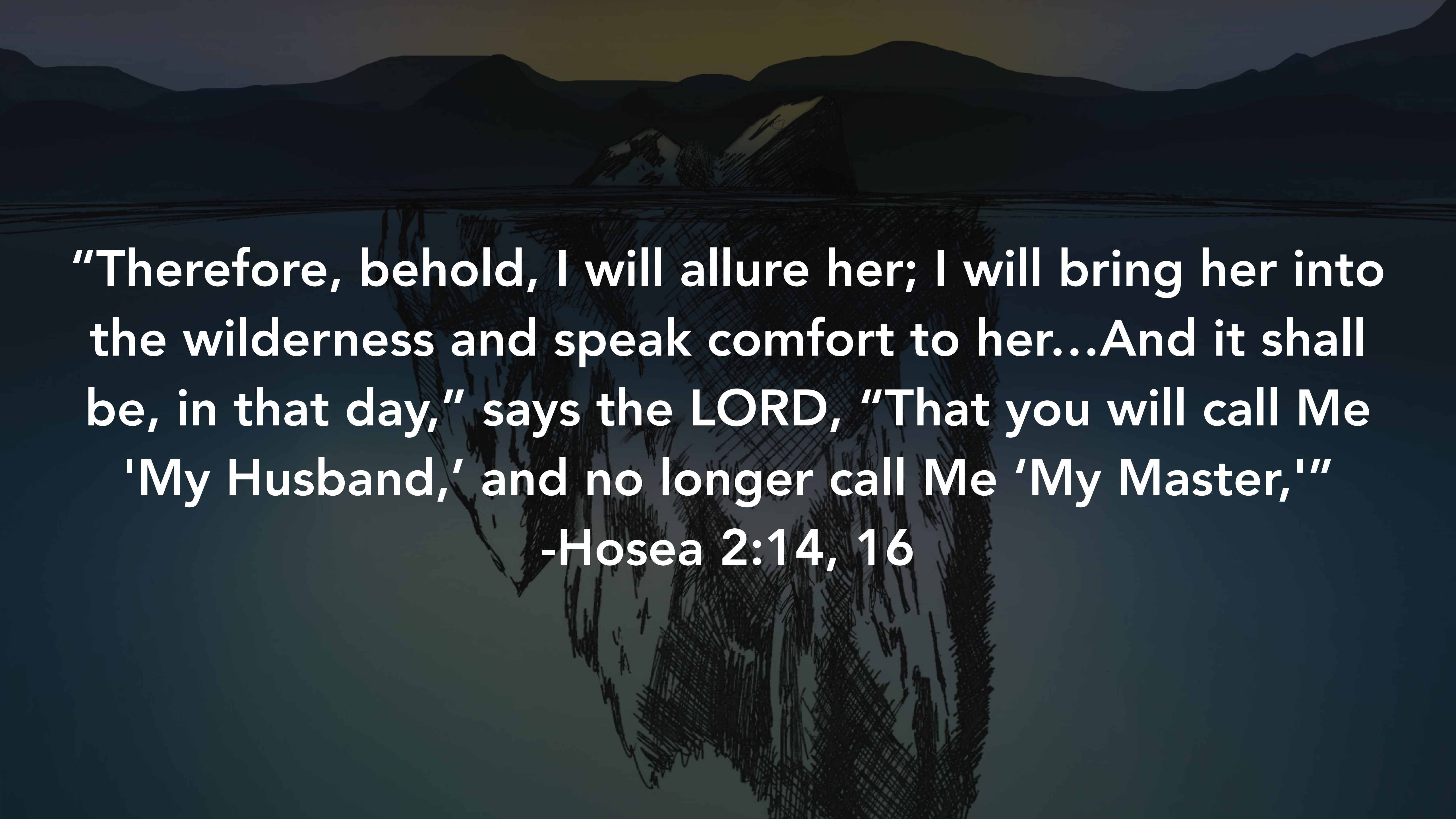
-Romans 15:13



So abject fear is not God's chosen method to reach us, or to motivate us. In fact, fear is in many ways a selfish motivation. It leads us to make decisions to protect ourselves, and to provide for ourselves, instead of relying upon God to protect and to provide for us.

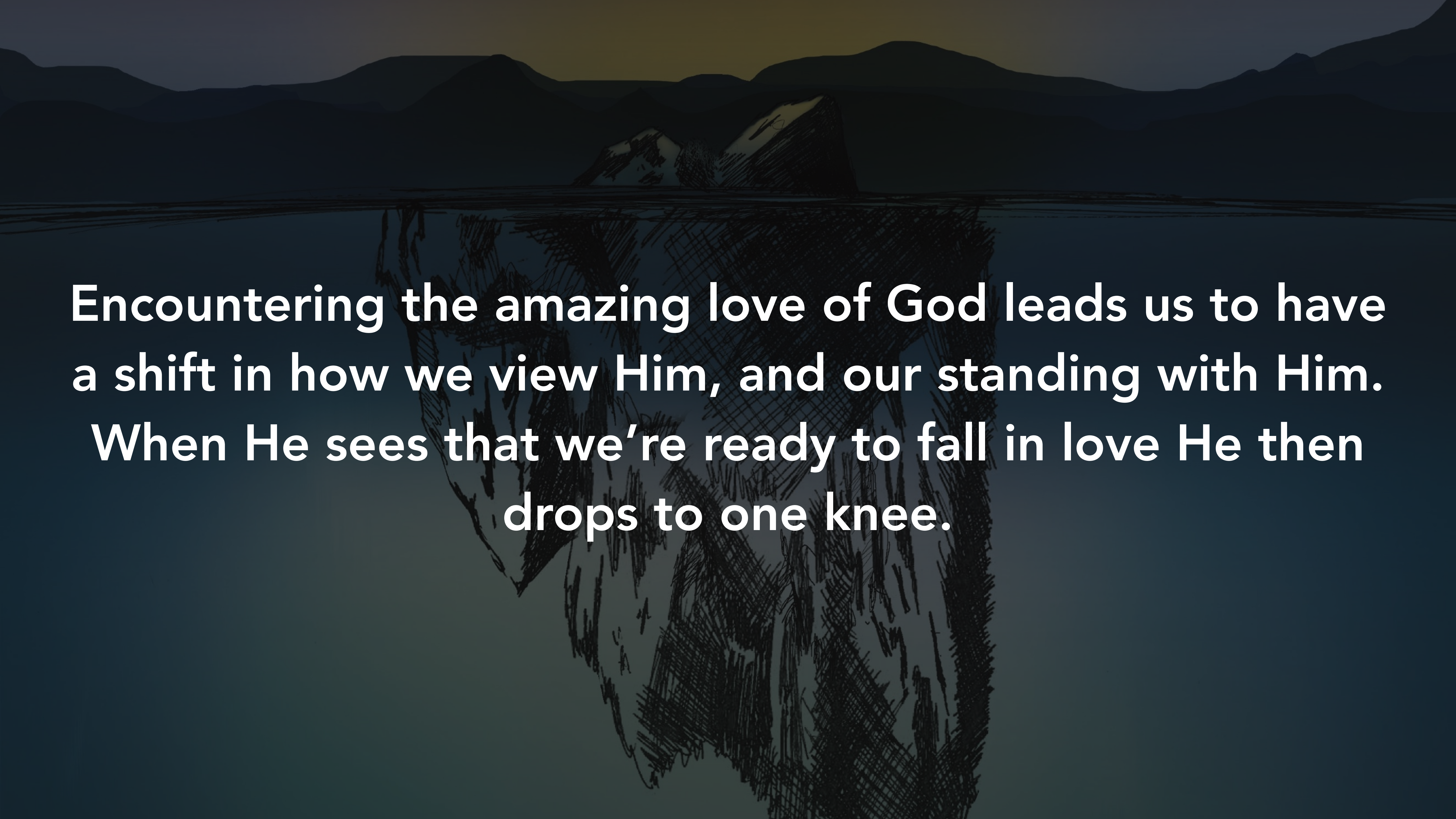


Interestingly, in many of the supernatural encounters that the people of God had with Him or with angels they would be greeted with the tender charge to “fear not” or “don’t be afraid”. God doesn’t want our experience with Him to be driven by fear, but by true love. He wants our perspective to shift to something better.

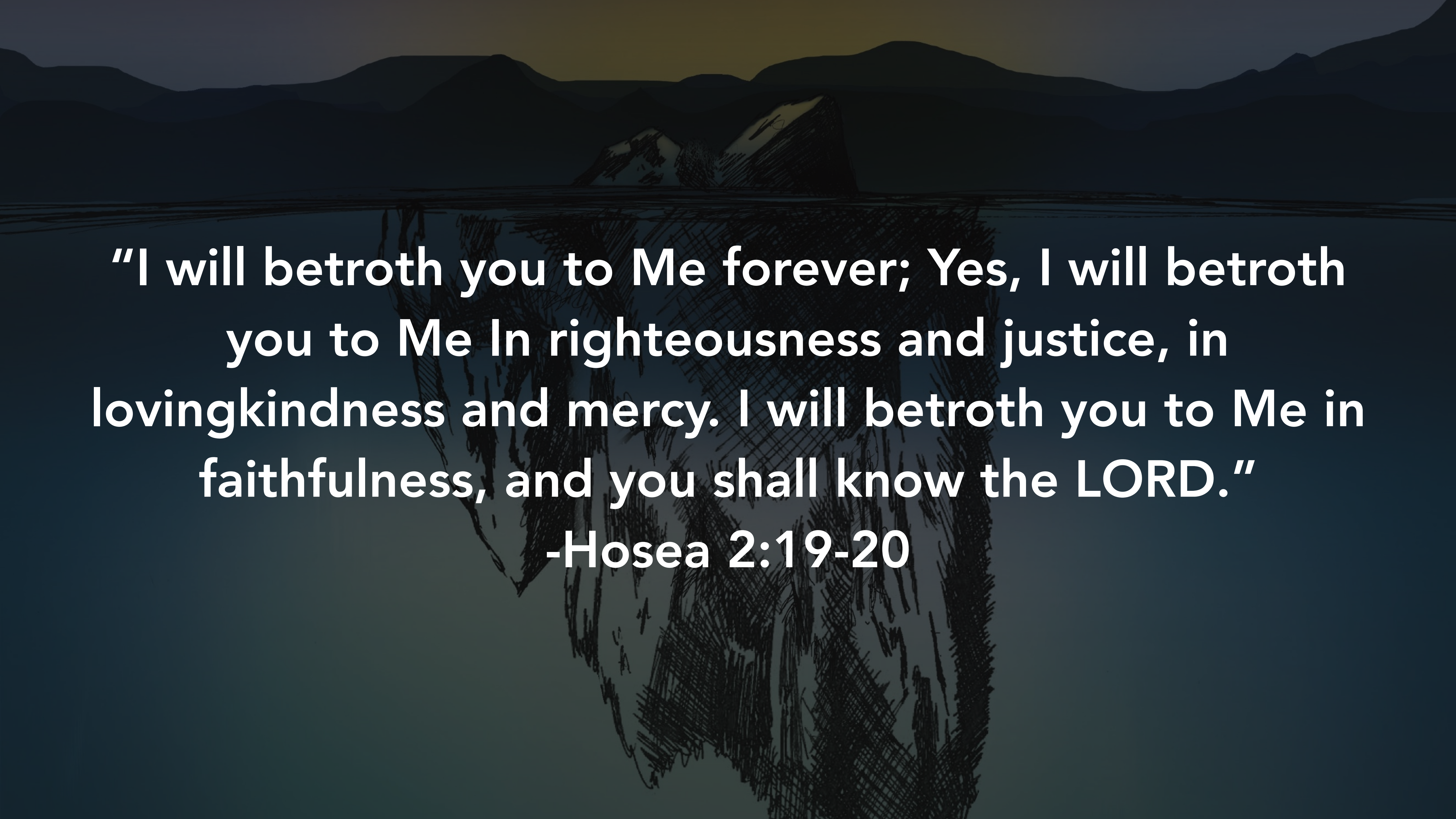
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“Therefore, behold, I will allure her; I will bring her into the wilderness and speak comfort to her...And it shall be, in that day,” says the LORD, “That you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer call Me ‘My Master,’”

-Hosea 2:14, 16

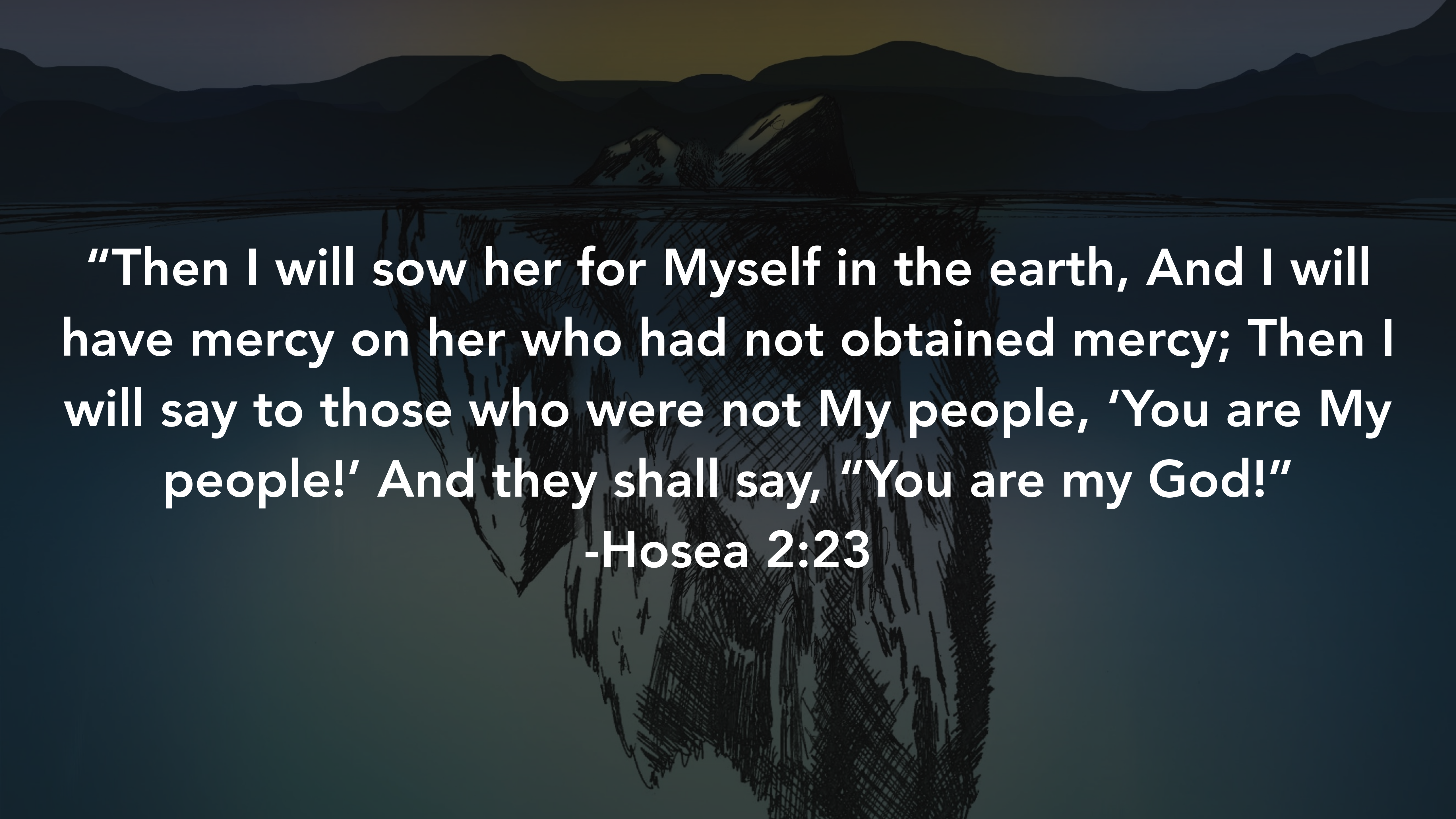


Encountering the amazing love of God leads us to have
a shift in how we view Him, and our standing with Him.
When He sees that we're ready to fall in love He then
drops to one knee.

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the sky. The scene is rendered in a sketchy, painterly style with muted colors. The mountains in the background are dark and silhouetted against a slightly lighter sky. The water in the foreground is dark and reflects the sky and mountains, creating a sense of depth and tranquility. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

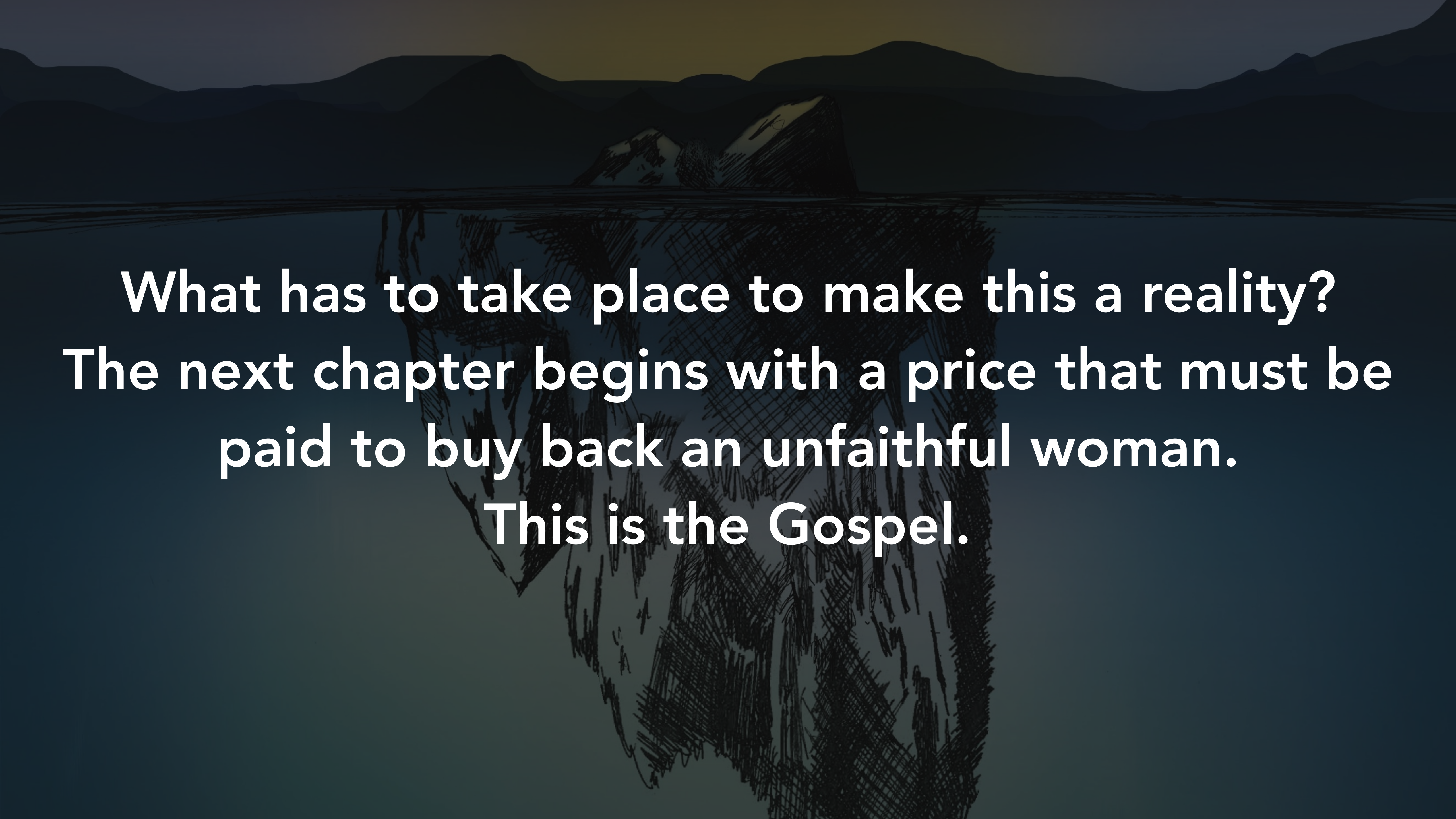
**"I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth
you to Me In righteousness and justice, in
lovingkindness and mercy. I will betroth you to Me in
faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD."**

-Hosea 2:19-20

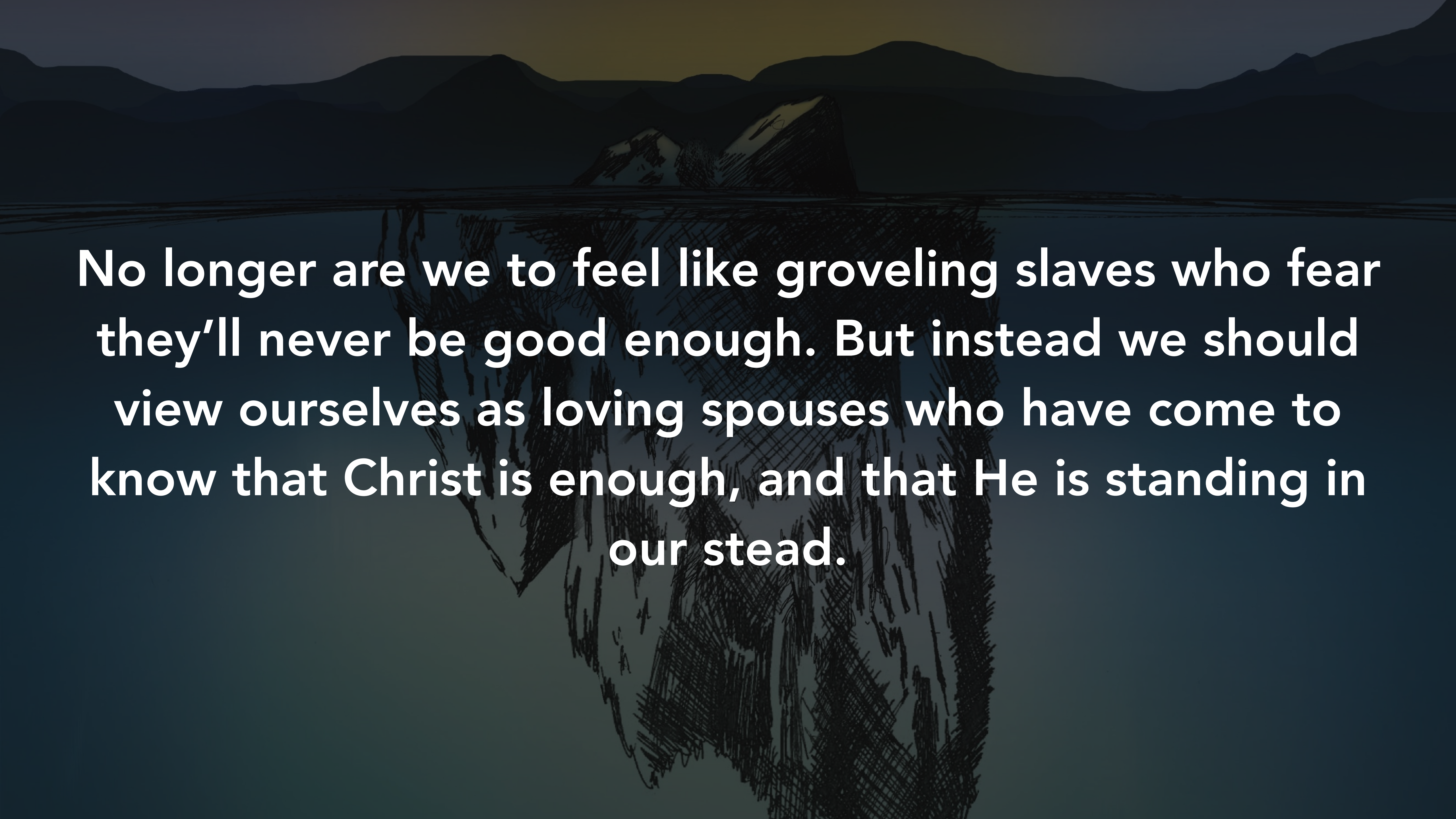
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“Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; Then I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they shall say, “You are my God!”

-Hosea 2:23

The background is a dark, moody landscape. In the distance, there are silhouettes of mountains under a twilight sky. In the foreground, a body of water reflects the scene, with a prominent, dark, textured reflection of a mountain peak in the center. The text is overlaid on this scene in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

What has to take place to make this a reality?
The next chapter begins with a price that must be
paid to buy back an unfaithful woman.
This is the Gospel.



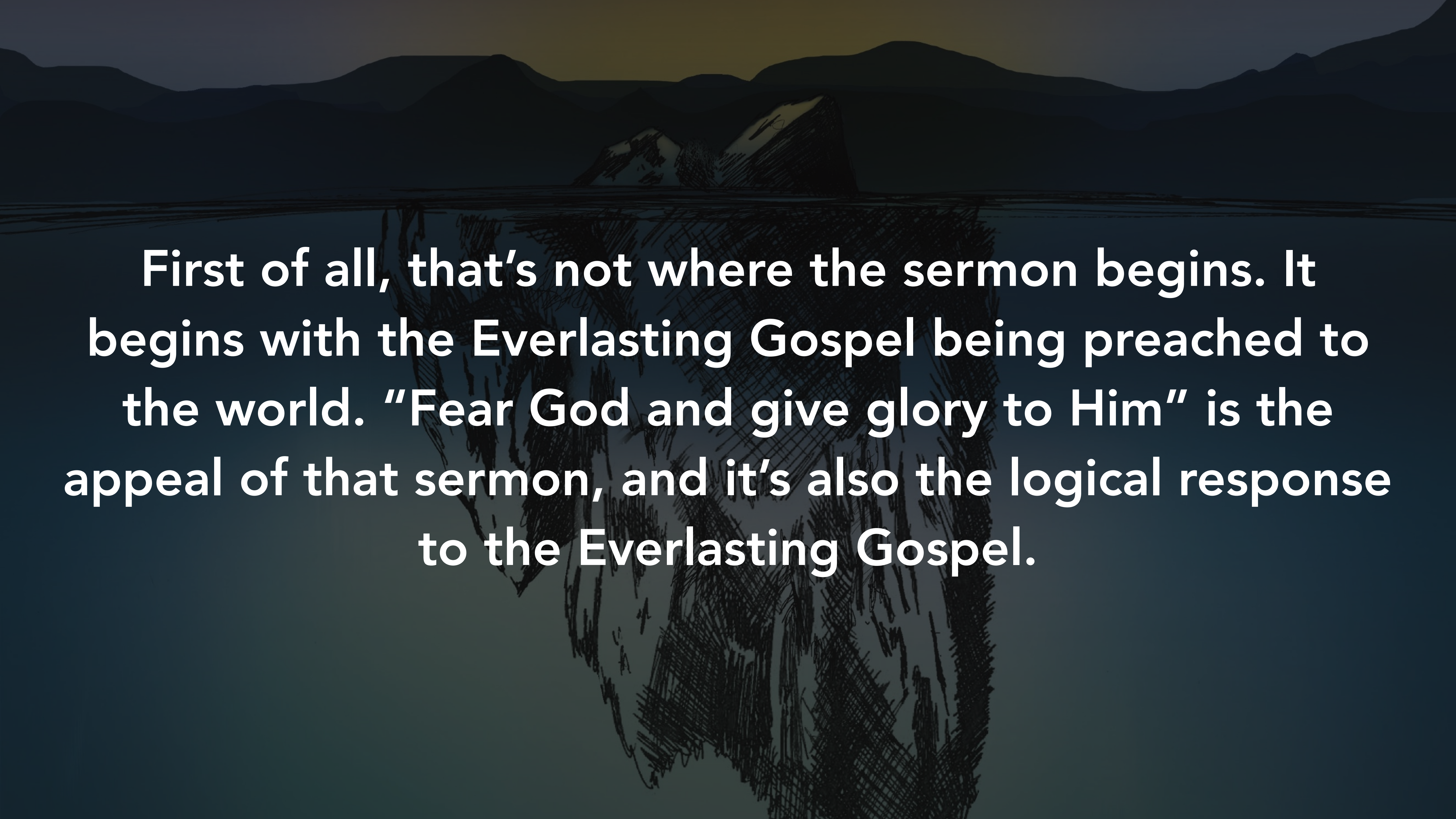
No longer are we to feel like groveling slaves who fear they'll never be good enough. But instead we should view ourselves as loving spouses who have come to know that Christ is enough, and that He is standing in our stead.

A dark, atmospheric landscape illustration. In the background, there are silhouettes of mountains under a dark sky. In the middle ground, a body of water reflects the scene. A large, dark, textured rock formation or iceberg is prominent in the water, with its reflection clearly visible below. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

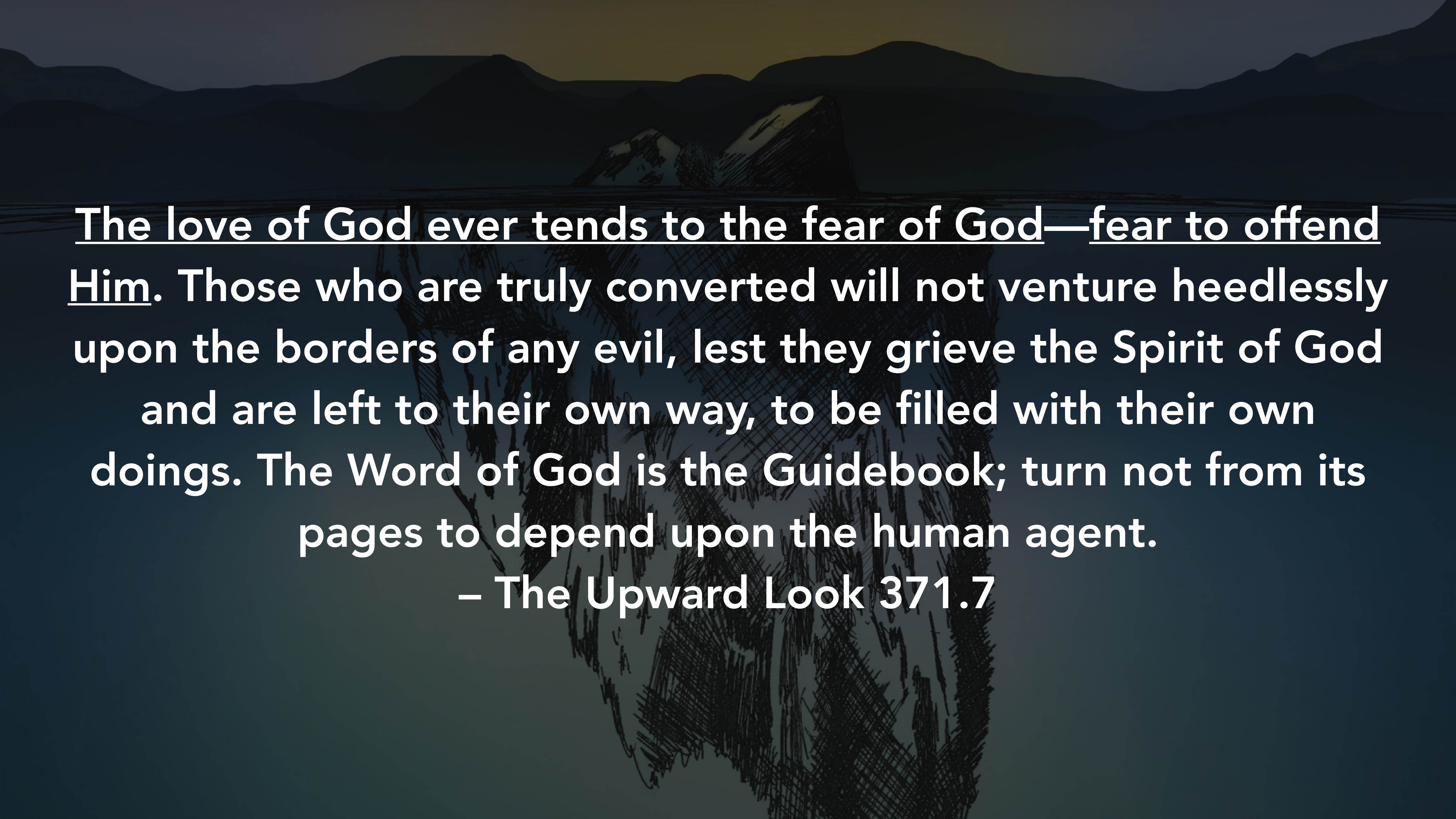
What about “fear God and give glory to Him”?

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the scene. The text is overlaid on the water.

How can we give glory to God when fear robs us of power, love, and the ability to think with a sound mind?

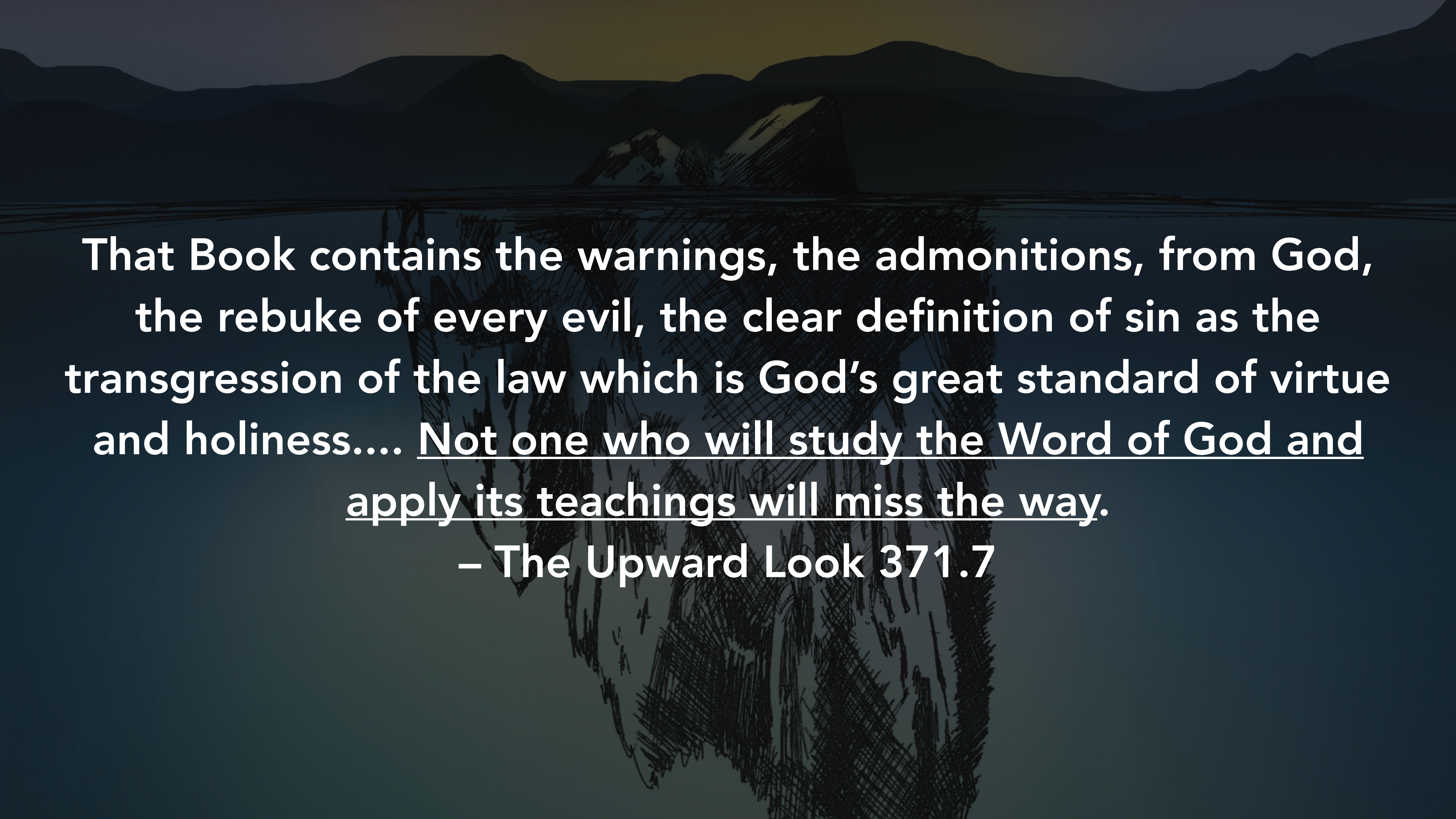
The background is a dark, moody landscape. In the distance, there are silhouettes of mountains under a dark sky. In the foreground, a body of water reflects the scene, with some dark, textured shapes that look like rocks or ice floating in it. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

First of all, that's not where the sermon begins. It begins with the Everlasting Gospel being preached to the world. "Fear God and give glory to Him" is the appeal of that sermon, and it's also the logical response to the Everlasting Gospel.



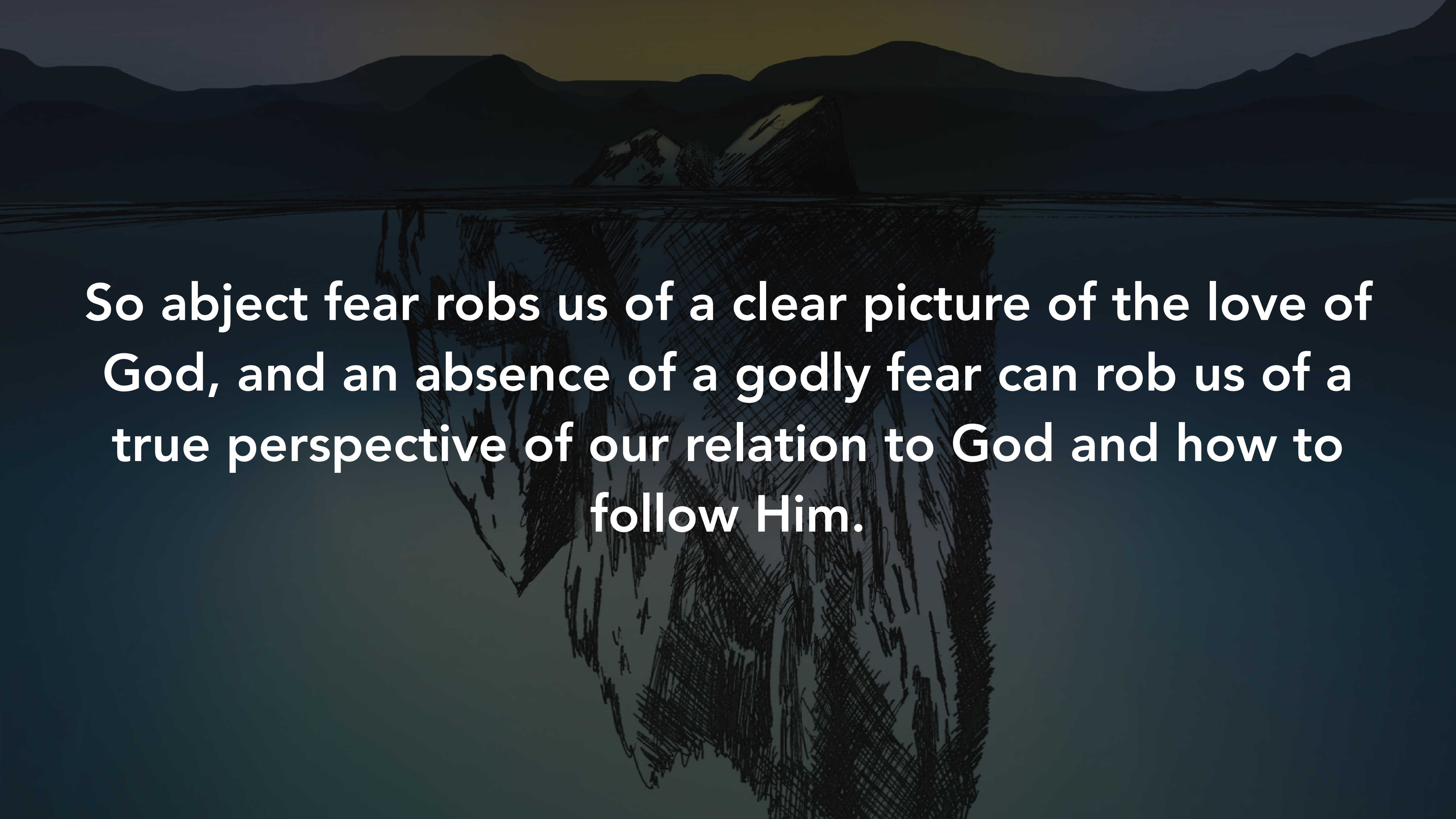
The love of God ever tends to the fear of God—fear to offend Him. Those who are truly converted will not venture heedlessly upon the borders of any evil, lest they grieve the Spirit of God and are left to their own way, to be filled with their own doings. The Word of God is the Guidebook; turn not from its pages to depend upon the human agent.

– The Upward Look 371.7

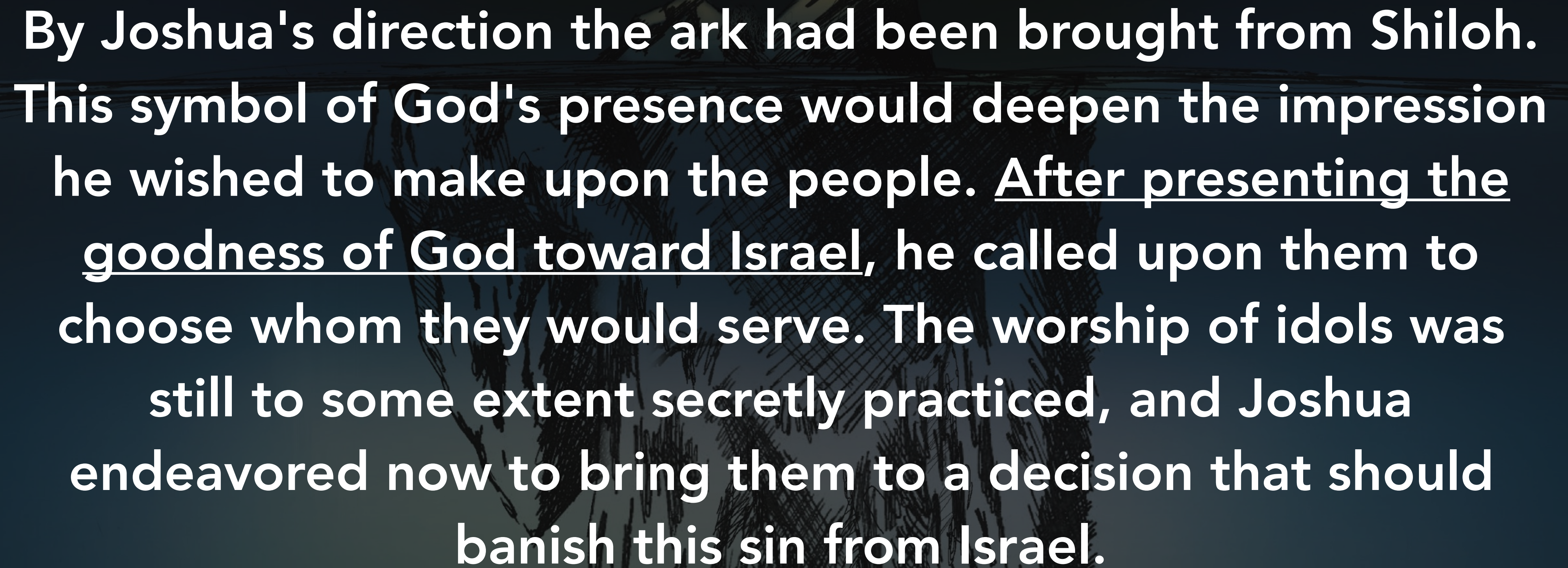


That Book contains the warnings, the admonitions, from God,
the rebuke of every evil, the clear definition of sin as the
transgression of the law which is God's great standard of virtue
and holiness.... Not one who will study the Word of God and
apply its teachings will miss the way.

– The Upward Look 371.7

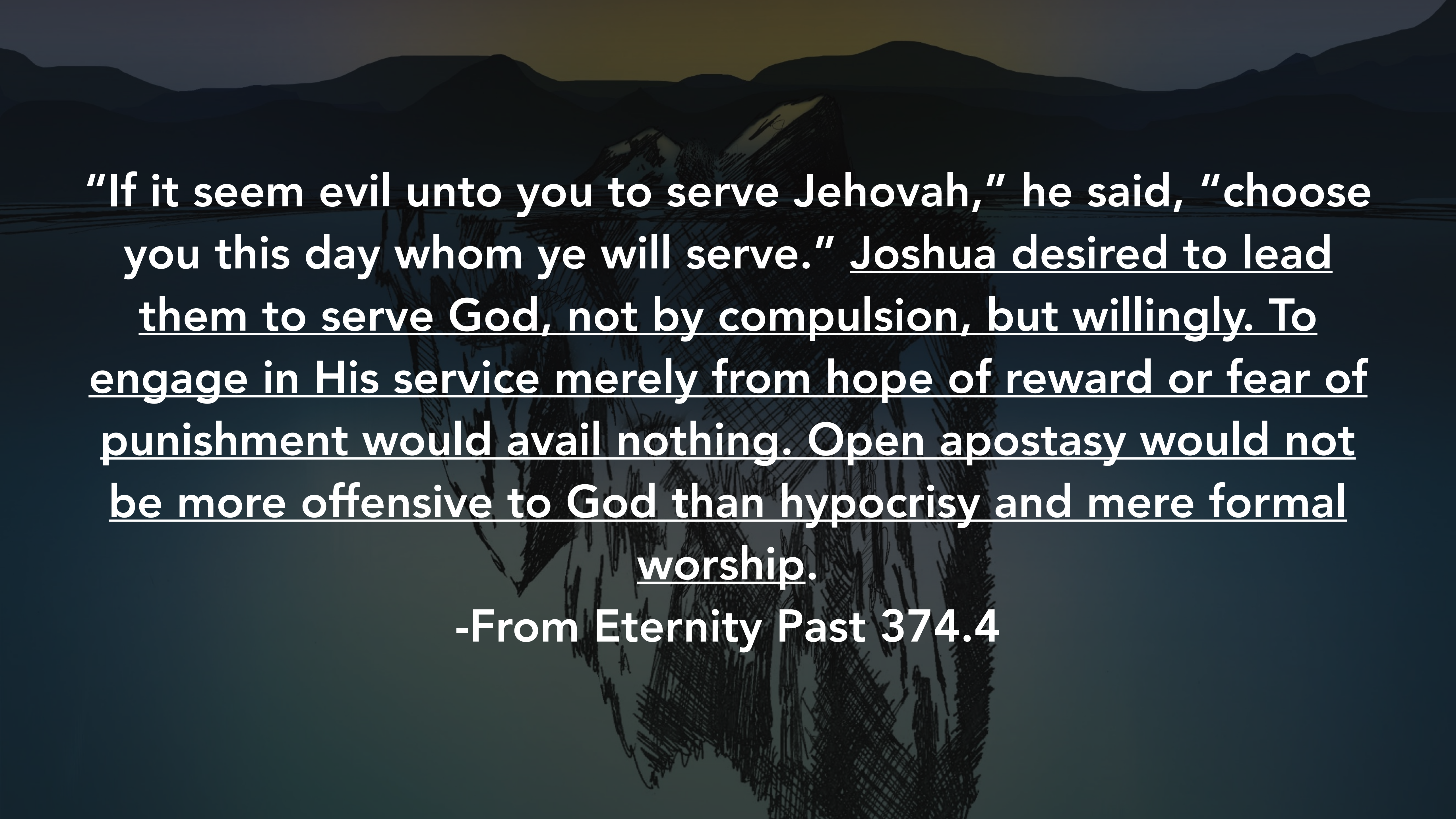
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So abject fear robs us of a clear picture of the love of God, and an absence of a godly fear can rob us of a true perspective of our relation to God and how to follow Him.



By Joshua's direction the ark had been brought from Shiloh. This symbol of God's presence would deepen the impression he wished to make upon the people. After presenting the goodness of God toward Israel, he called upon them to choose whom they would serve. The worship of idols was still to some extent secretly practiced, and Joshua endeavored now to bring them to a decision that should banish this sin from Israel.

-From Eternity Past 374.4

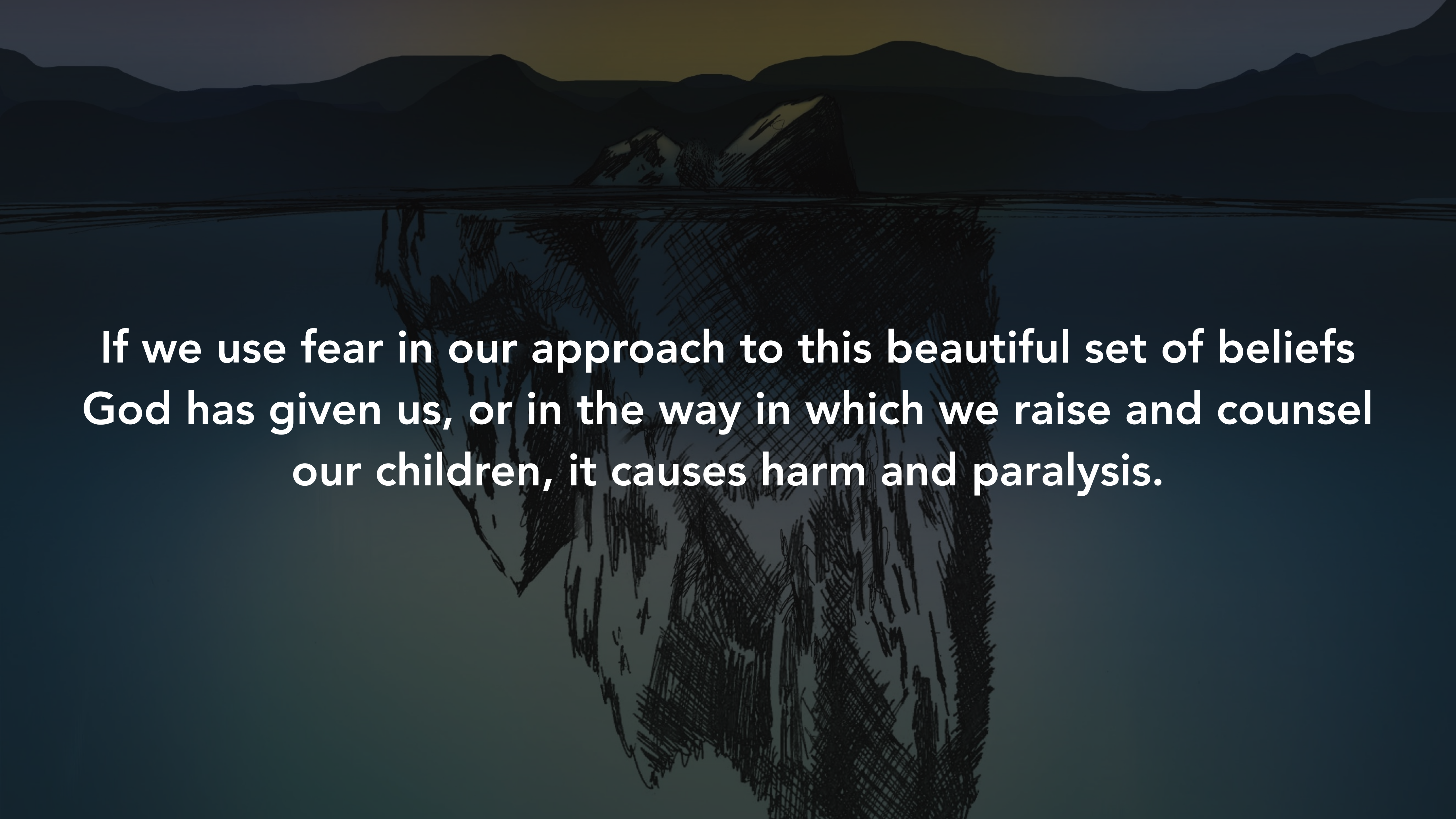


“If it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah,” he said, “choose you this day whom ye will serve.” Joshua desired to lead them to serve God, not by compulsion, but willingly. To engage in His service merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment would avail nothing. Open apostasy would not be more offensive to God than hypocrisy and mere formal worship.

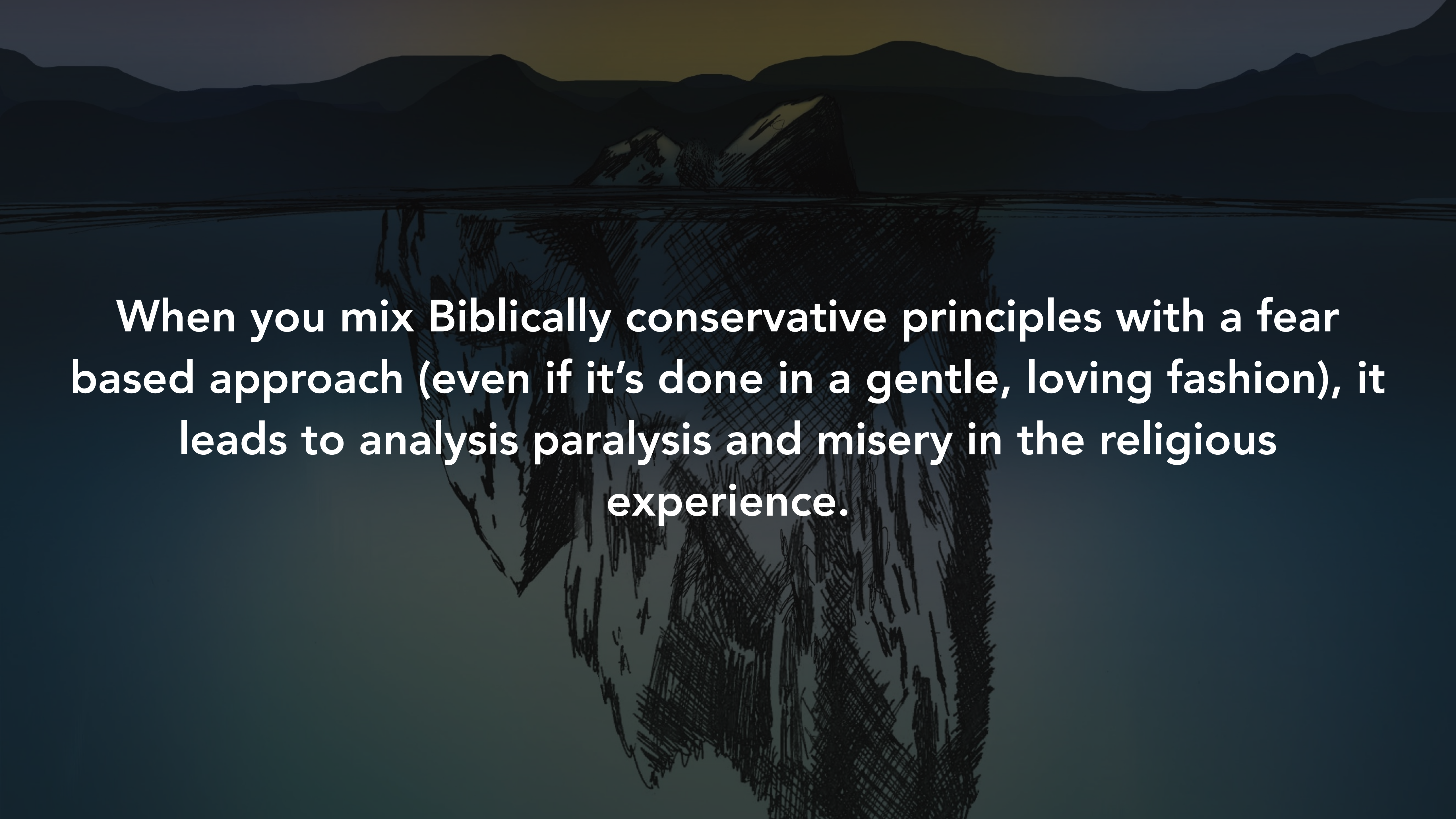
-From Eternity Past 374.4



What does fear do to us?



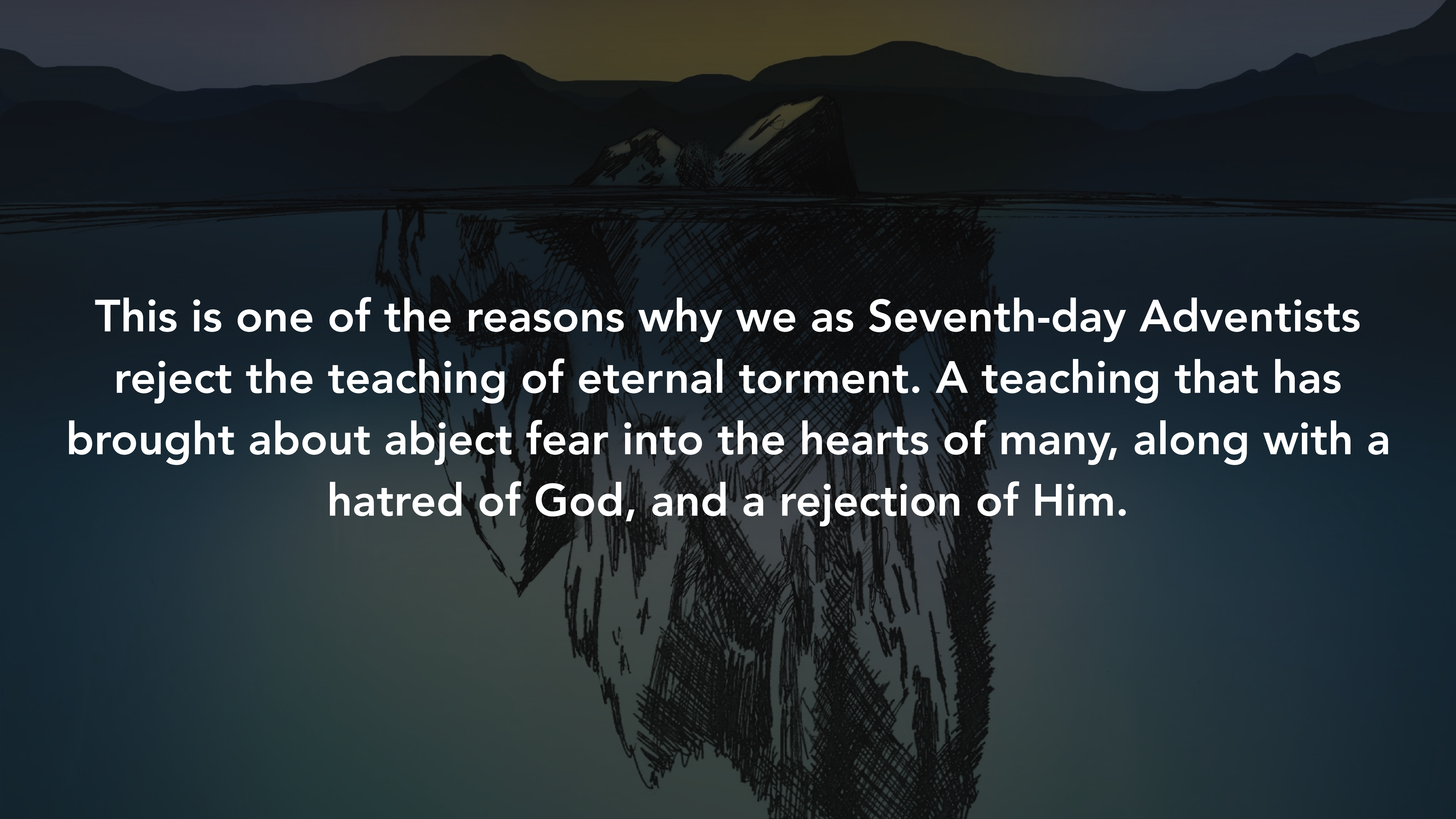
If we use fear in our approach to this beautiful set of beliefs
God has given us, or in the way in which we raise and counsel
our children, it causes harm and paralysis.



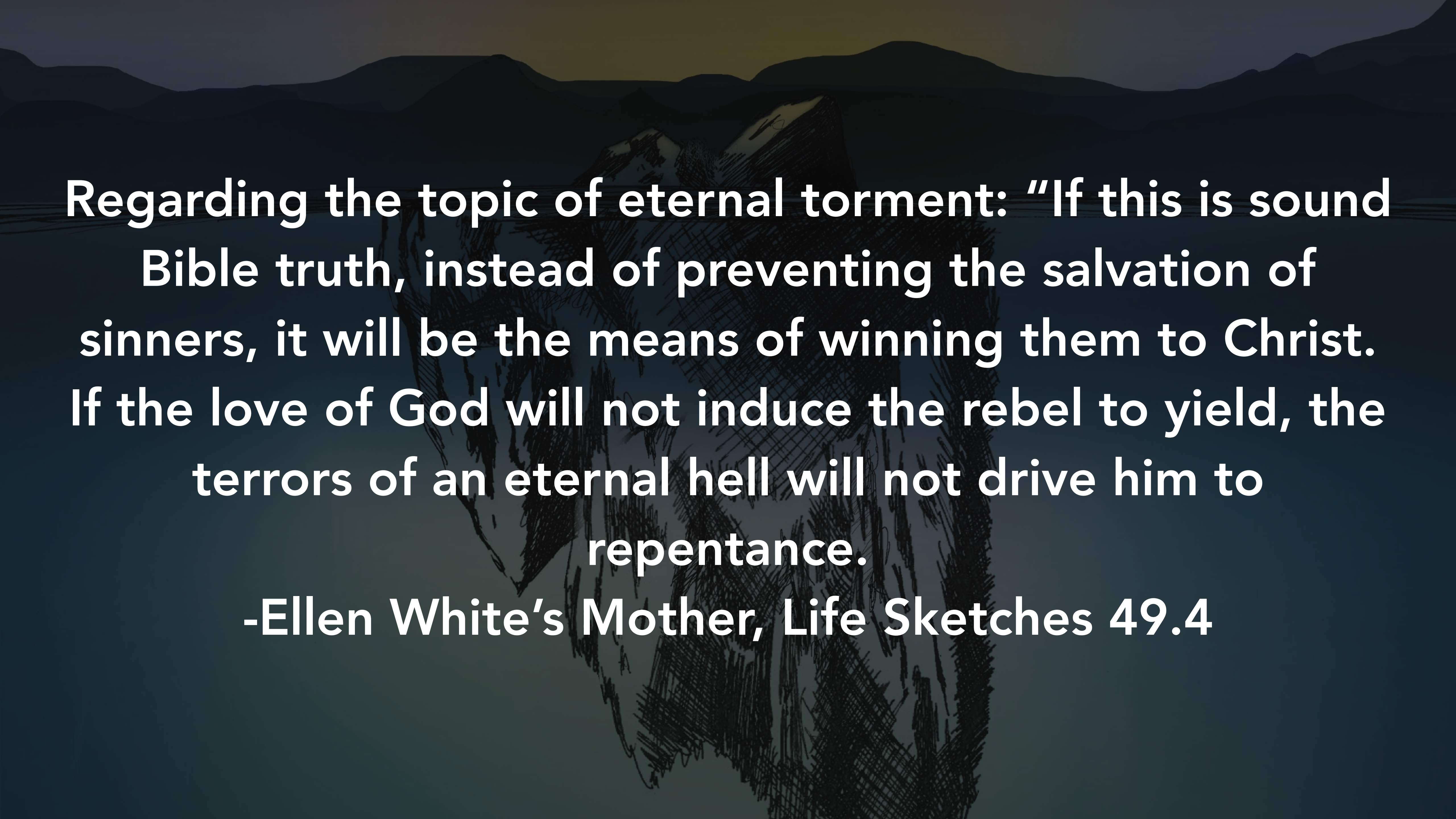
When you mix Biblically conservative principles with a fear based approach (even if it's done in a gentle, loving fashion), it leads to analysis paralysis and misery in the religious experience.



You may be able to scare someone into a pew, but it won't
keep them there.

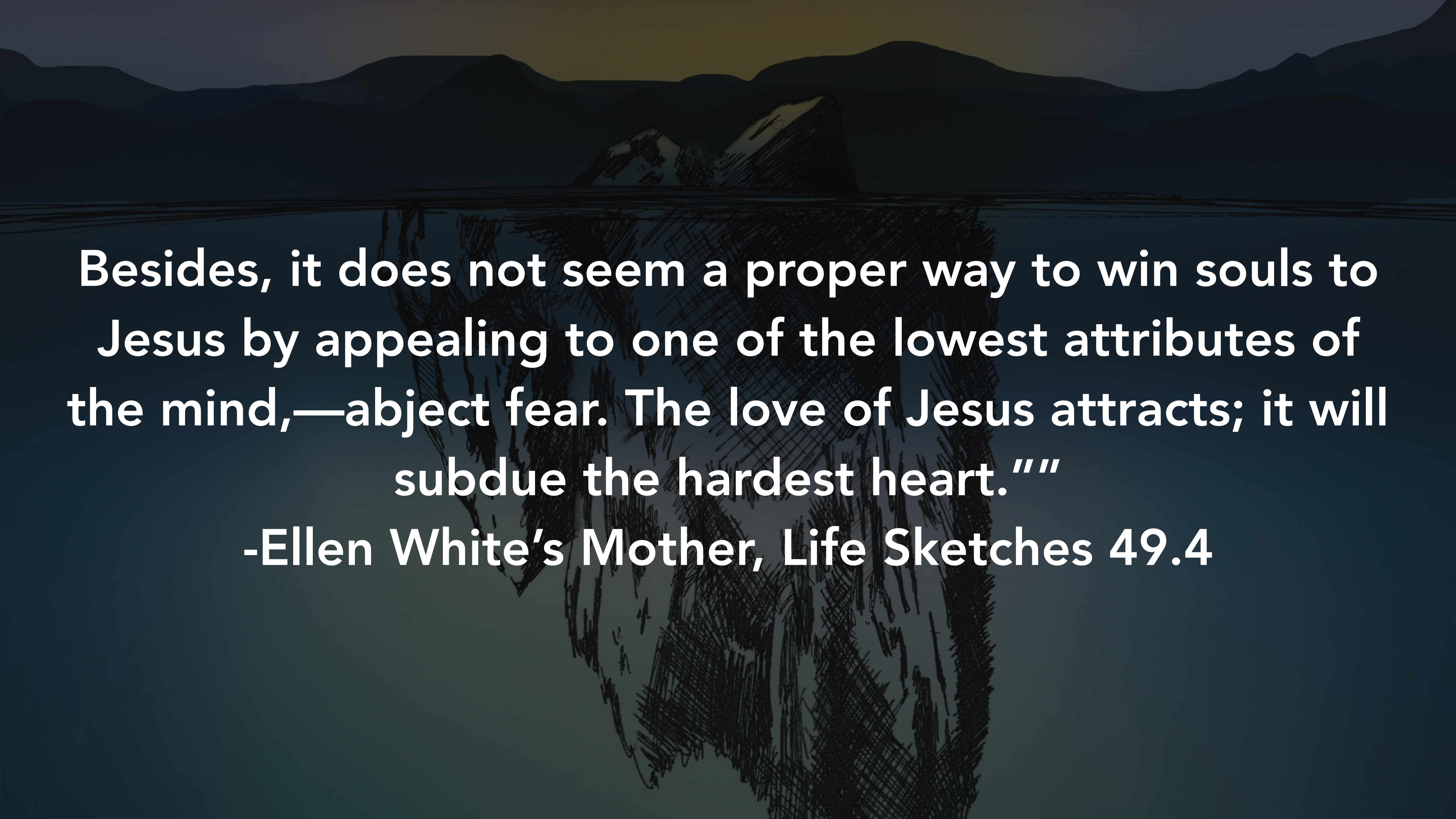
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This is one of the reasons why we as Seventh-day Adventists reject the teaching of eternal torment. A teaching that has brought about abject fear into the hearts of many, along with a hatred of God, and a rejection of Him.



Regarding the topic of eternal torment: "If this is sound Bible truth, instead of preventing the salvation of sinners, it will be the means of winning them to Christ. If the love of God will not induce the rebel to yield, the terrors of an eternal hell will not drive him to repentance.

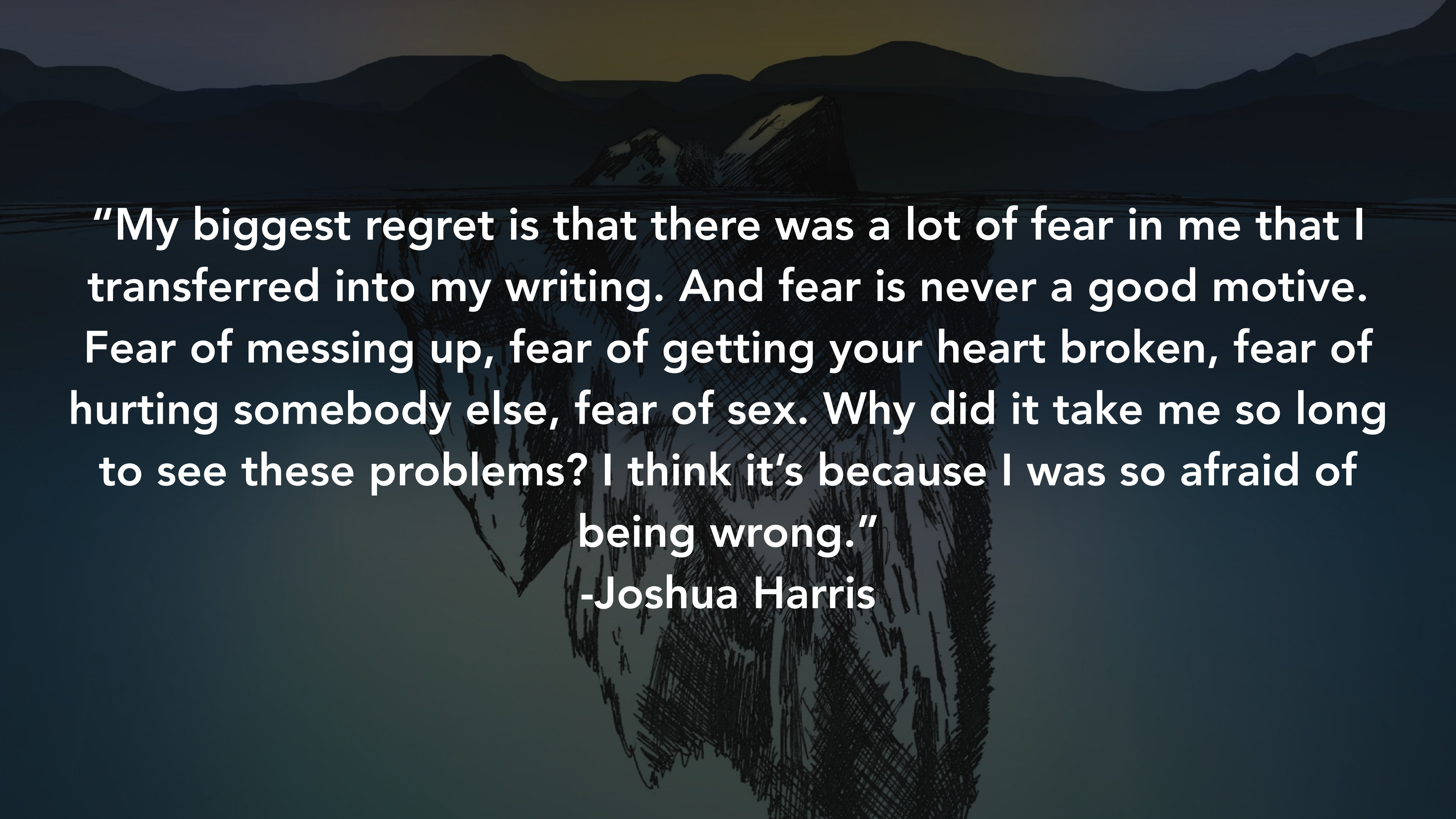
-Ellen White's Mother, Life Sketches 49.4

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the scene. The mountains are silhouetted against a dark sky, and the water reflects the mountains and the sky. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

Besides, it does not seem a proper way to win souls to Jesus by appealing to one of the lowest attributes of the mind,—abject fear. The love of Jesus attracts; it will subdue the hardest heart.””

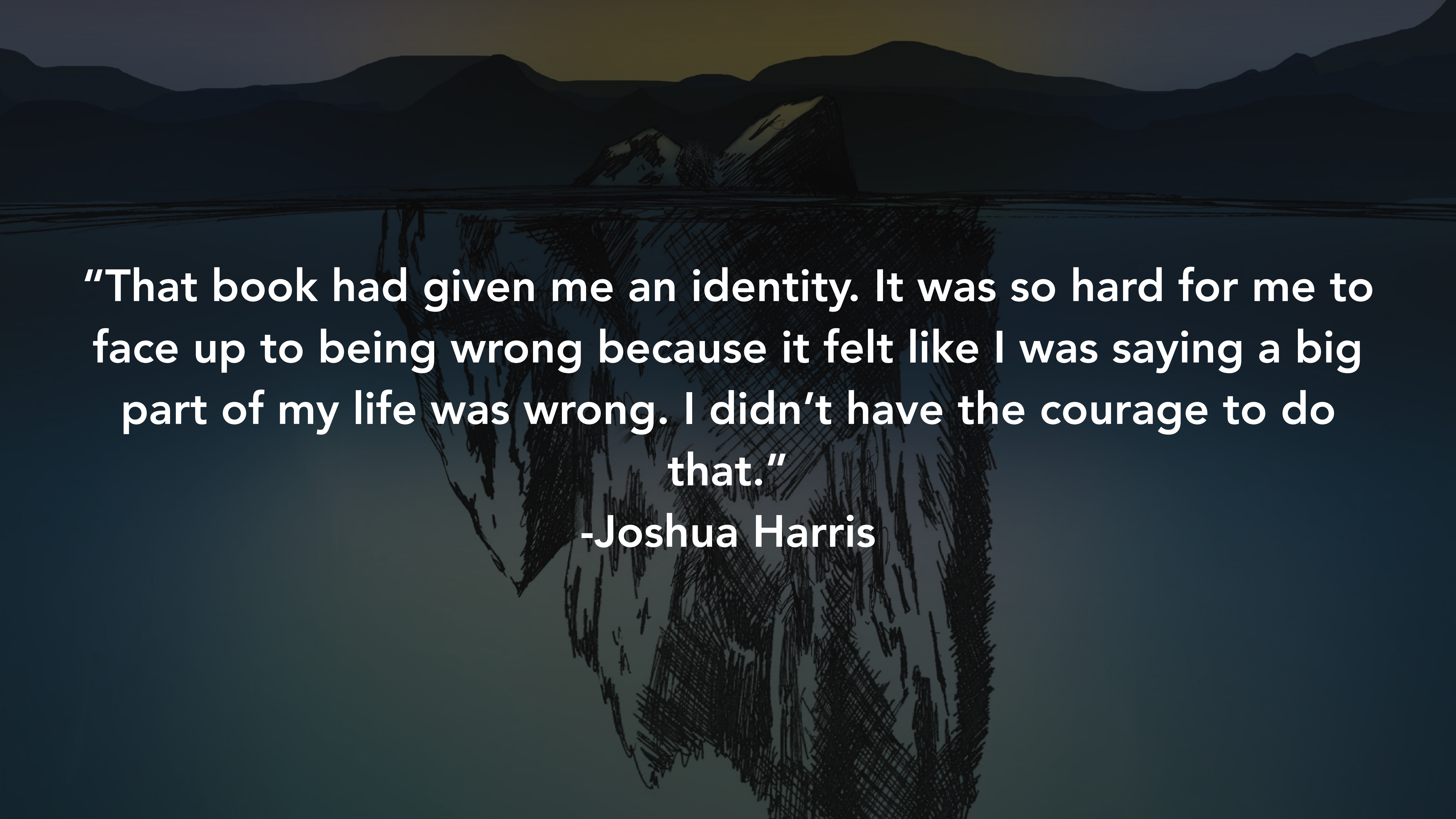
-Ellen White's Mother, Life Sketches 49.4





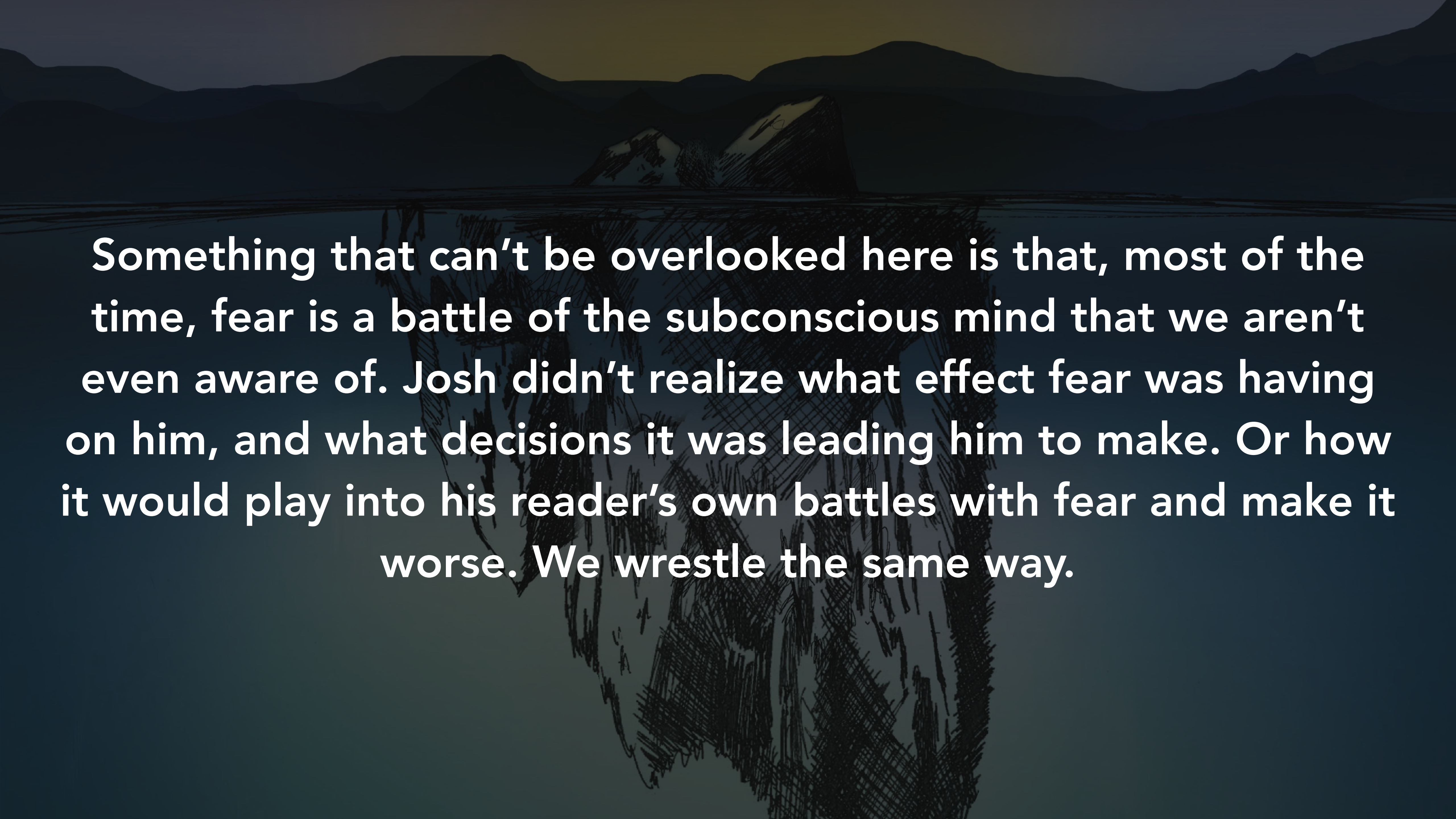
"My biggest regret is that there was a lot of fear in me that I transferred into my writing. And fear is never a good motive. Fear of messing up, fear of getting your heart broken, fear of hurting somebody else, fear of sex. Why did it take me so long to see these problems? I think it's because I was so afraid of being wrong."

-Joshua Harris

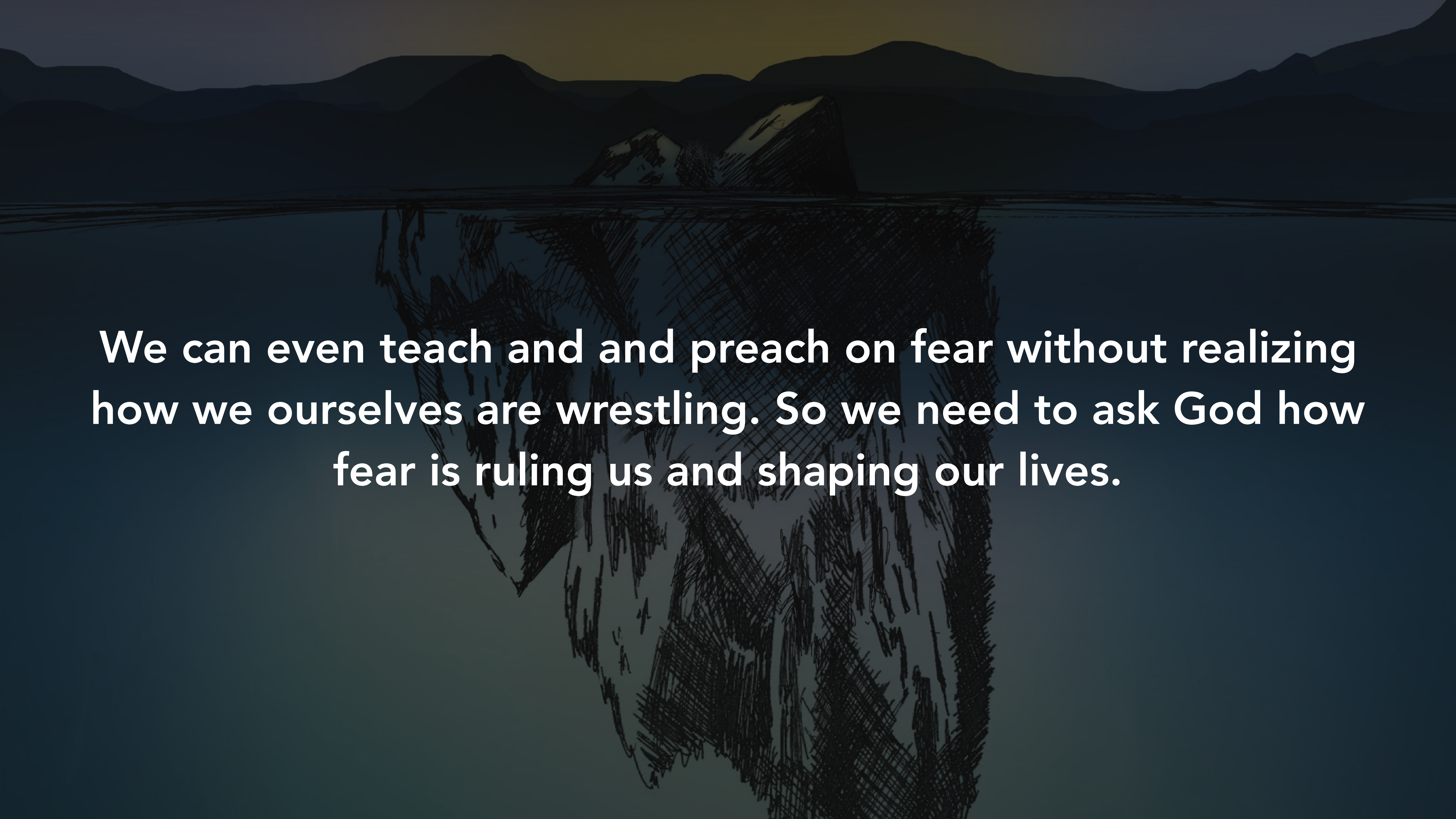


"That book had given me an identity. It was so hard for me to face up to being wrong because it felt like I was saying a big part of my life was wrong. I didn't have the courage to do that."

-Joshua Harris



Something that can't be overlooked here is that, most of the time, fear is a battle of the subconscious mind that we aren't even aware of. Josh didn't realize what effect fear was having on him, and what decisions it was leading him to make. Or how it would play into his reader's own battles with fear and make it worse. We wrestle the same way.



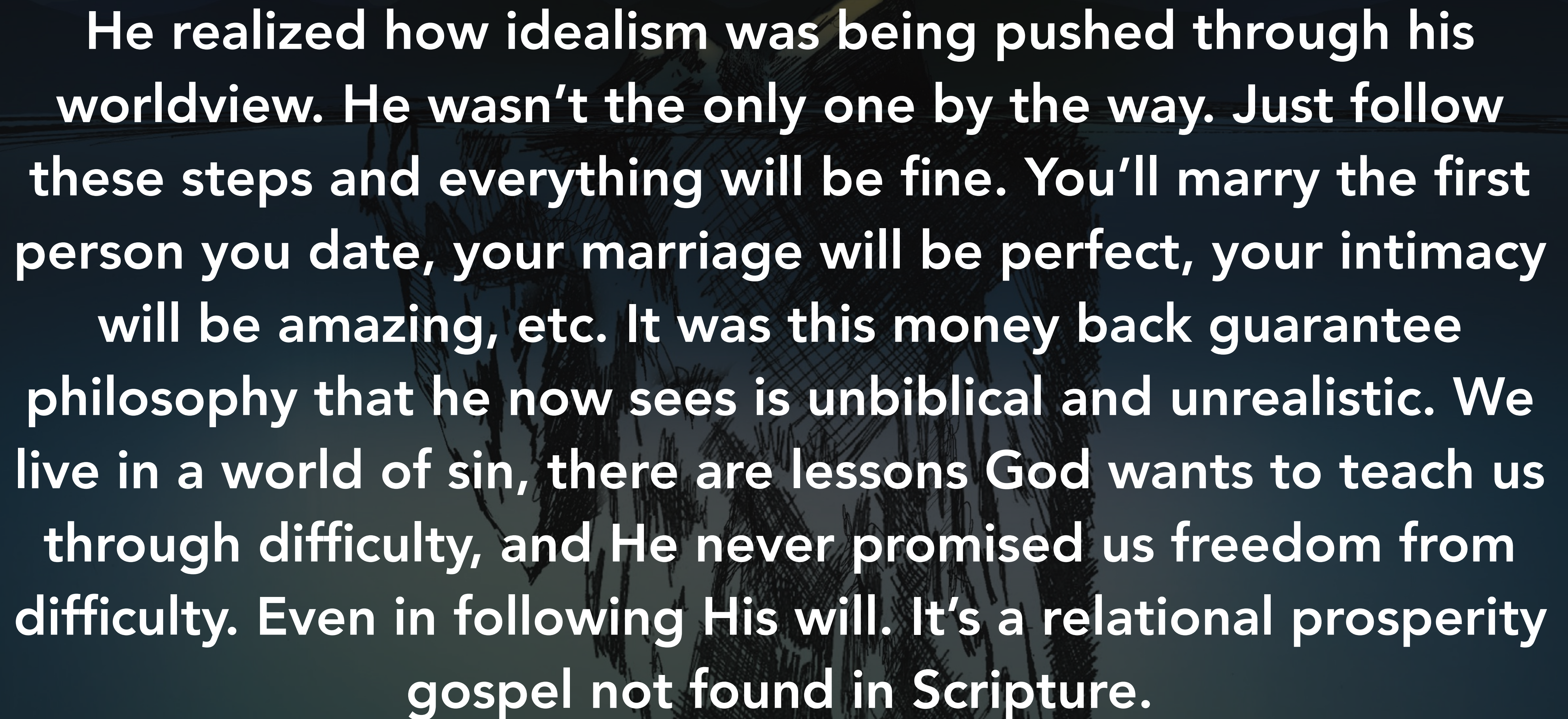
We can even teach and and preach on fear without realizing how we ourselves are wrestling. So we need to ask God how fear is ruling us and shaping our lives.



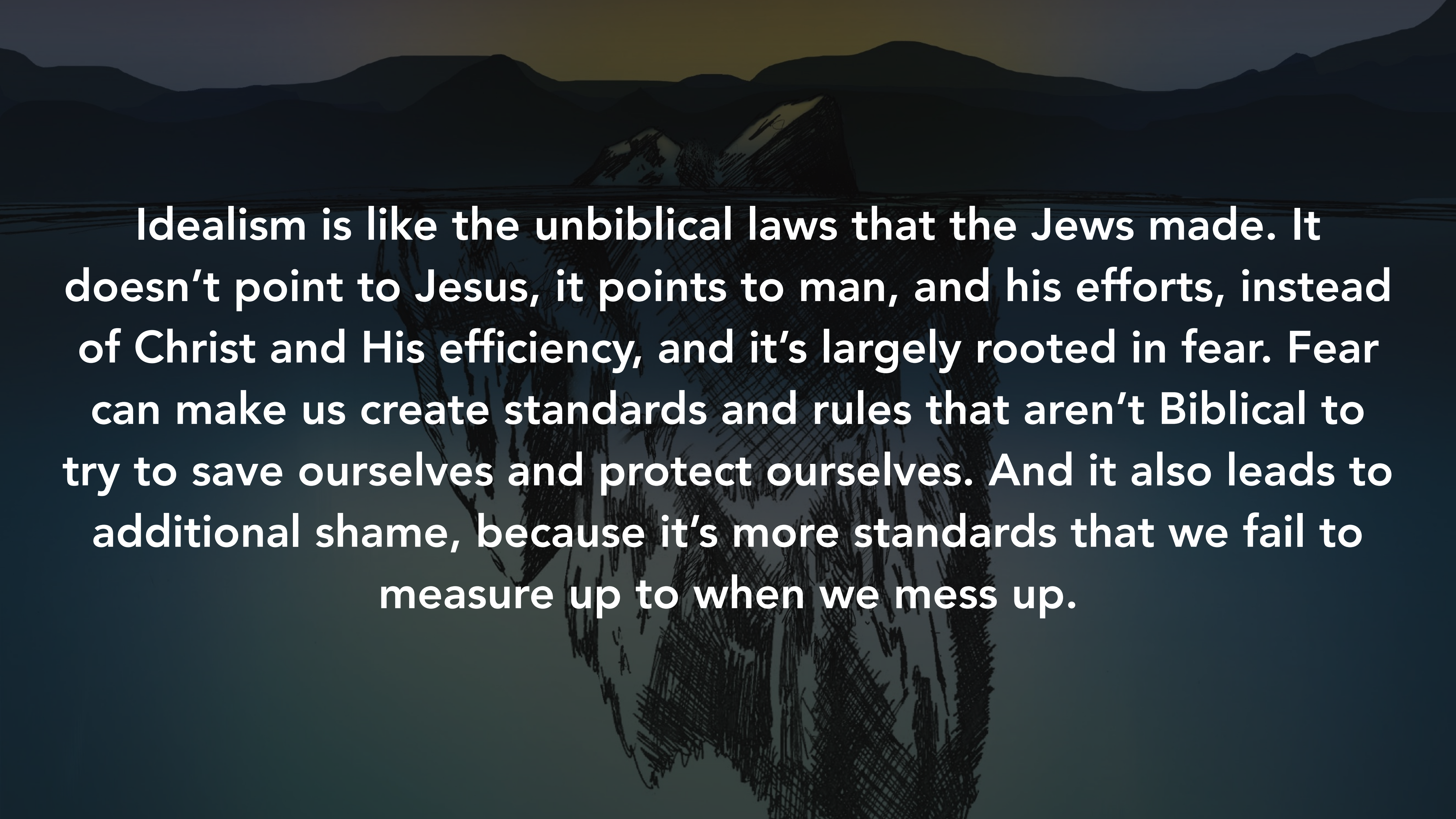
"Surely oppression destroys a wise man's reason..."

-Ecclesiastes 7:7

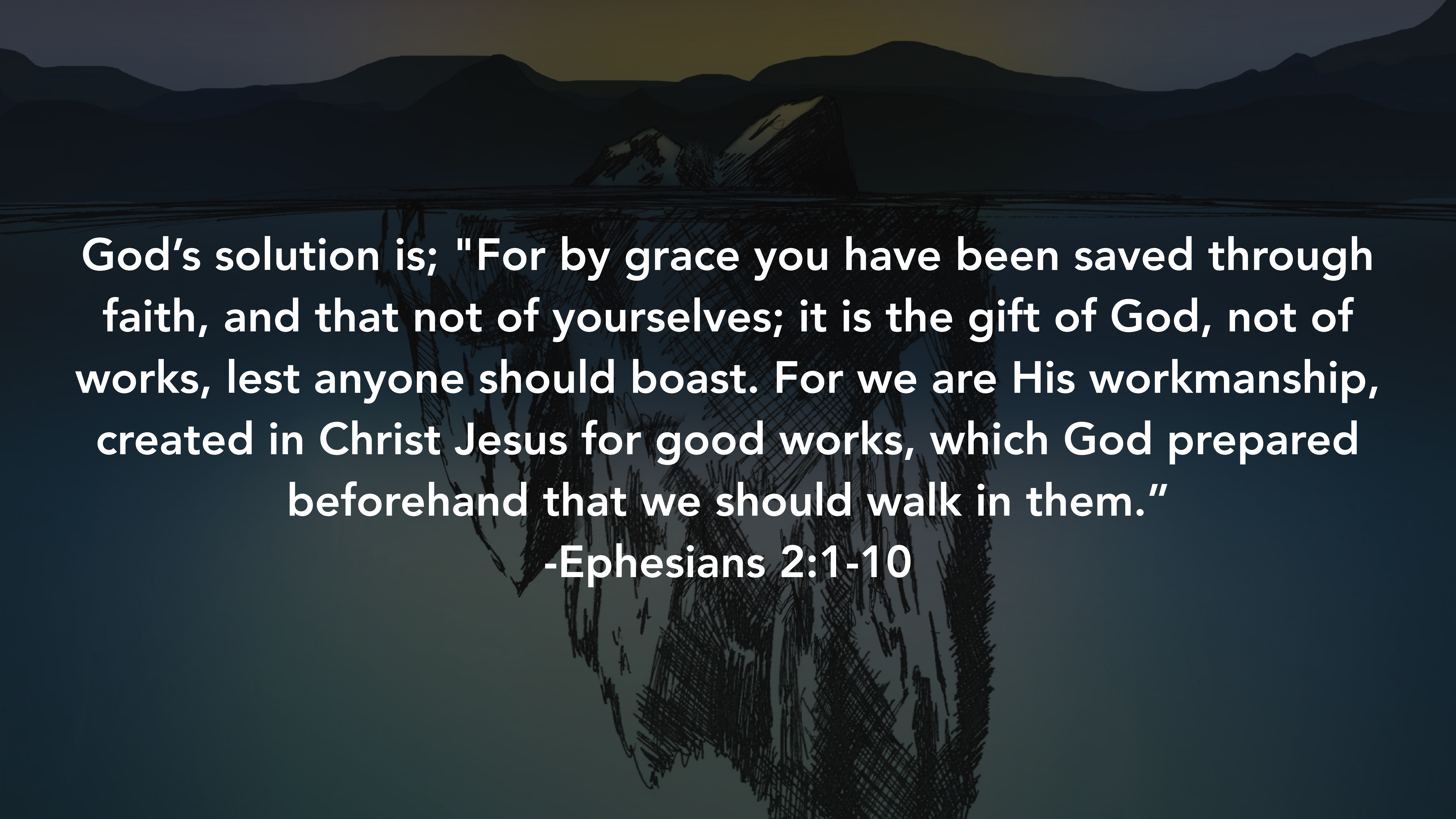
Even people with wisdom can be beat up by fear and in turn make decisions and develop ideas that aren't reasonable. This is why we need God to open our eyes, and to allow His love to set us free from our fear.



He realized how idealism was being pushed through his worldview. He wasn't the only one by the way. Just follow these steps and everything will be fine. You'll marry the first person you date, your marriage will be perfect, your intimacy will be amazing, etc. It was this money back guarantee philosophy that he now sees is unbiblical and unrealistic. We live in a world of sin, there are lessons God wants to teach us through difficulty, and He never promised us freedom from difficulty. Even in following His will. It's a relational prosperity gospel not found in Scripture.

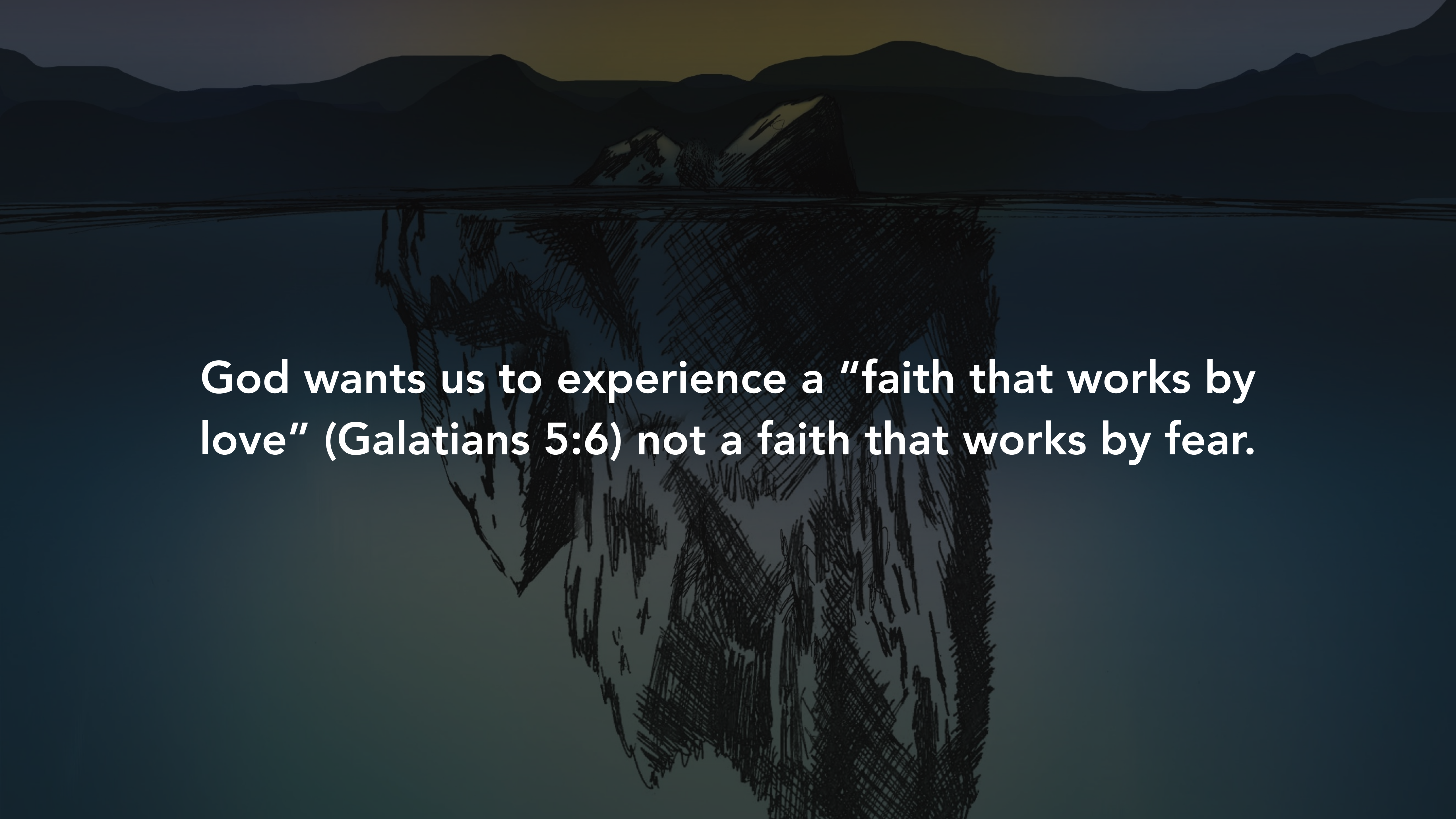


Idealism is like the unbiblical laws that the Jews made. It doesn't point to Jesus, it points to man, and his efforts, instead of Christ and His efficiency, and it's largely rooted in fear. Fear can make us create standards and rules that aren't Biblical to try to save ourselves and protect ourselves. And it also leads to additional shame, because it's more standards that we fail to measure up to when we mess up.

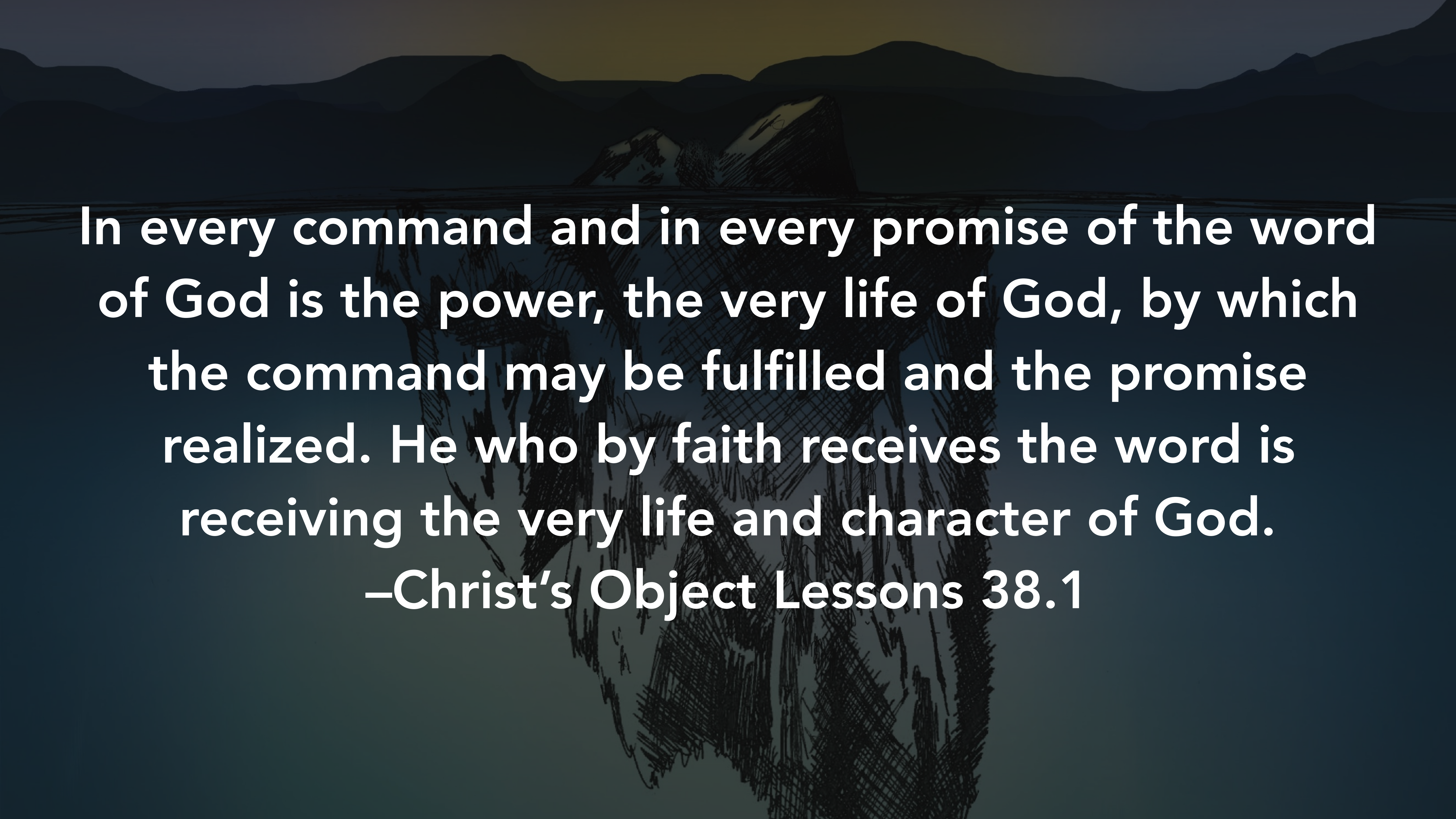


God's solution is; "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

-Ephesians 2:1-10

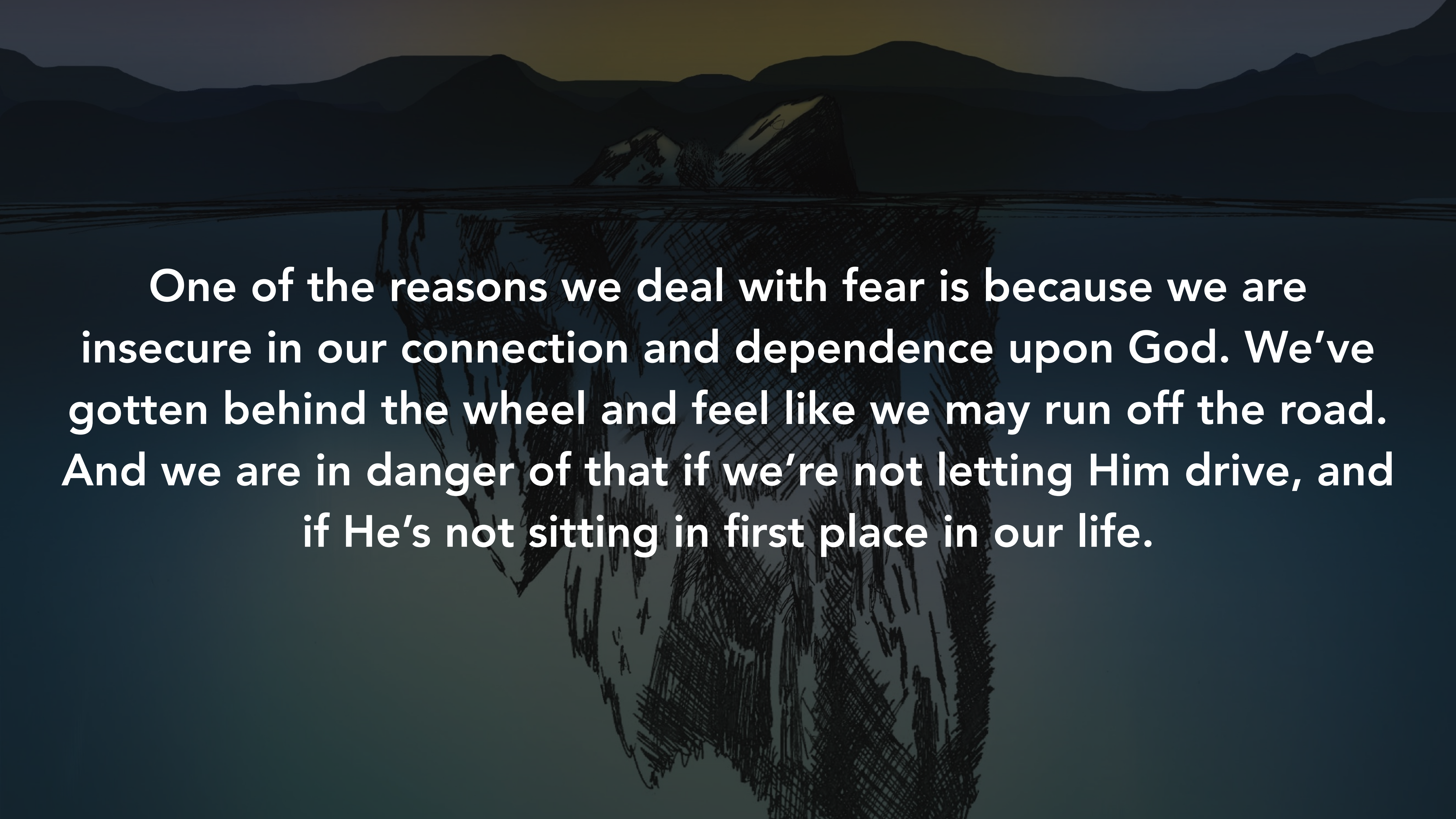
A dark, atmospheric landscape illustration. In the background, there are silhouettes of mountains under a dark sky. In the middle ground, a body of water reflects the scene. A large, dark, textured rock formation or iceberg is prominent in the water, its reflection visible below. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

God wants us to experience a “faith that works by love” (Galatians 5:6) not a faith that works by fear.

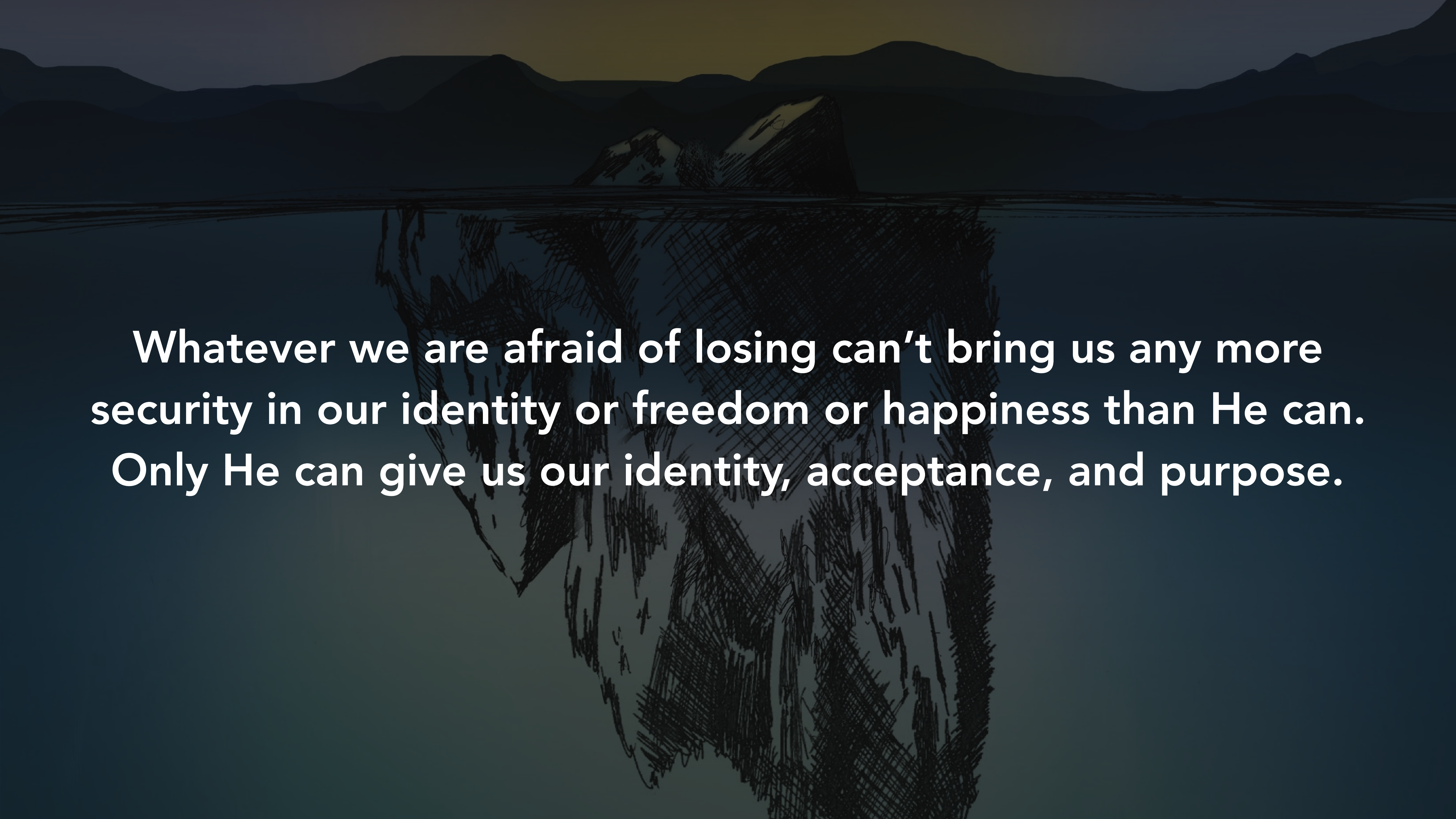
A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the sky. The text is overlaid on this background.

In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God.

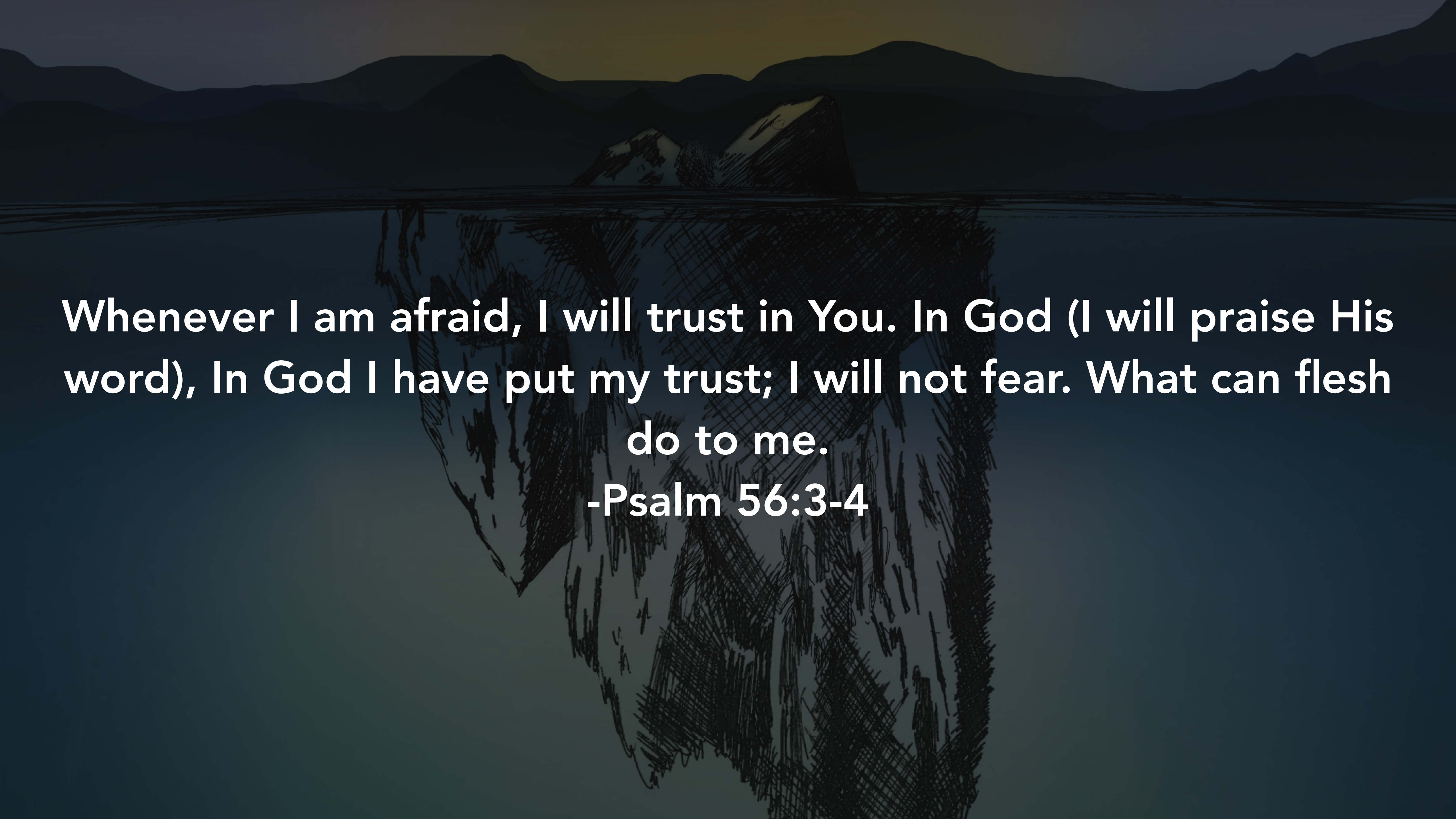
–Christ's Object Lessons 38.1



One of the reasons we deal with fear is because we are insecure in our connection and dependence upon God. We've gotten behind the wheel and feel like we may run off the road. And we are in danger of that if we're not letting Him drive, and if He's not sitting in first place in our life.



Whatever we are afraid of losing can't bring us any more security in our identity or freedom or happiness than He can. Only He can give us our identity, acceptance, and purpose.

A dark, atmospheric landscape with mountains and a body of water reflecting the scene. The mountains are silhouetted against a dark sky, and the water below shows a distorted, sketchy reflection of the landscape. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

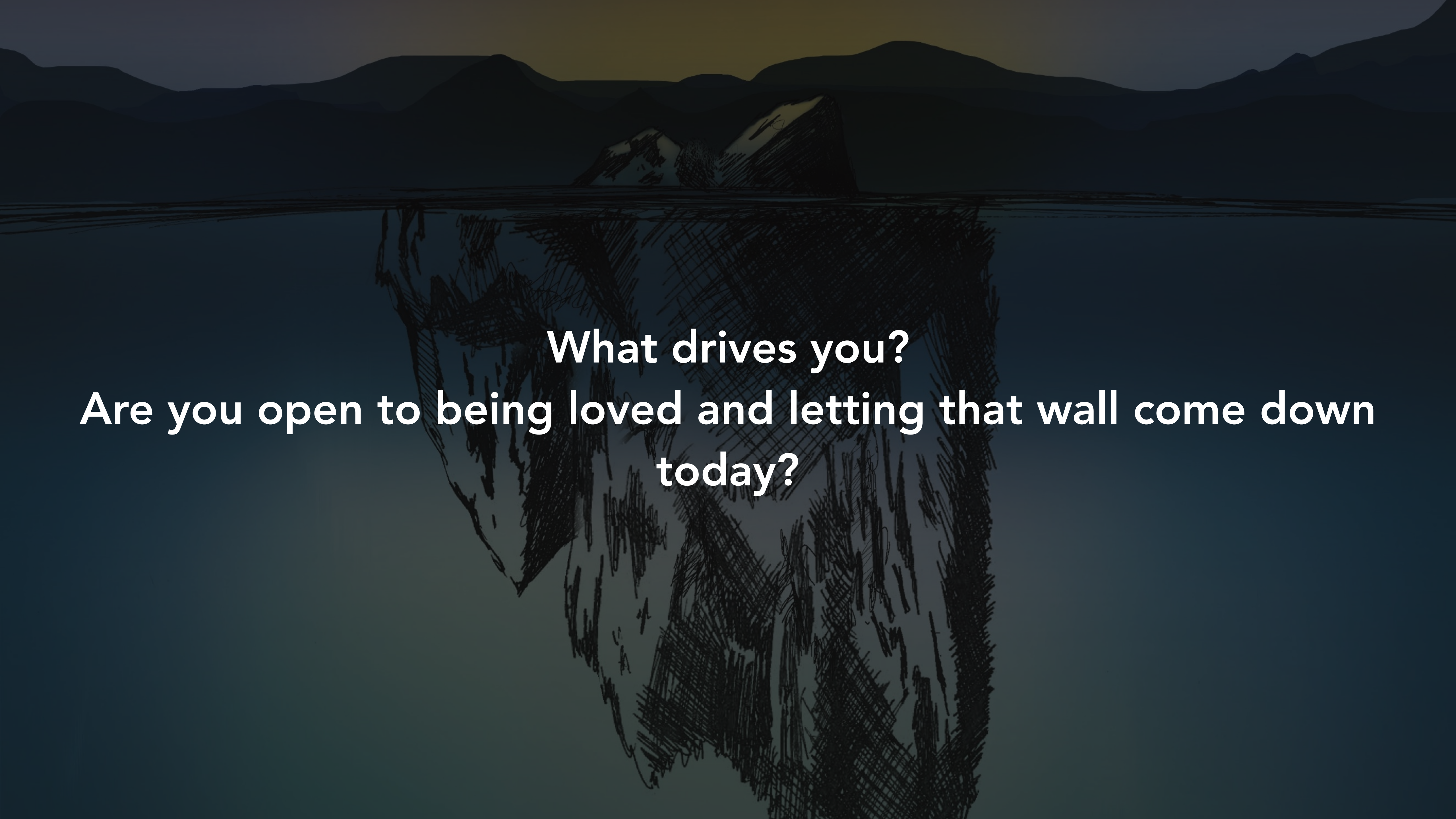
Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me.

-Psalm 56:3-4



This implies that fear affects our ability to trust God. And I believe this is why many of us have self protective tendencies





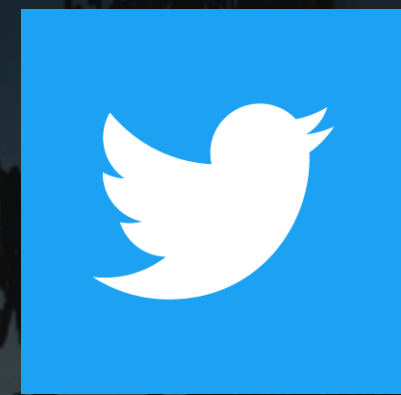
What drives you?
Are you open to being loved and letting that wall come down
today?



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Dee Casper