



The Worship Experience Your Heart Longs For

Dr S Joseph Kidder



WORSHIP,
THE GATEWAY TO
COMMUNION WITH
GOD

The twenty-four elders will fall down before him
who sits on the throne, and will worship him
who lives forever and ever, and will cast
their crowns before the throne, saying,
"Worthy are you, our Lord and our God,
to receive glory and honor and power;
for you created all things, and because of You
will they existed, and were created.

Revelation 4:10, 11

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- I was glad when they said unto me, let us go to the house of the Lord.
 - Psalm 122:1

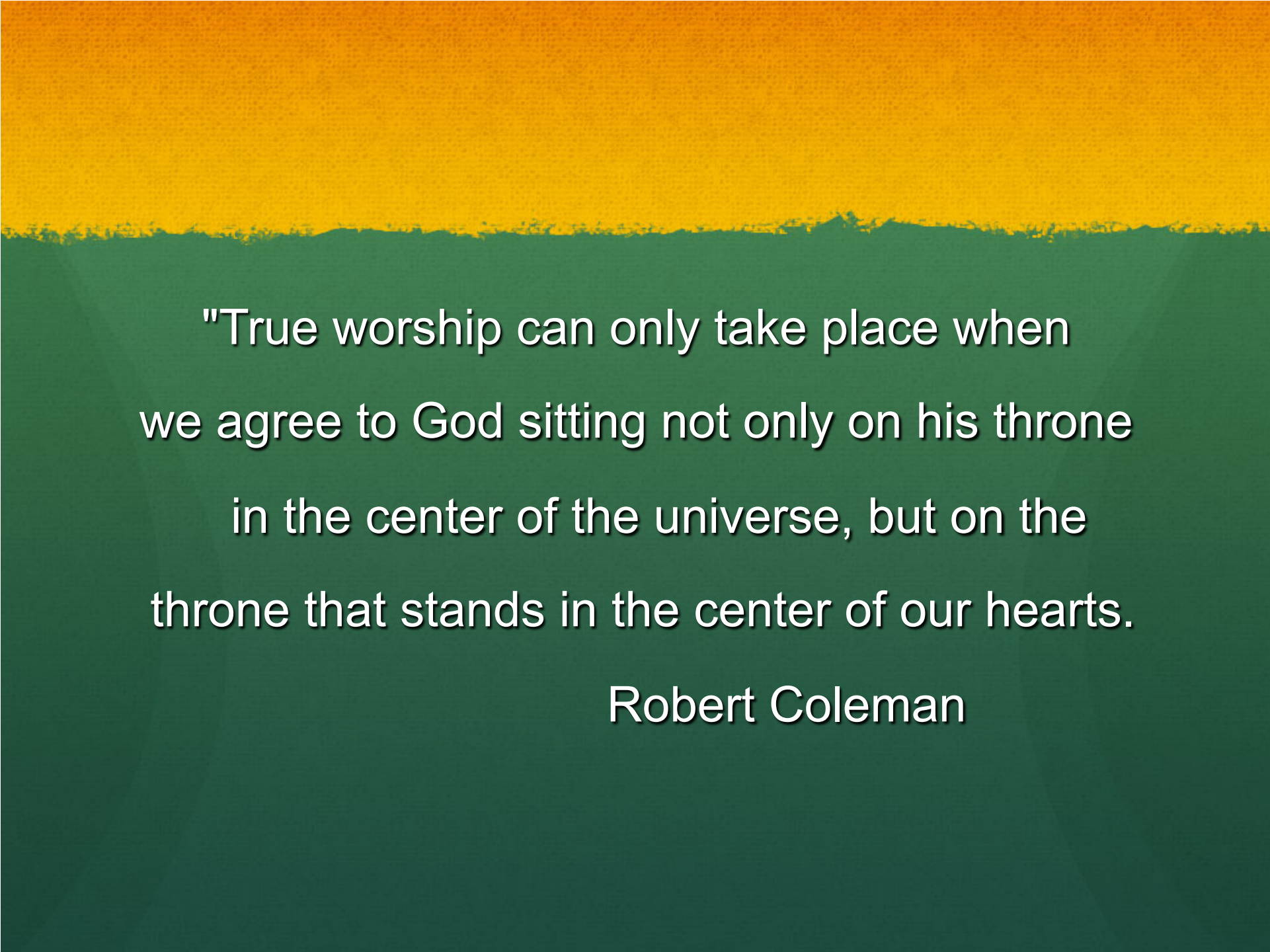
- For David says of Him, I was always beholding the Lord in my presence; for He is at my right hand , that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; moreover my flesh also will abide in hope.

- Acts 2:25-26

"To worship is to act as an inferior before a superior. When I worship God, I am saying by my actions, "God, You are better than I am. You are bigger than I am. You are more than am."



Oseph Garlington



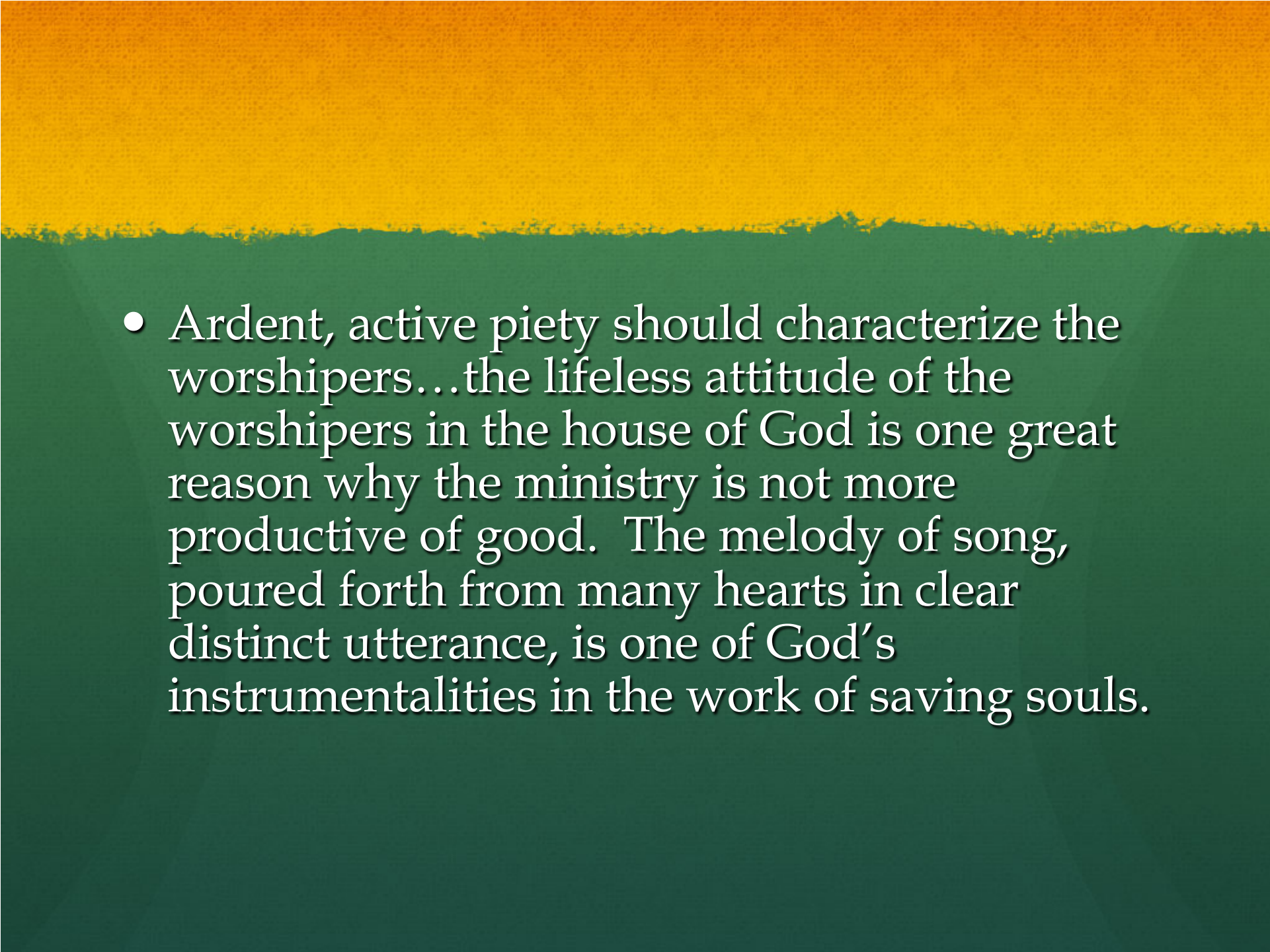
"True worship can only take place when
we agree to God sitting not only on his throne
in the center of the universe, but on the
throne that stands in the center of our hearts.

Robert Coleman

Isaiah's Progression in worship

Isaiah 6:1-9

- He saw the glory of God
 - Upward vision – He saw the glory and majesty of God
- He felt the sinfulness of his nature
 - Inward vision – He saw his emptiness and helplessness.
- He experience the gospel
 - Inward mission – He received cleansing, renewal, and empowerment.
- He accepted the call of God
 - Outward mission – He accepted the call to serve.

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- Ardent, active piety should characterize the worshipers...the lifeless attitude of the worshipers in the house of God is one great reason why the ministry is not more productive of good. The melody of song, poured forth from many hearts in clear distinct utterance, is one of God's instrumentalities in the work of saving souls.

- All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies.
 - 5T, pp. 492,493

Worship

- The most common mistake Christians make in worship today is seeking an experience rather than seeking God.
- The Purpose Driven Life. P.110

The Heart of worship

Give yourself to God...

Surrender your whole being to Him

to be used for righteous purpose.

- Romans 6:13 (TEV)

Definition of Worship

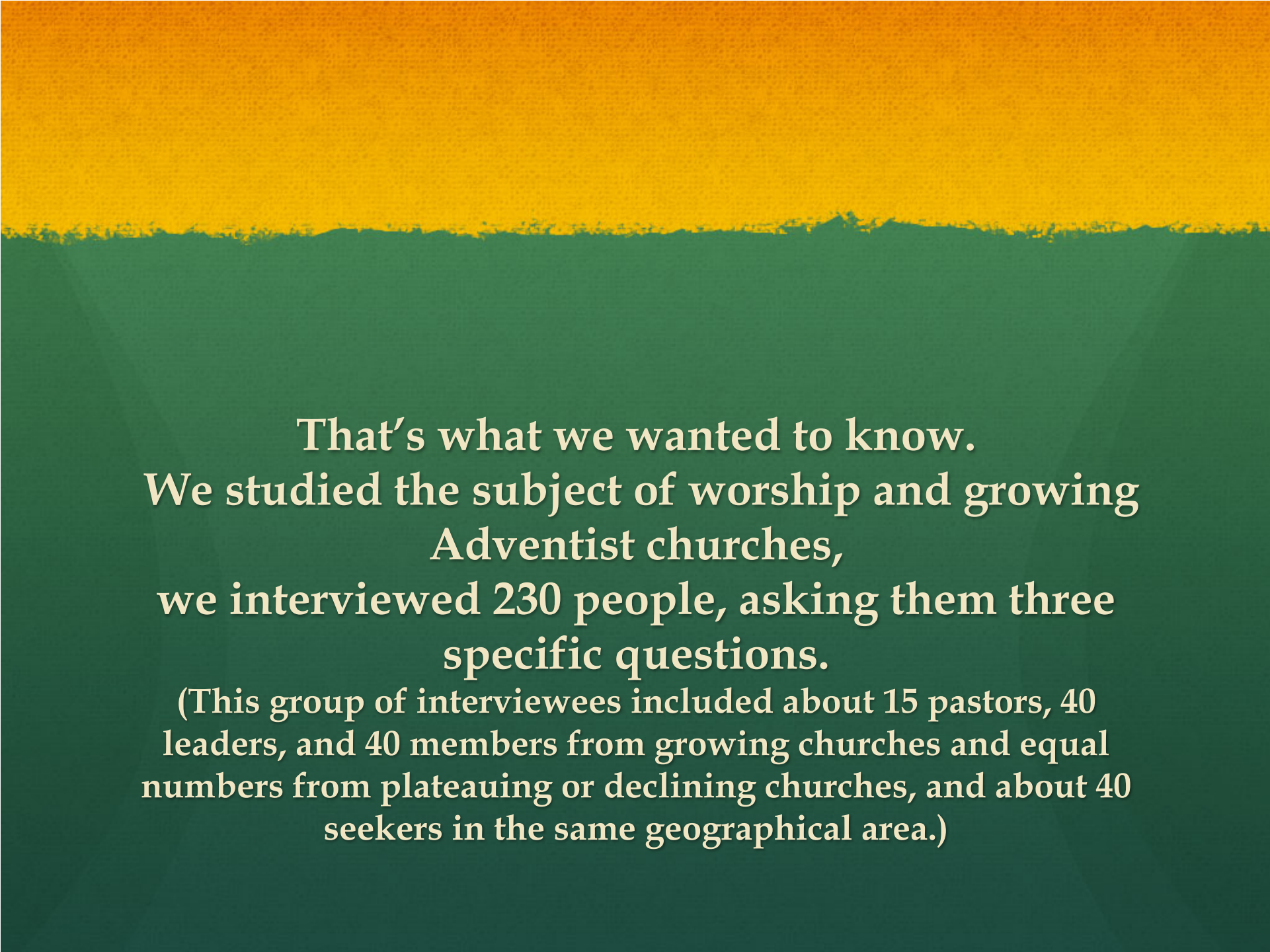
- What, then, is worship? Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth. Worship is not passive, but is participative. Worship is not simply a mood; it is a response. Worship is not just feeling; it is a declaration.





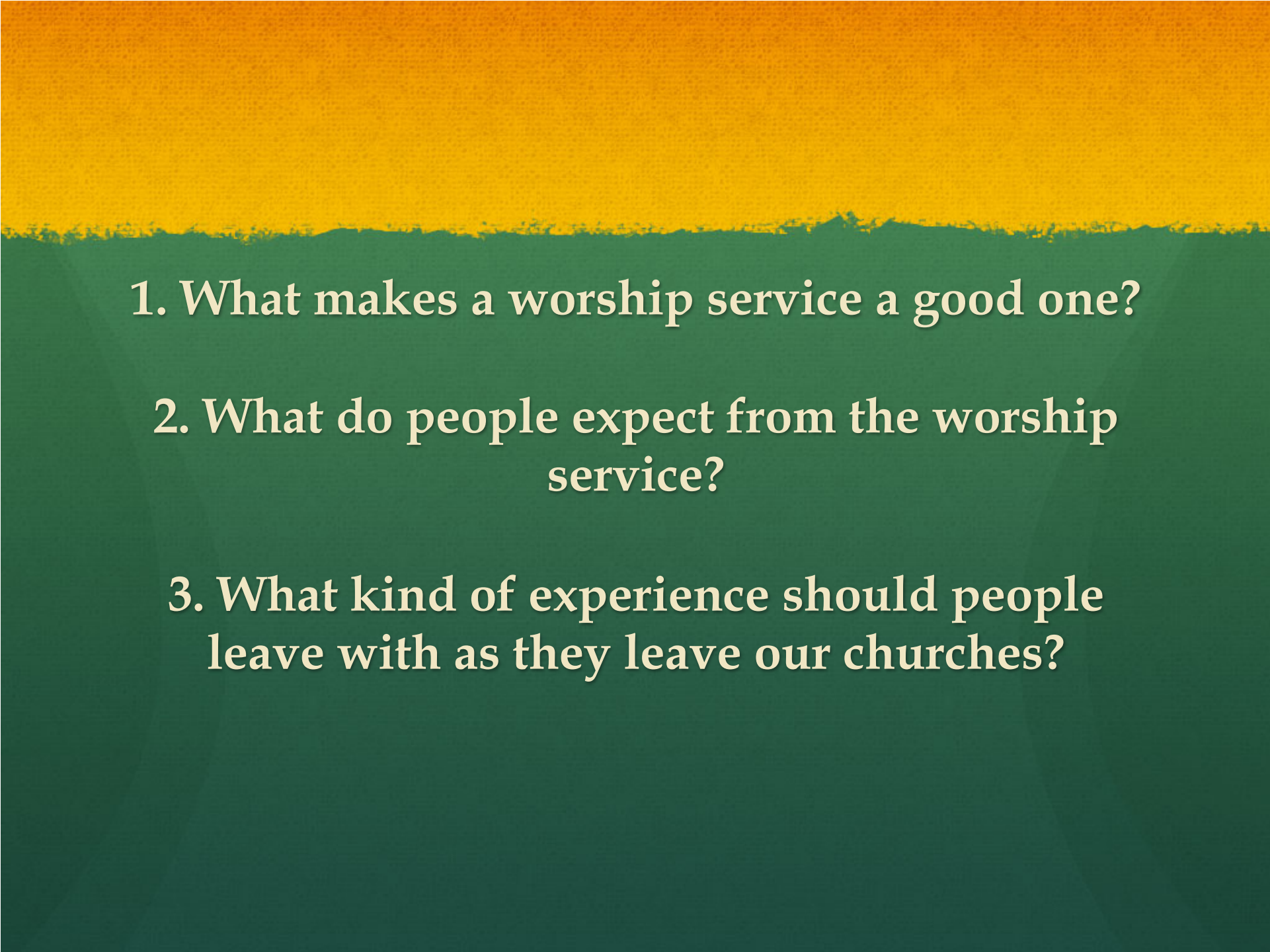
It's Sabbath morning, 11 o'clock. For the next 15
or so, you'll be sitting in church, in another
worship service. What do you expect from this
worship?

An opening song, followed by the invocation,
leading into the welcome and announcements?
Yes, but what do you *want* from worship?



That's what we wanted to know.
We studied the subject of worship and growing
Adventist churches,
we interviewed 230 people, asking them three
specific questions.

(This group of interviewees included about 15 pastors, 40
leaders, and 40 members from growing churches and equal
numbers from plateauing or declining churches, and about 40
seekers in the same geographical area.)

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1. What makes a worship service a good one?
 2. What do people expect from the worship service?
 3. What kind of experience should people leave with as they leave our churches?

The Results...

- Experience the Presence of God
- Experience the Grace of God
- Inspired by Hope
- Loved by the Church
- Leading to Transformation
- Resulting in Service
- Done with Excellency

1 - Experience the Presence of God



Over and over again people told us that they want to enjoy God, that what they desire most from worship is to experience His presence. Many people are looking for an experience with God – to live in His power and be touched by His grace and love – and they'll go anywhere to find it. Why don't we make our churches the place where people find God and begin enjoying Him forever?

Glen Martin and Gary McIntosh, *The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends that Confront Your Church and Designing a Strategy for Success* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 39.

God's desire is to be with His people. It's how He spent His time in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8), it's why He called for a wilderness tabernacle (Exodus 25:8), it is one of the many gracious reasons that Jesus came to the earth (John 1:14), and it will be the glory of the new earth (Revelation 21:3; 22:1-5).

Yet the privilege of God's presence is not limited to Adam or ancient Israelites or first-century Galileans, nor is it a gift we receive only upon entrance to the New Jerusalem. Jesus has promised that when people gather in His name, He is there among them (Matthew 18:20). Every worship service, every meeting gathered in His name holds the promise of His presence, so when your church assembles together God is there, too.

It would be well for us to focus more on creating a holy climate through prayer, music, and education that will help people become aware of the presence of God. Many worshipers come to church looking for more than fellowship, exhortation, or exposition.

They come seeking an experience with the Holy One. They come looking for “awe and reverence, mystery and transcendence.” What is your church doing to provide that opportunity?

Tim Dearborn and Scott Coil, *Worship at the Next Level: Insight from Contemporary Voices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 153.

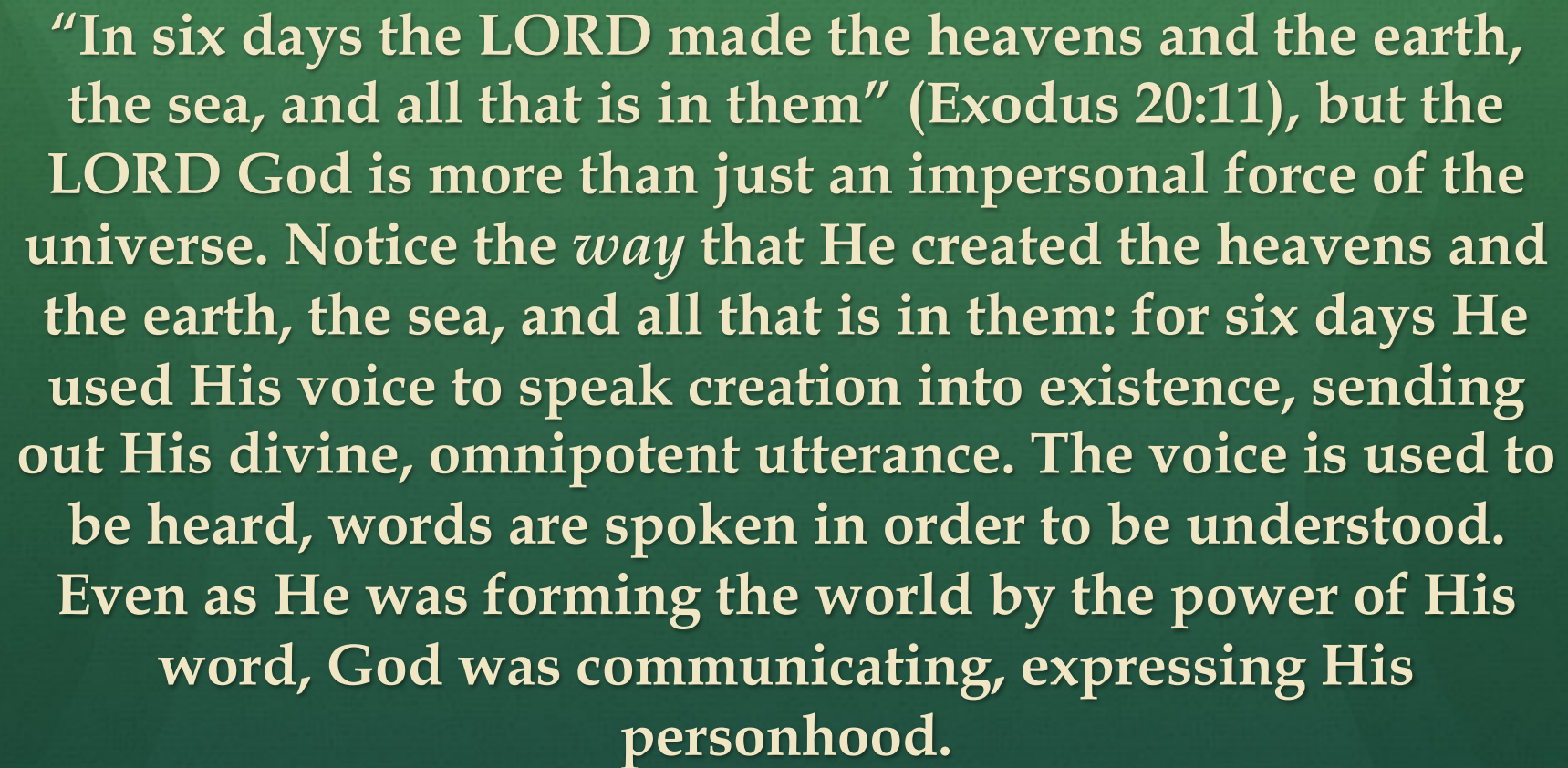
We experience God's presence through prayer and by being in contact with other people who are experiencing Him. Those growing churches that help their congregation experience the presence of God do it through prayer, praise, music, an atmosphere of loving acceptance, good greetings and welcome, and by using worship leaders who have a personal experience with God.



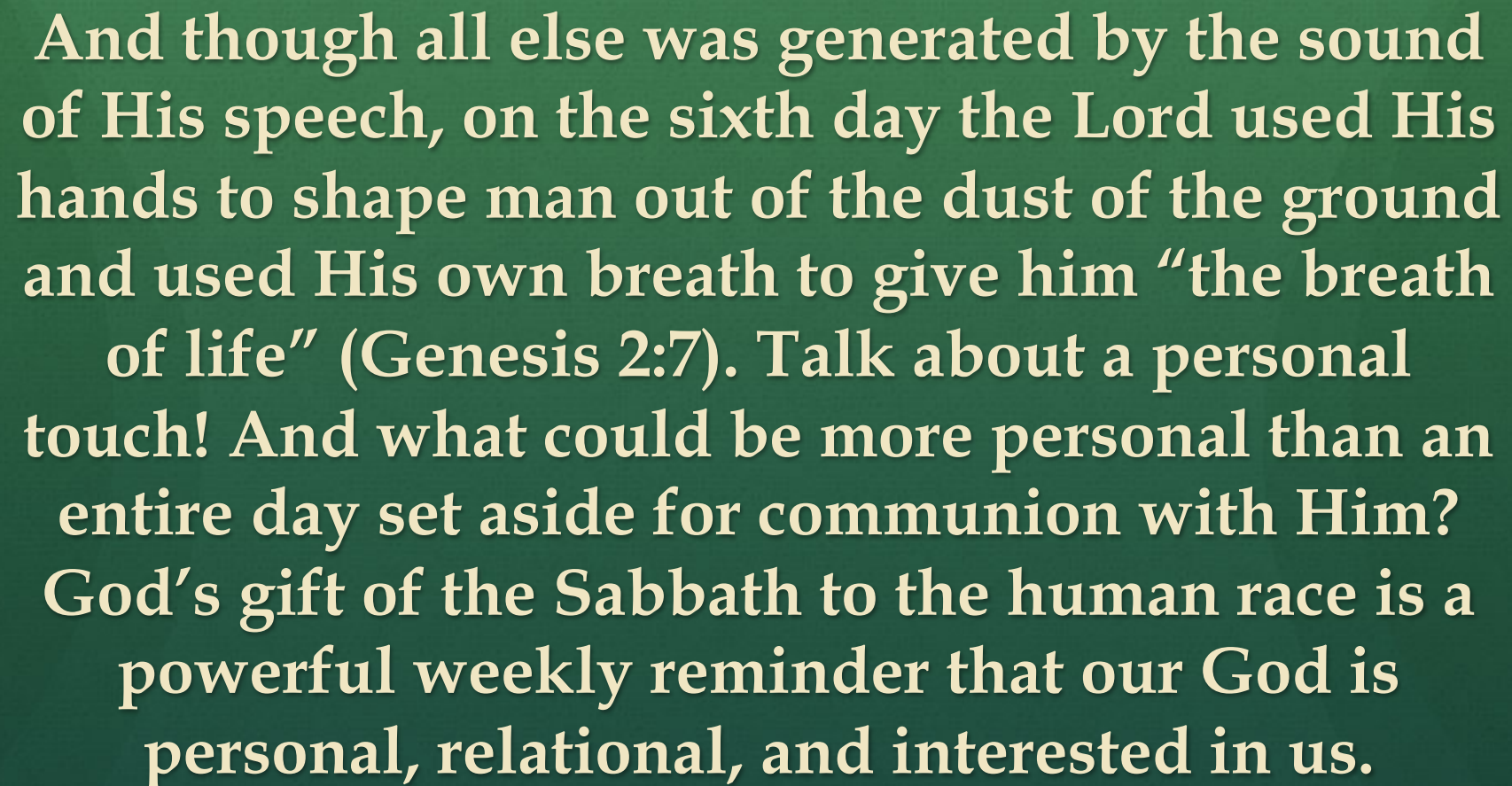
Today growing churches seek to find a balance between content and feelings, working to create a worship service that ministers to both the head and the heart, where worshipers can learn about God and yet also meet with Him, sing about God and also sing to Him.



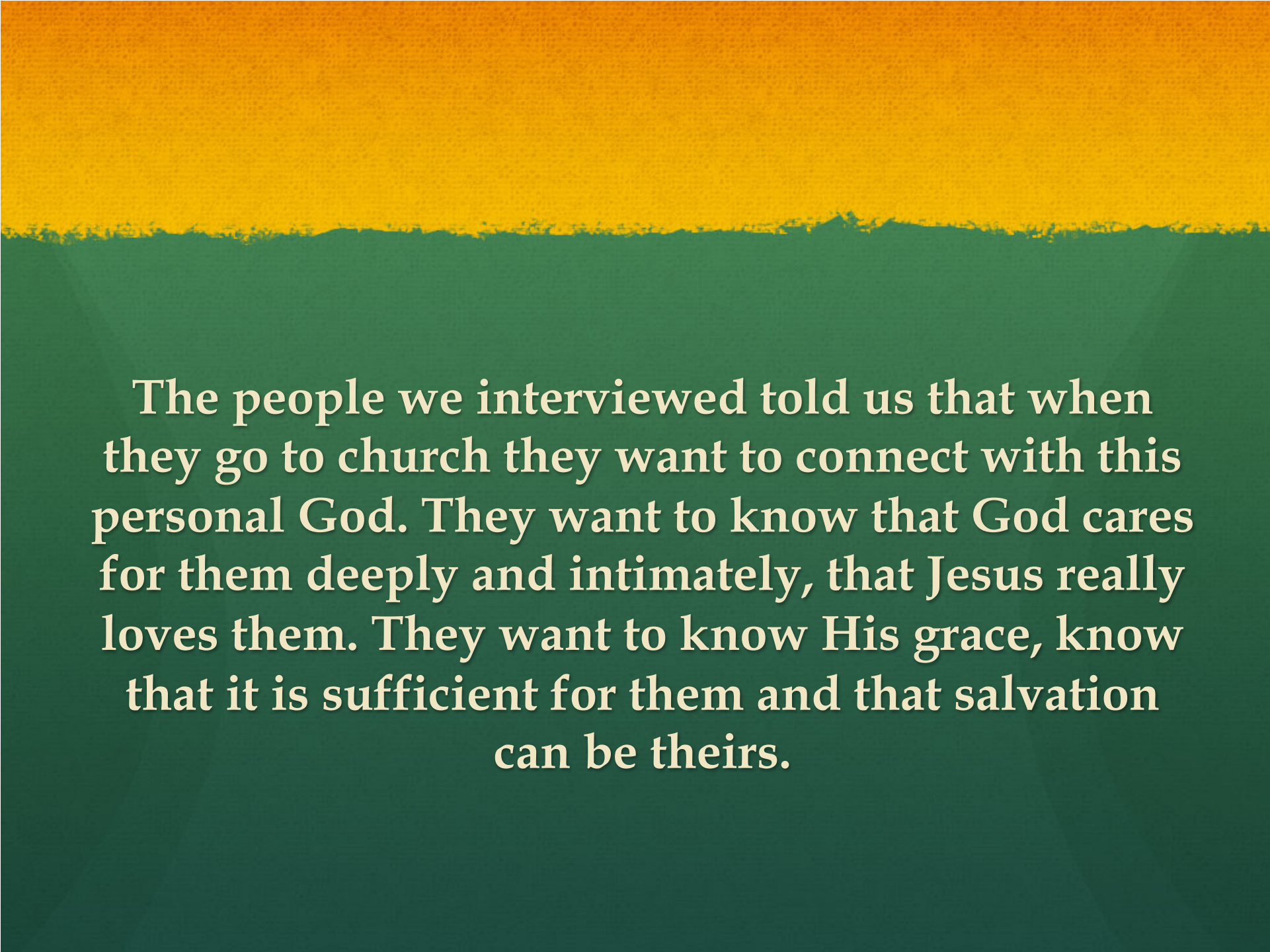
2 - Experience the Grace of God



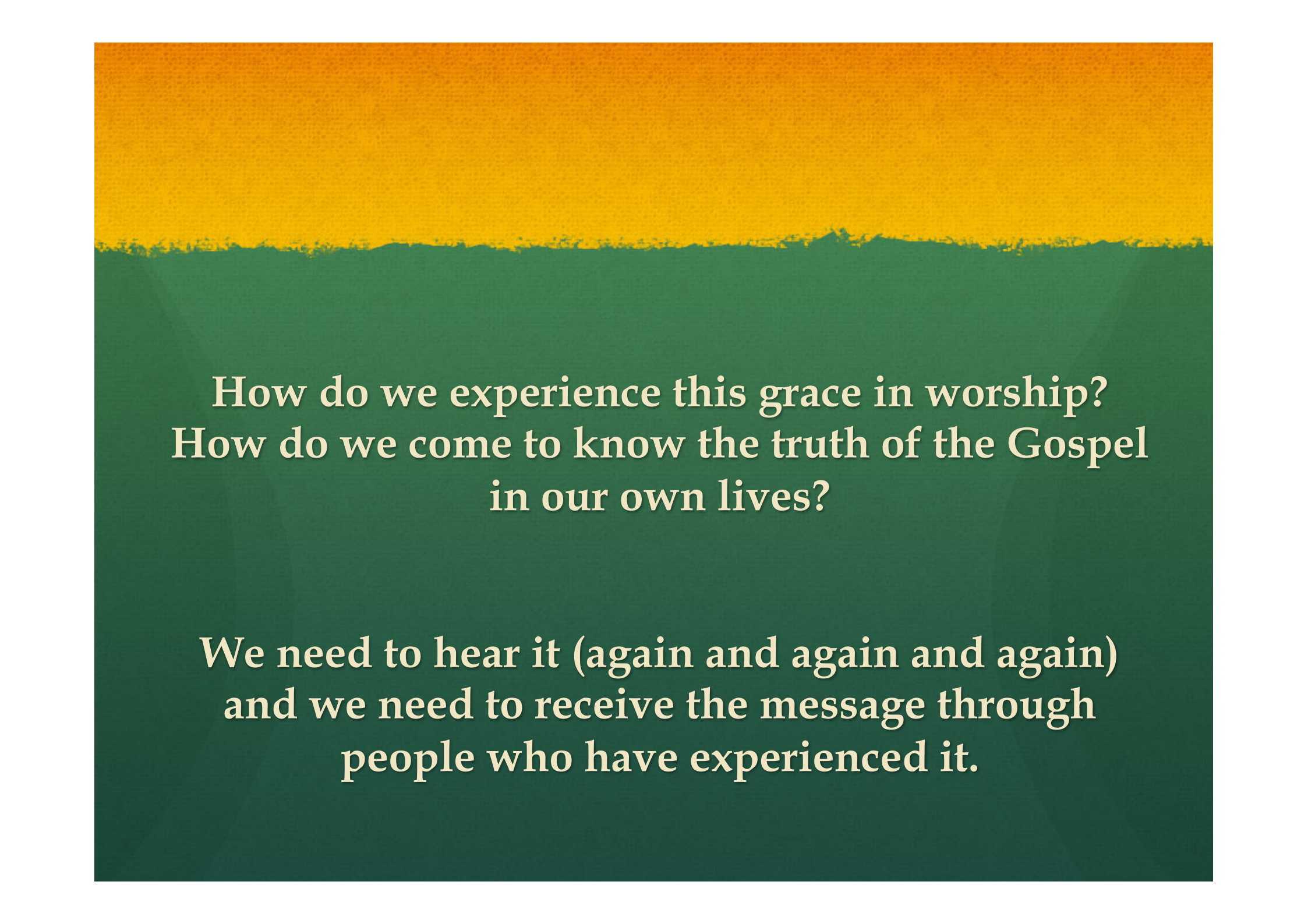
“In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them” (Exodus 20:11), but the LORD God is more than just an impersonal force of the universe. Notice the *way* that He created the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them: for six days He used His voice to speak creation into existence, sending out His divine, omnipotent utterance. The voice is used to be heard, words are spoken in order to be understood. Even as He was forming the world by the power of His word, God was communicating, expressing His personhood.



And though all else was generated by the sound of His speech, on the sixth day the Lord used His hands to shape man out of the dust of the ground and used His own breath to give him “the breath of life” (Genesis 2:7). Talk about a personal touch! And what could be more personal than an entire day set aside for communion with Him? God’s gift of the Sabbath to the human race is a powerful weekly reminder that our God is personal, relational, and interested in us.



The people we interviewed told us that when they go to church they want to connect with this personal God. They want to know that God cares for them deeply and intimately, that Jesus really loves them. They want to know His grace, know that it is sufficient for them and that salvation can be theirs.

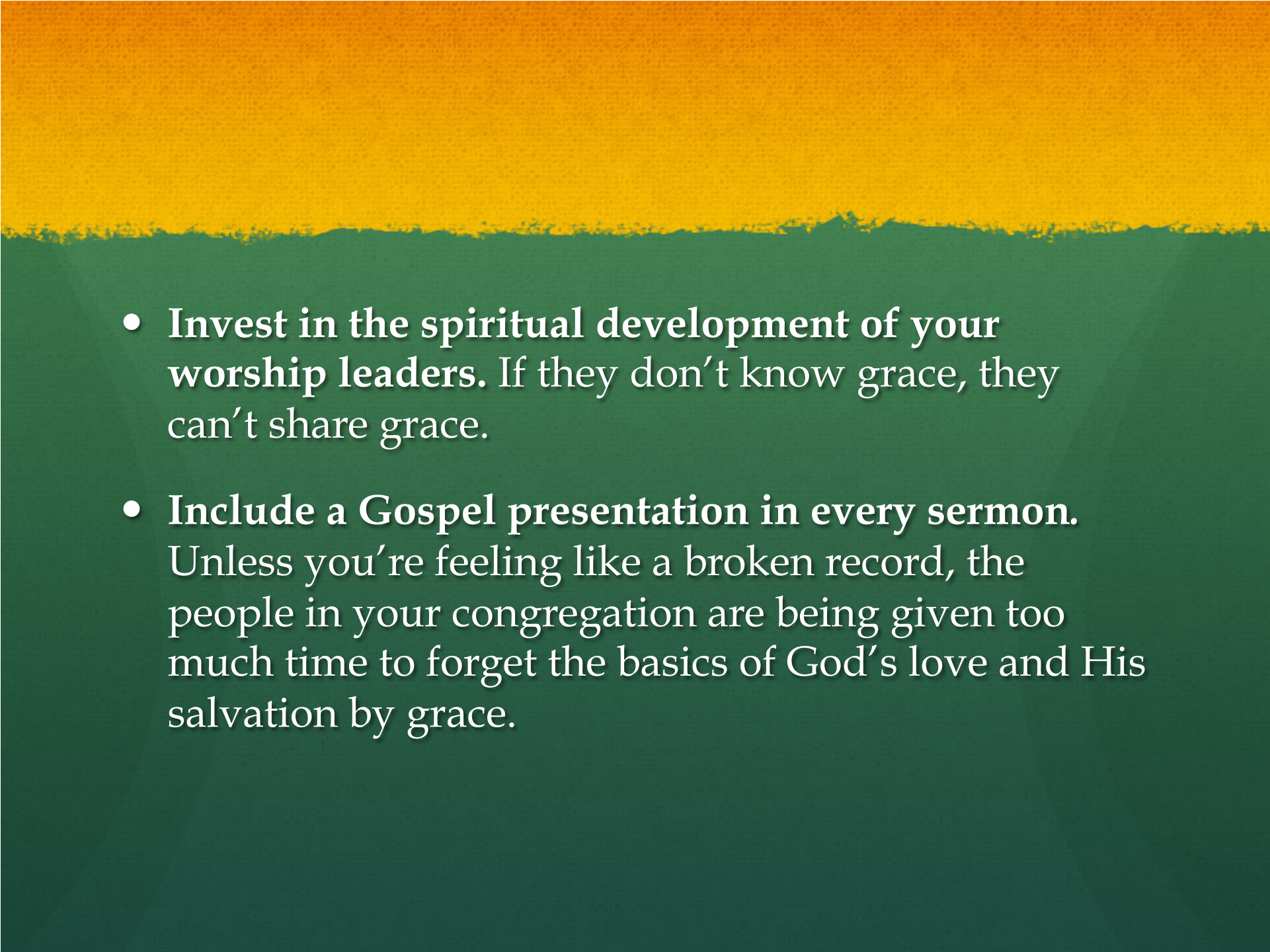


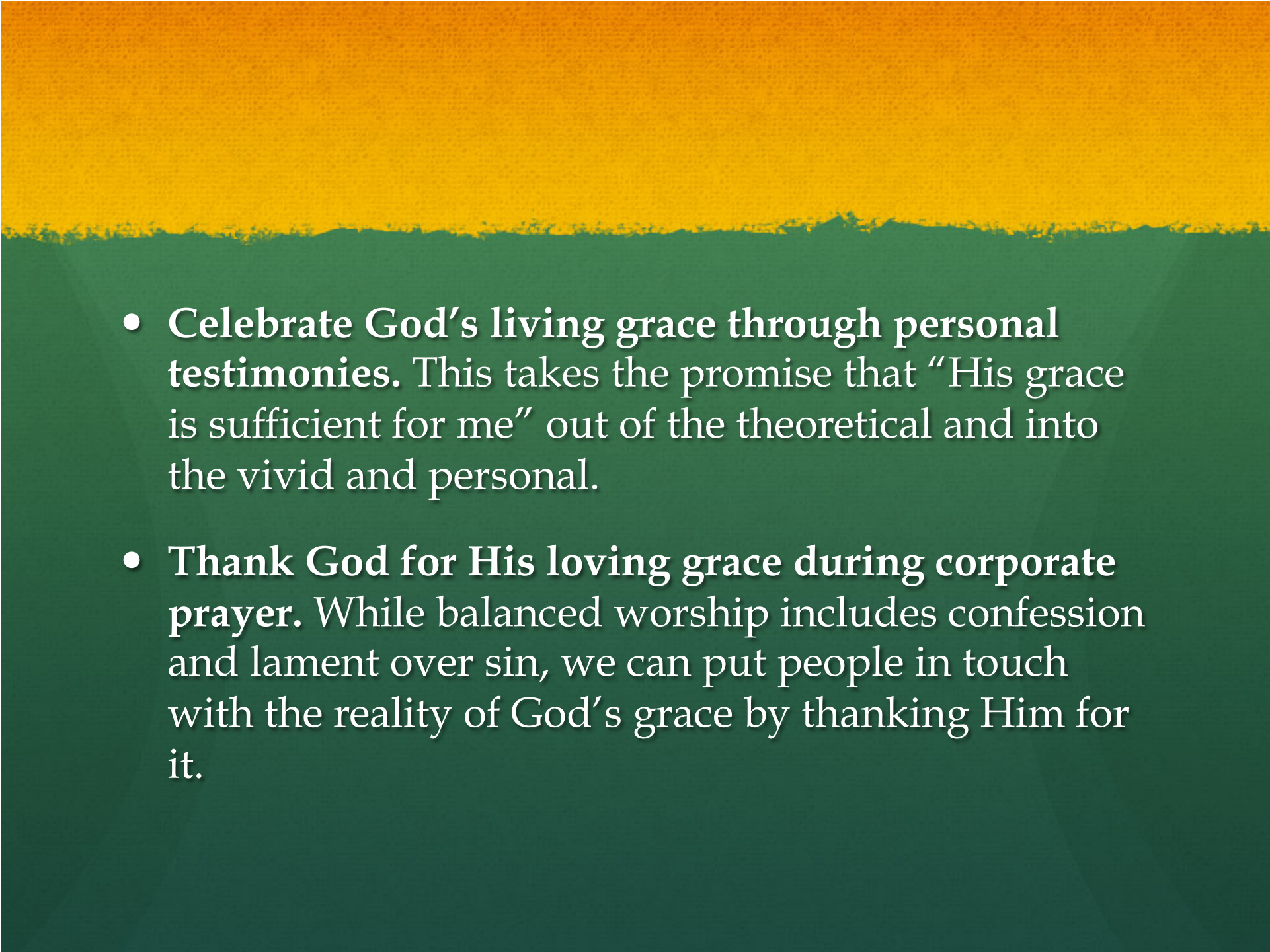
How do we experience this grace in worship?
How do we come to know the truth of the Gospel
in our own lives?

We need to hear it (again and again and again)
and we need to receive the message through
people who have experienced it.



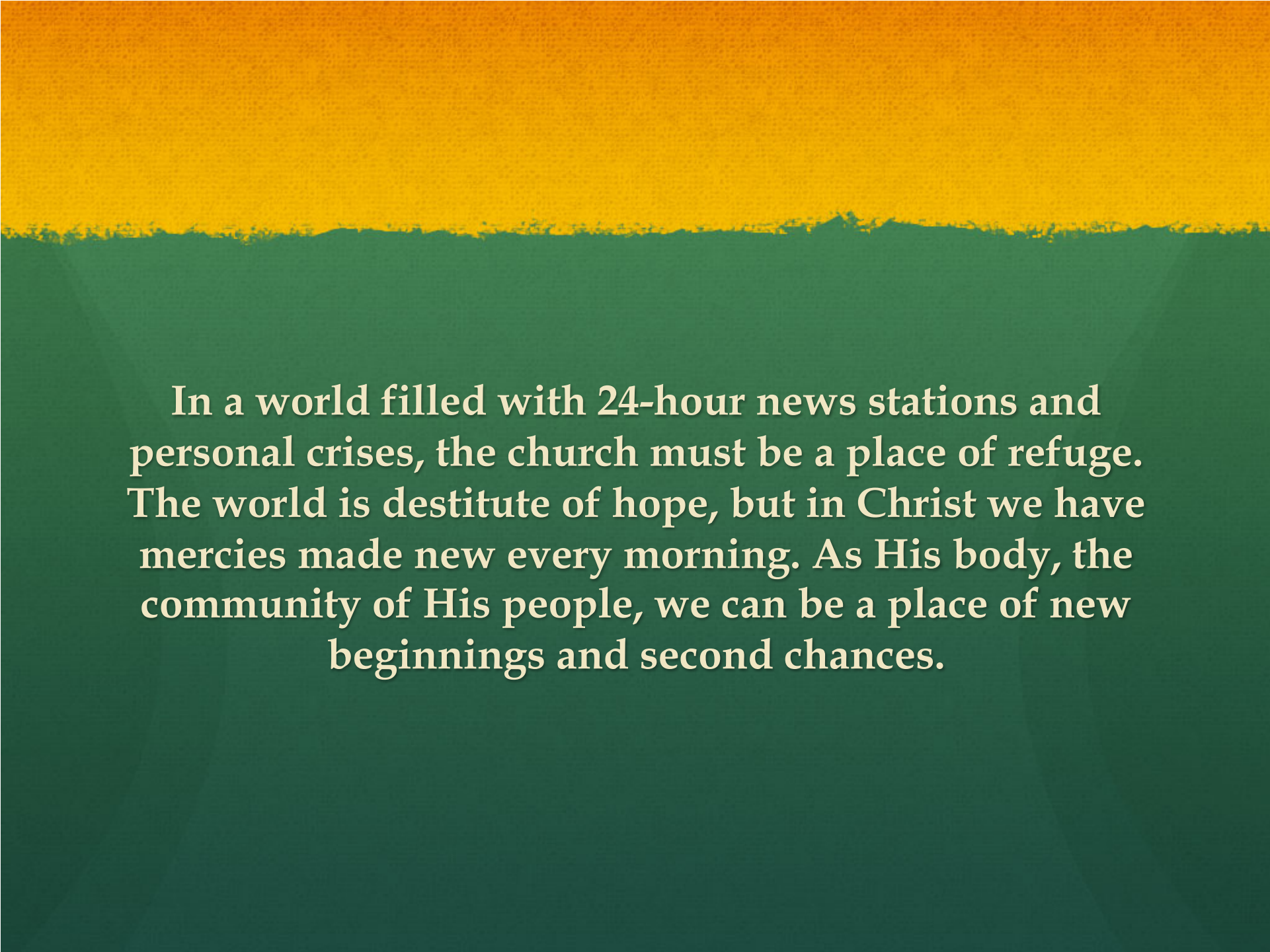
Here are some practical steps you can take in your worship service to offer the water of the Gospel to your grace-parched community:

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- **Invest in the spiritual development of your worship leaders.** If they don't know grace, they can't share grace.
 - **Include a Gospel presentation in every sermon.** Unless you're feeling like a broken record, the people in your congregation are being given too much time to forget the basics of God's love and His salvation by grace.

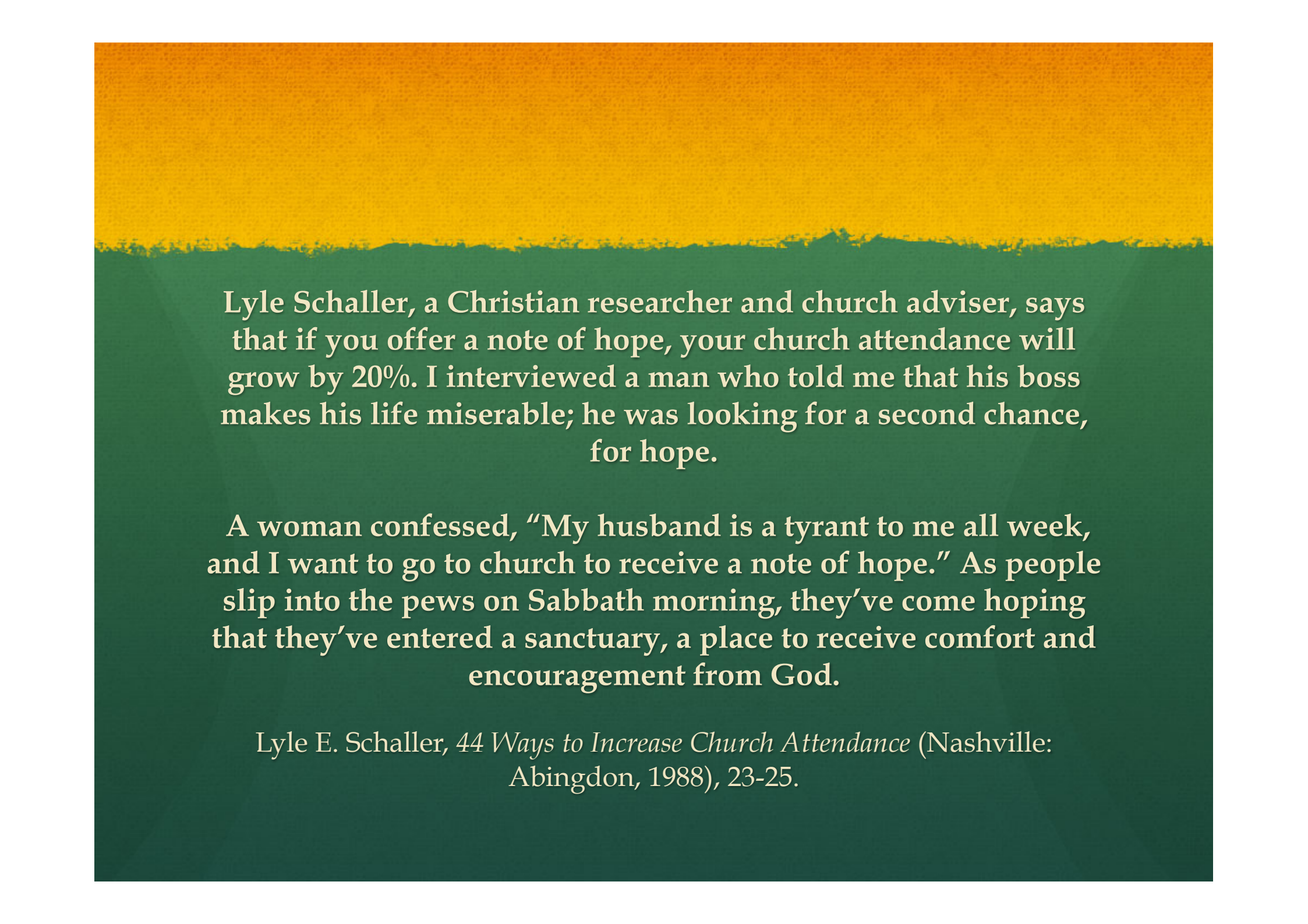
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- **Celebrate God's living grace through personal testimonies.** This takes the promise that "His grace is sufficient for me" out of the theoretical and into the vivid and personal.
 - **Thank God for His loving grace during corporate prayer.** While balanced worship includes confession and lament over sin, we can put people in touch with the reality of God's grace by thanking Him for it.



3 - Inspired by Hope



In a world filled with 24-hour news stations and personal crises, the church must be a place of refuge. The world is destitute of hope, but in Christ we have mercies made new every morning. As His body, the community of His people, we can be a place of new beginnings and second chances.



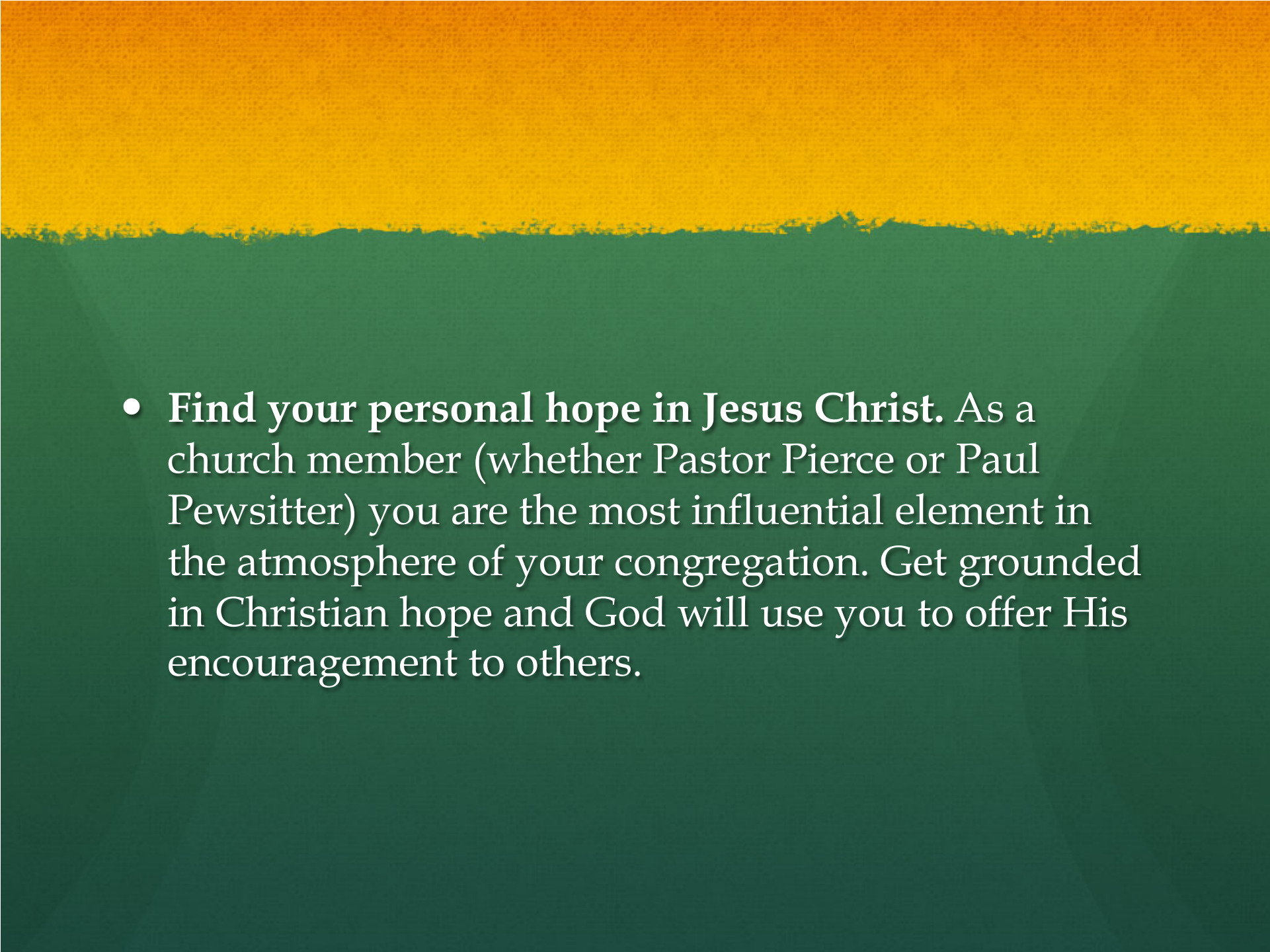
Lyle Schaller, a Christian researcher and church adviser, says that if you offer a note of hope, your church attendance will grow by 20%. I interviewed a man who told me that his boss makes his life miserable; he was looking for a second chance, for hope.

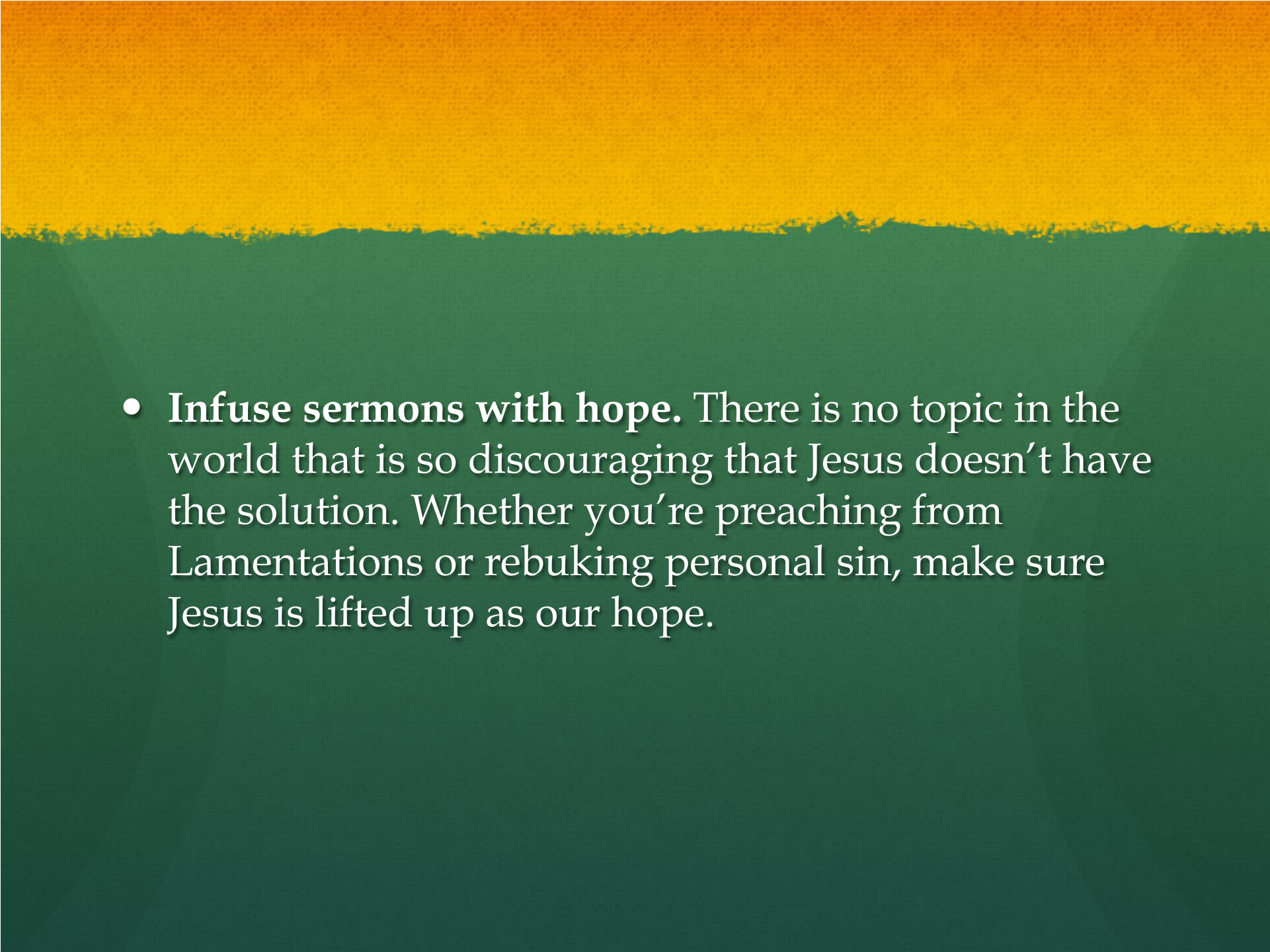
A woman confessed, “My husband is a tyrant to me all week, and I want to go to church to receive a note of hope.” As people slip into the pews on Sabbath morning, they’ve come hoping that they’ve entered a sanctuary, a place to receive comfort and encouragement from God.

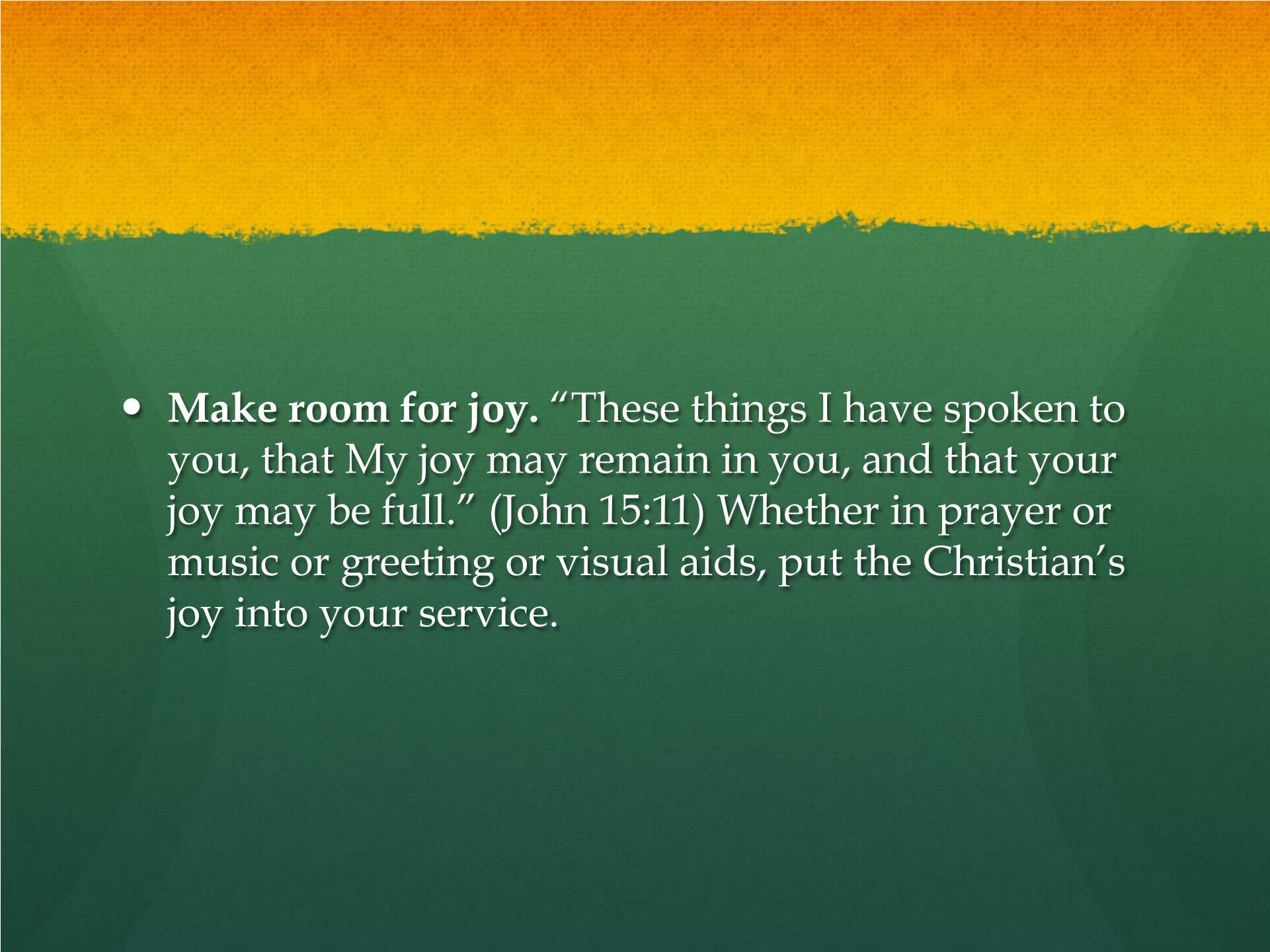
Lyle E. Schaller, *44 Ways to Increase Church Attendance* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 23-25.

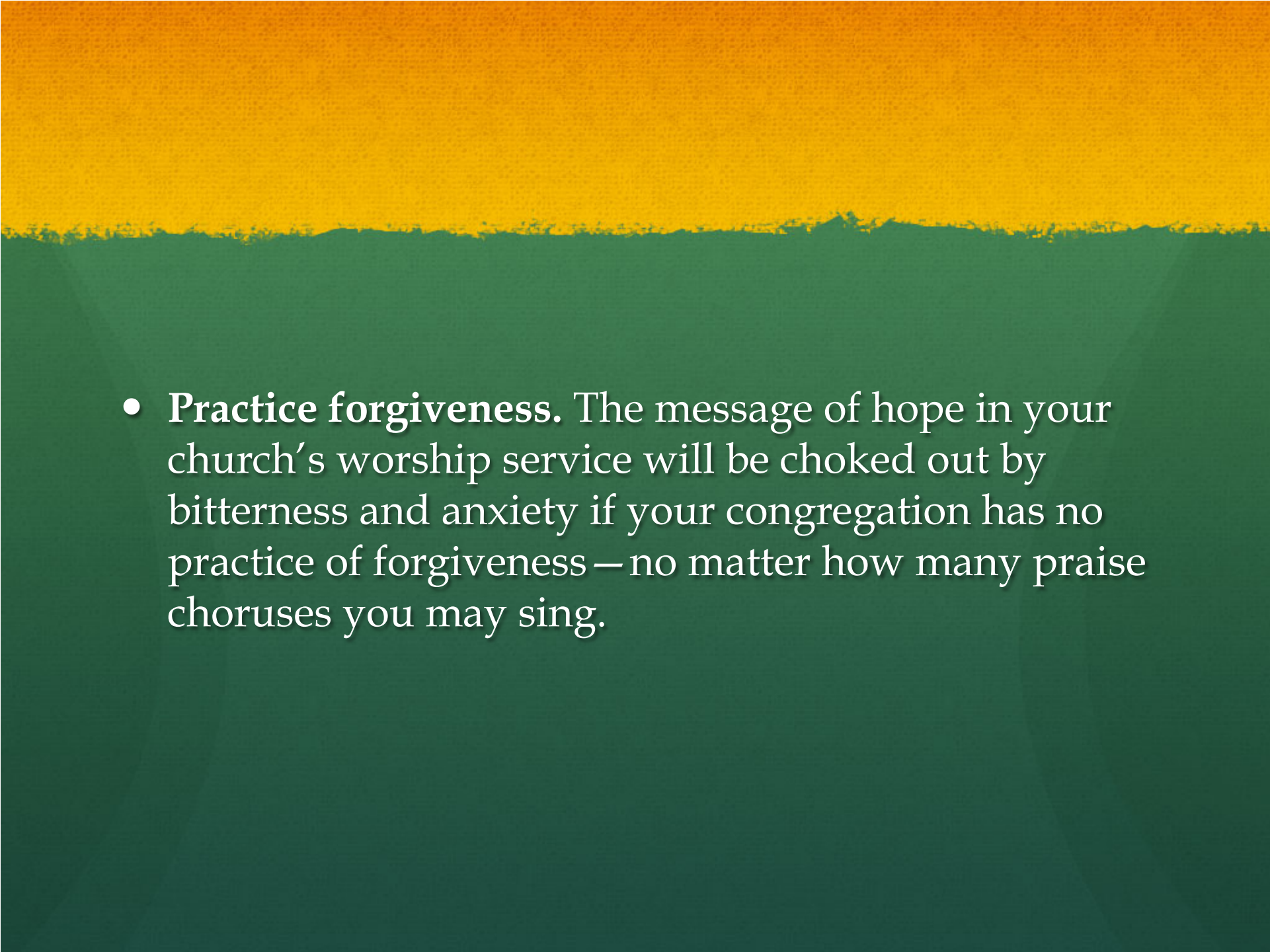


How can your worship service instill hope in the participants? Here are some practical ideas:

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- **Find your personal hope in Jesus Christ.** As a church member (whether Pastor Pierce or Paul Pewsetter) you are the most influential element in the atmosphere of your congregation. Get grounded in Christian hope and God will use you to offer His encouragement to others.

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- **Infuse sermons with hope.** There is no topic in the world that is so discouraging that Jesus doesn't have the solution. Whether you're preaching from Lamentations or rebuking personal sin, make sure Jesus is lifted up as our hope.

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- **Make room for joy.** “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:11) Whether in prayer or music or greeting or visual aids, put the Christian’s joy into your service.

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- **Practice forgiveness.** The message of hope in your church's worship service will be choked out by bitterness and anxiety if your congregation has no practice of forgiveness – no matter how many praise choruses you may sing.

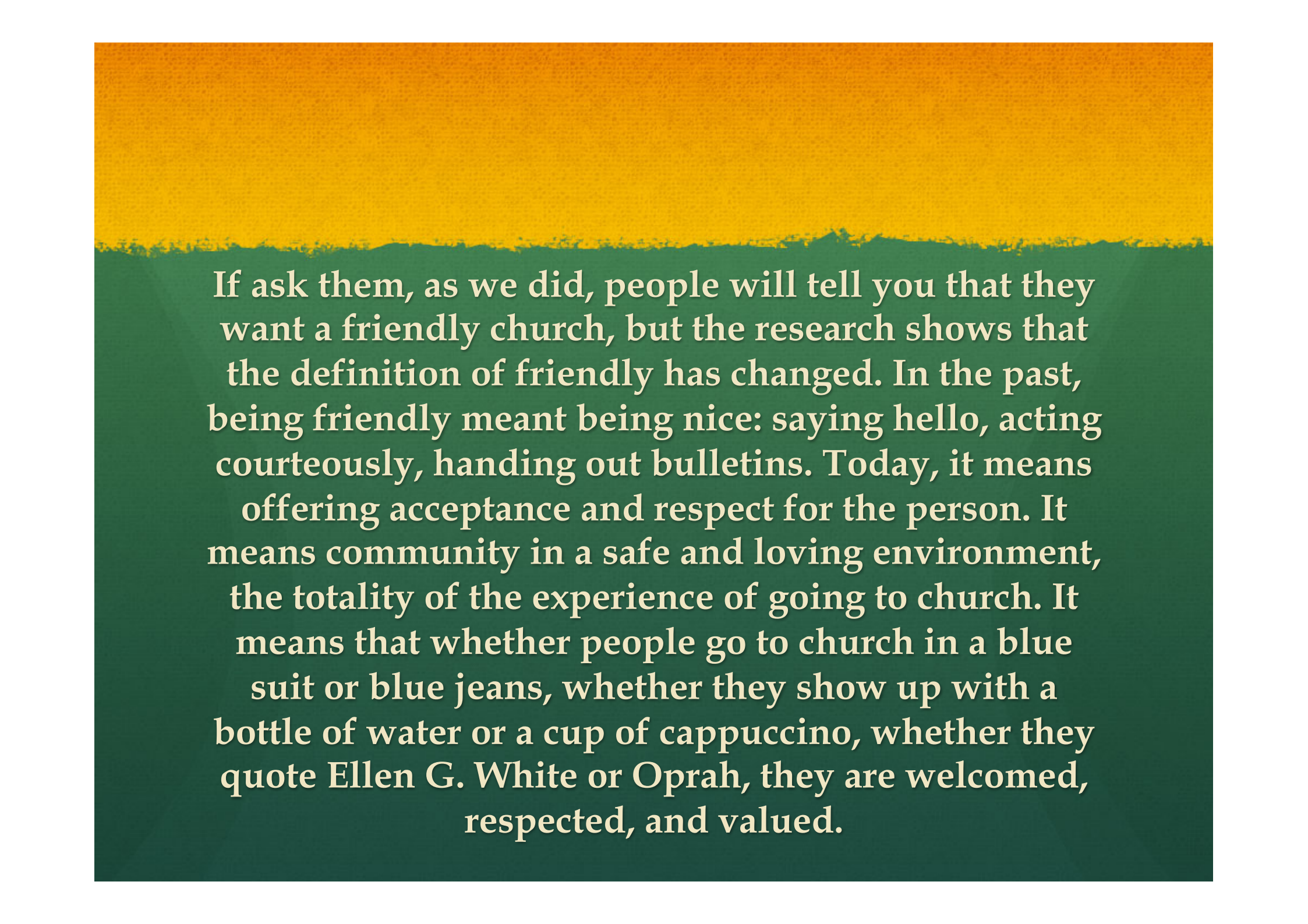


4 – Loved by the Church

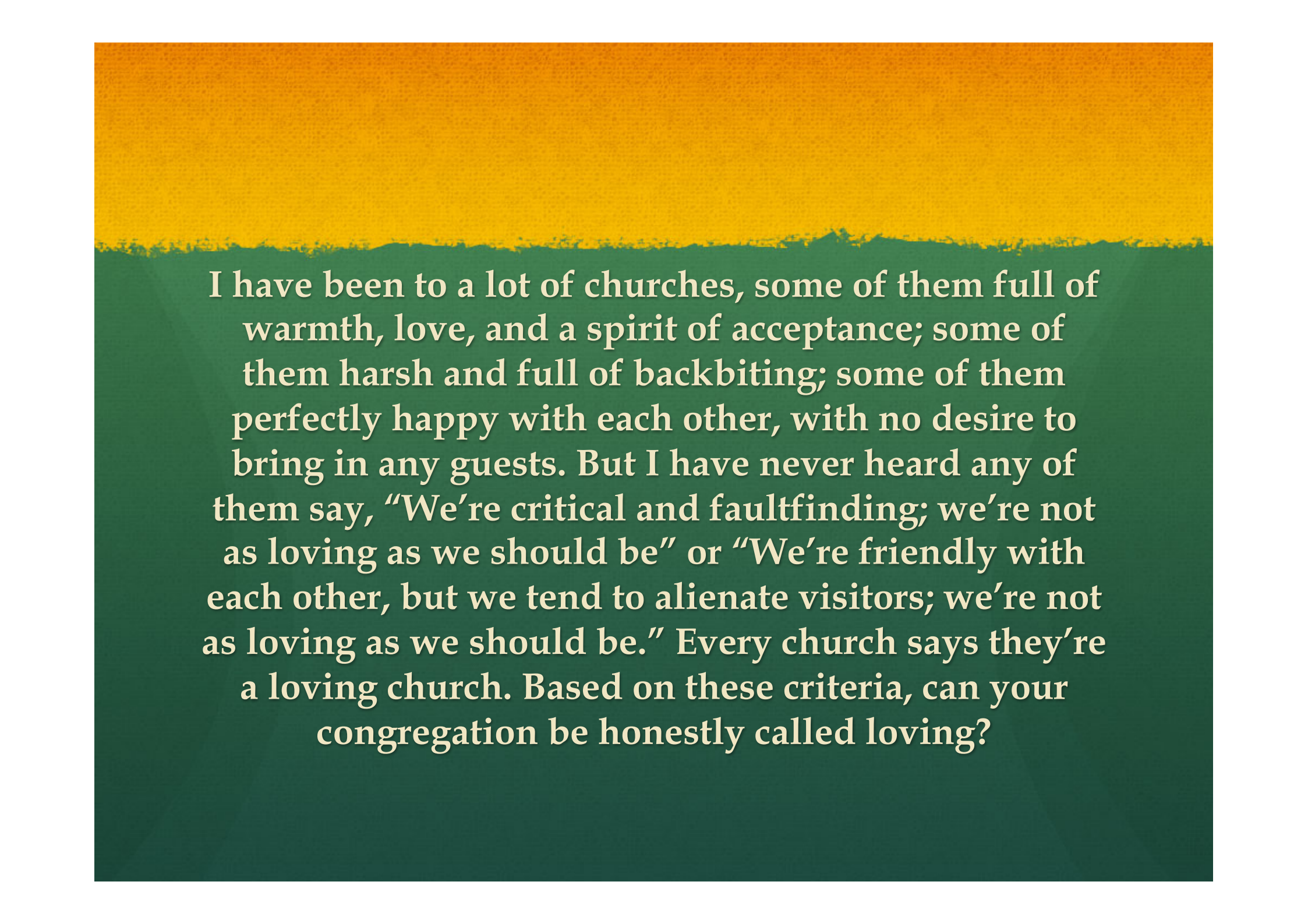
“This is My
commandment, that
you love one another
as I have loved
You.” (John 15:12).

Even for a
commandment-
keeping people, those
are some tough words
to hear! Still, the
church must be a
place where people
are loved.





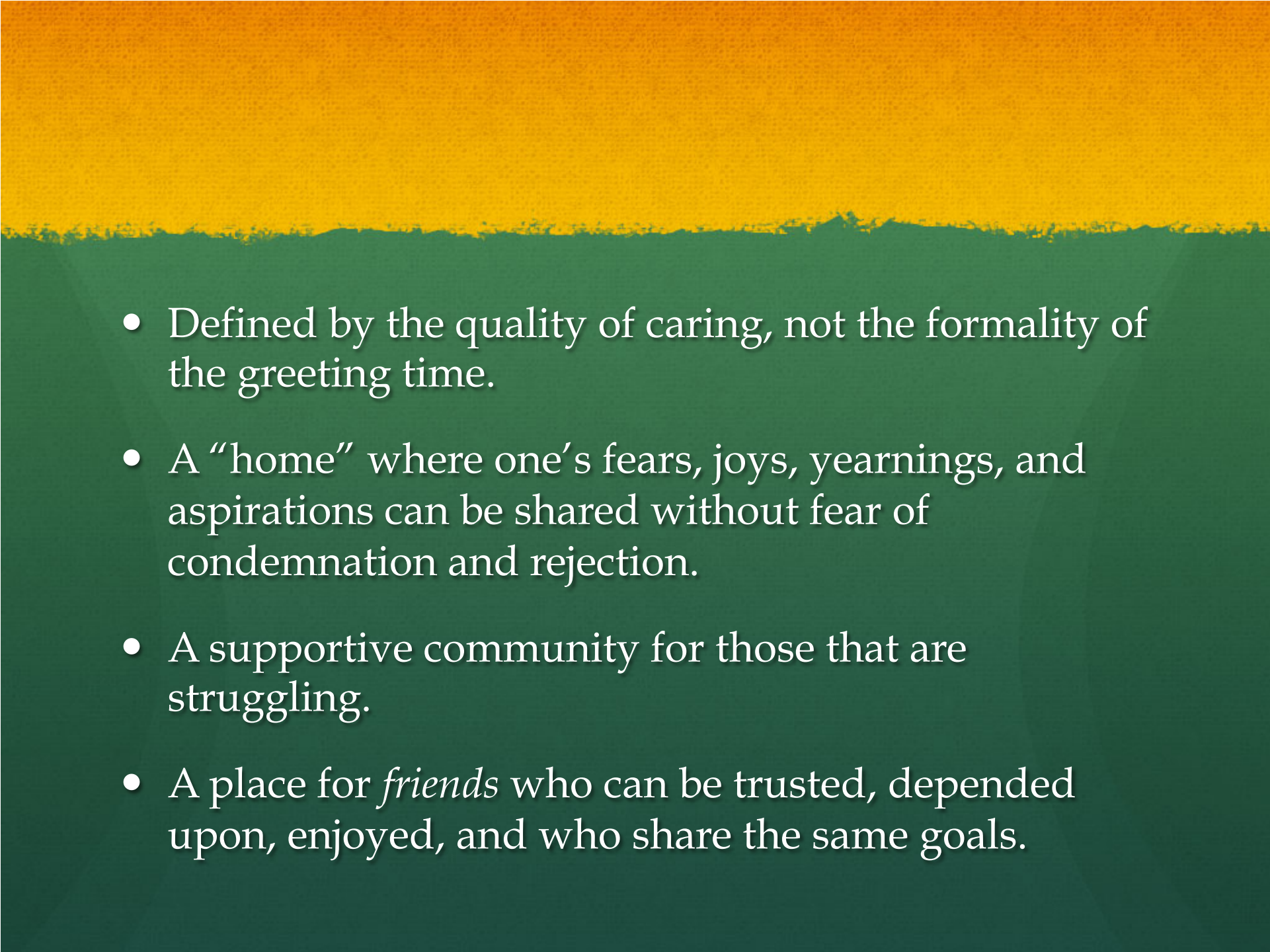
If ask them, as we did, people will tell you that they want a friendly church, but the research shows that the definition of friendly has changed. In the past, being friendly meant being nice: saying hello, acting courteously, handing out bulletins. Today, it means offering acceptance and respect for the person. It means community in a safe and loving environment, the totality of the experience of going to church. It means that whether people go to church in a blue suit or blue jeans, whether they show up with a bottle of water or a cup of cappuccino, whether they quote Ellen G. White or Oprah, they are welcomed, respected, and valued.

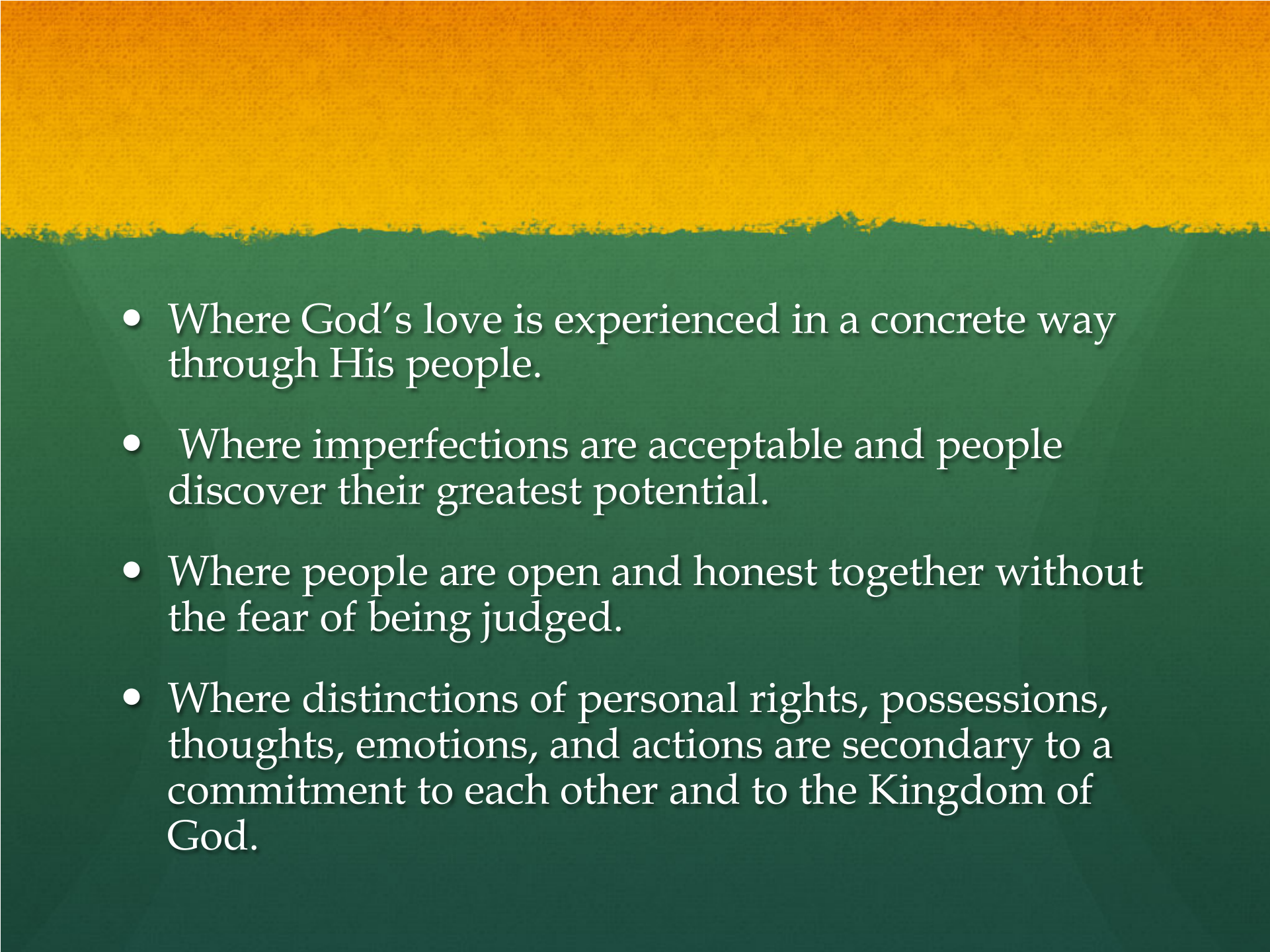


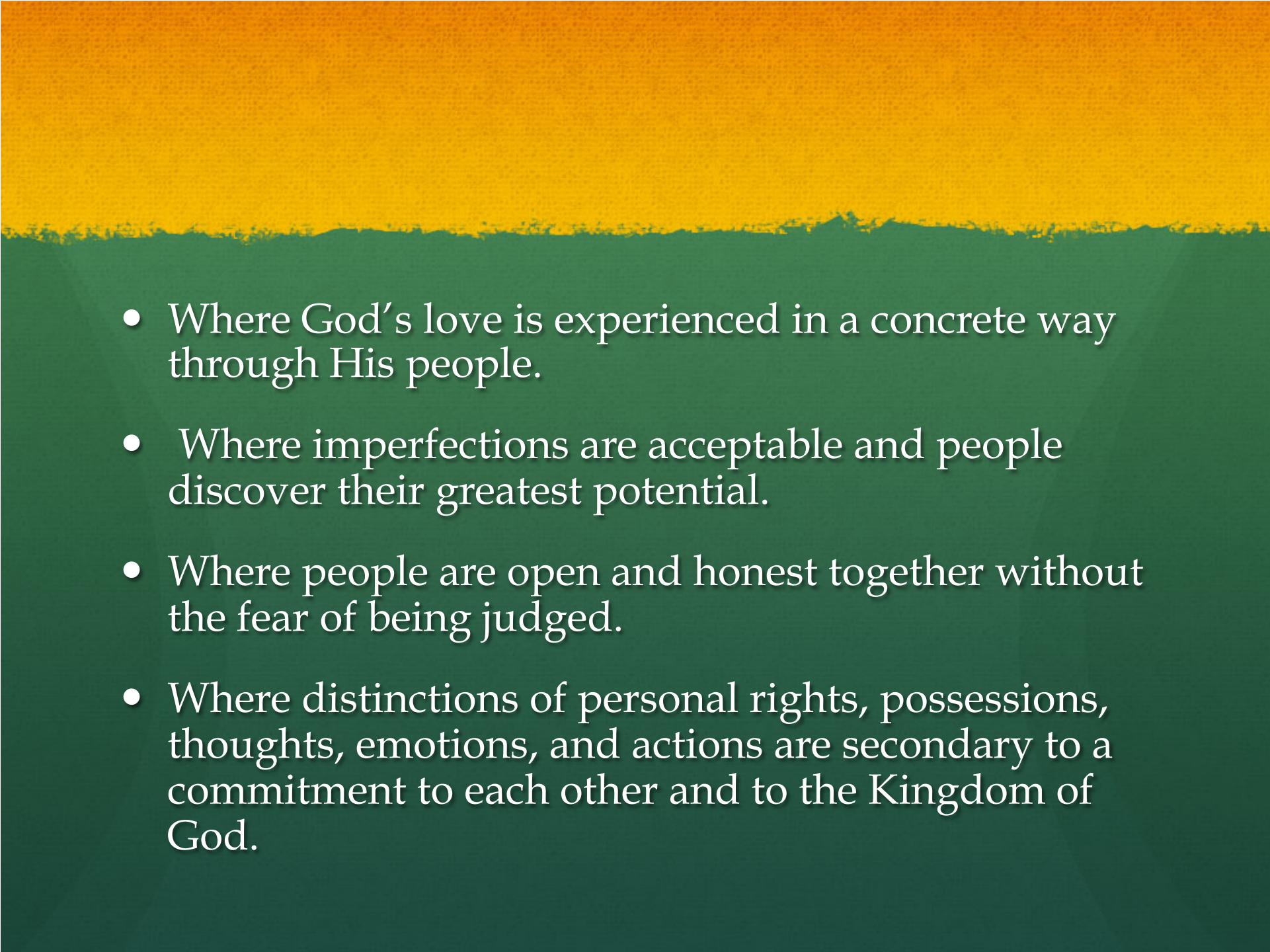
I have been to a lot of churches, some of them full of warmth, love, and a spirit of acceptance; some of them harsh and full of backbiting; some of them perfectly happy with each other, with no desire to bring in any guests. But I have never heard any of them say, “We’re critical and faultfinding; we’re not as loving as we should be” or “We’re friendly with each other, but we tend to alienate visitors; we’re not as loving as we should be.” Every church says they’re a loving church. Based on these criteria, can your congregation be honestly called loving?

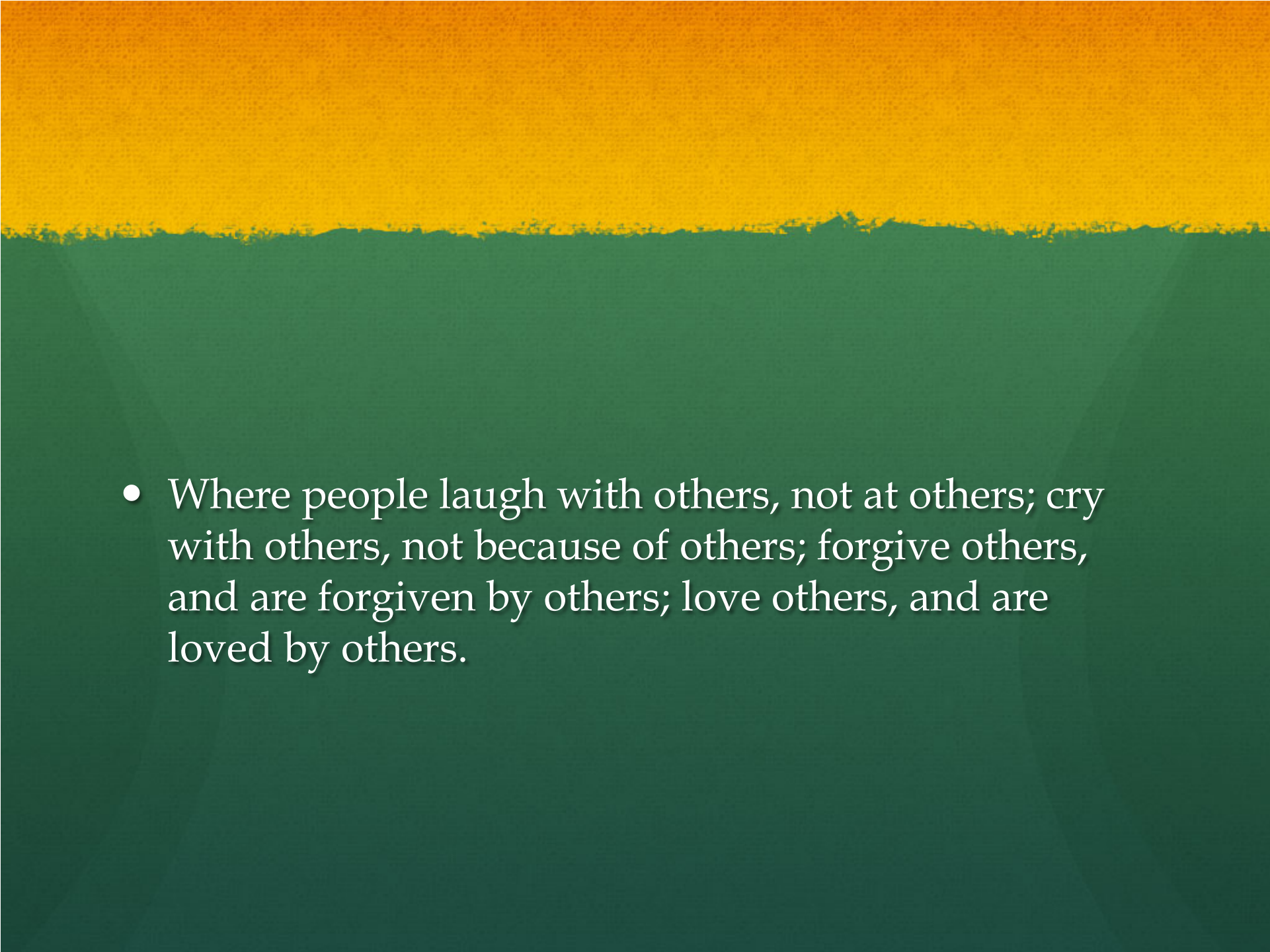


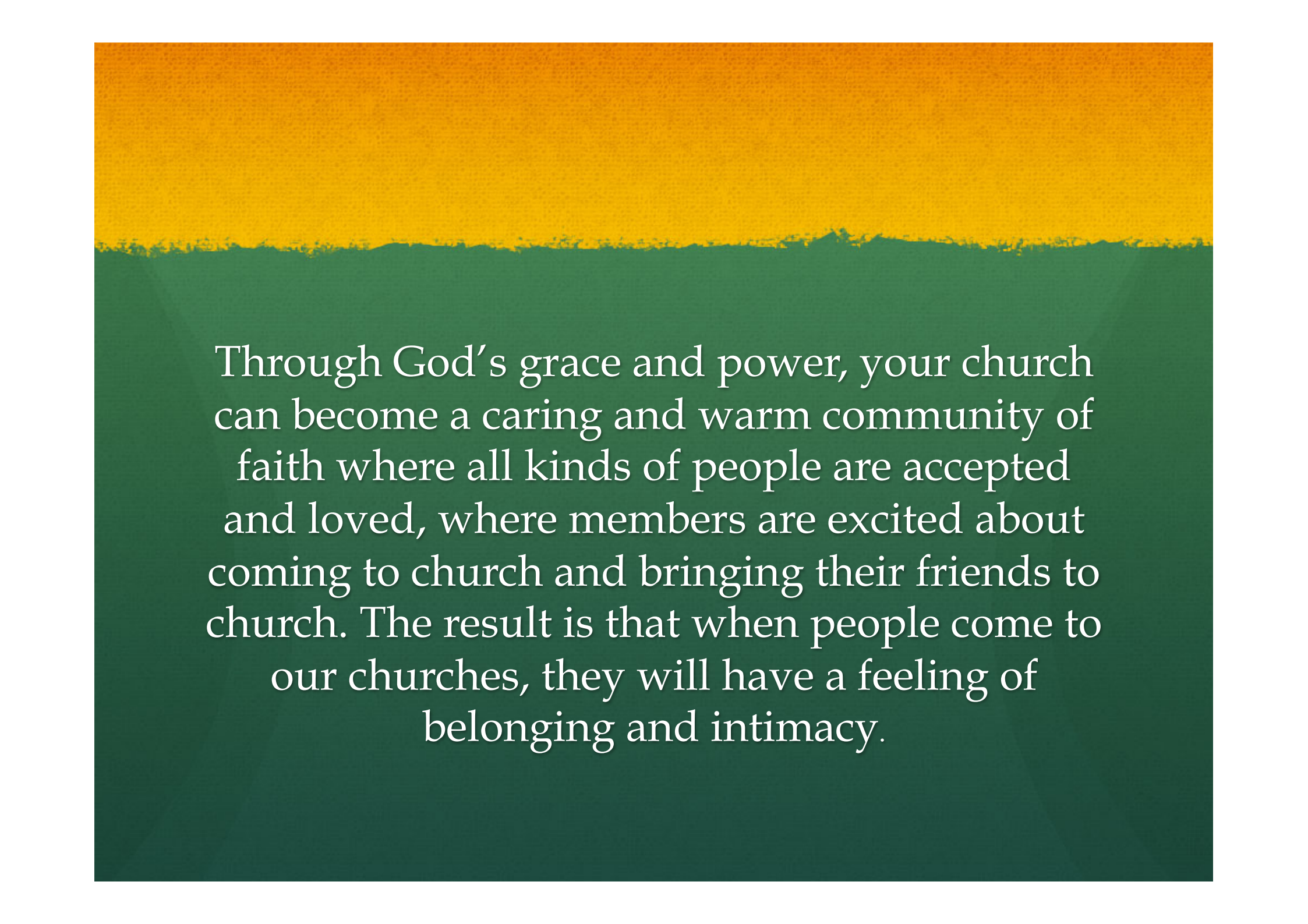
A loving church is . . .

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- Defined by the quality of caring, not the formality of the greeting time.
 - A “home” where one’s fears, joys, yearnings, and aspirations can be shared without fear of condemnation and rejection.
 - A supportive community for those that are struggling.
 - A place for *friends* who can be trusted, depended upon, enjoyed, and who share the same goals.

- 
- Where God's love is experienced in a concrete way through His people.
 - Where imperfections are acceptable and people discover their greatest potential.
 - Where people are open and honest together without the fear of being judged.
 - Where distinctions of personal rights, possessions, thoughts, emotions, and actions are secondary to a commitment to each other and to the Kingdom of God.

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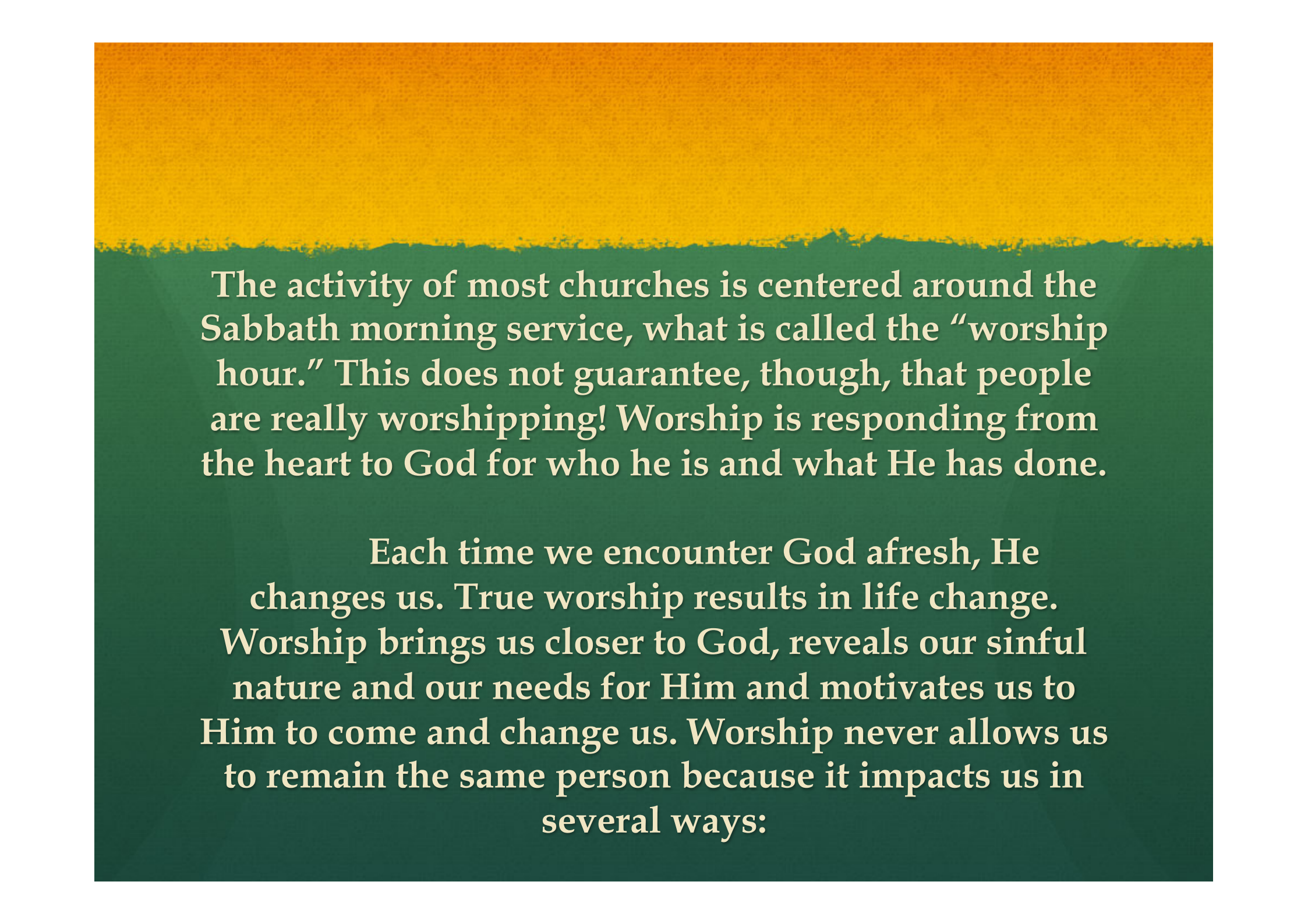
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- Where people laugh with others, not at others; cry with others, not because of others; forgive others, and are forgiven by others; love others, and are loved by others.



Through God's grace and power, your church can become a caring and warm community of faith where all kinds of people are accepted and loved, where members are excited about coming to church and bringing their friends to church. The result is that when people come to our churches, they will have a feeling of belonging and intimacy.

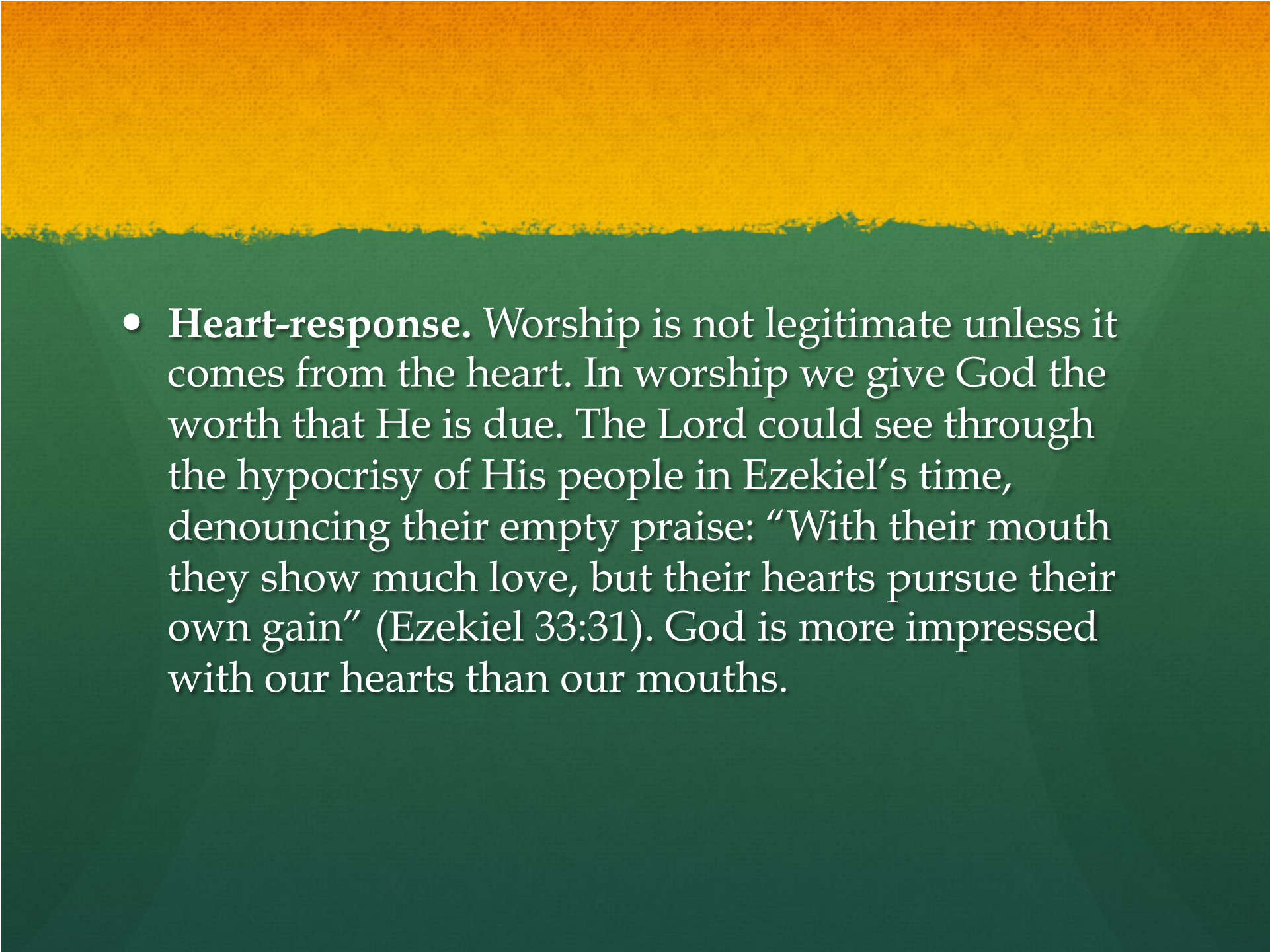


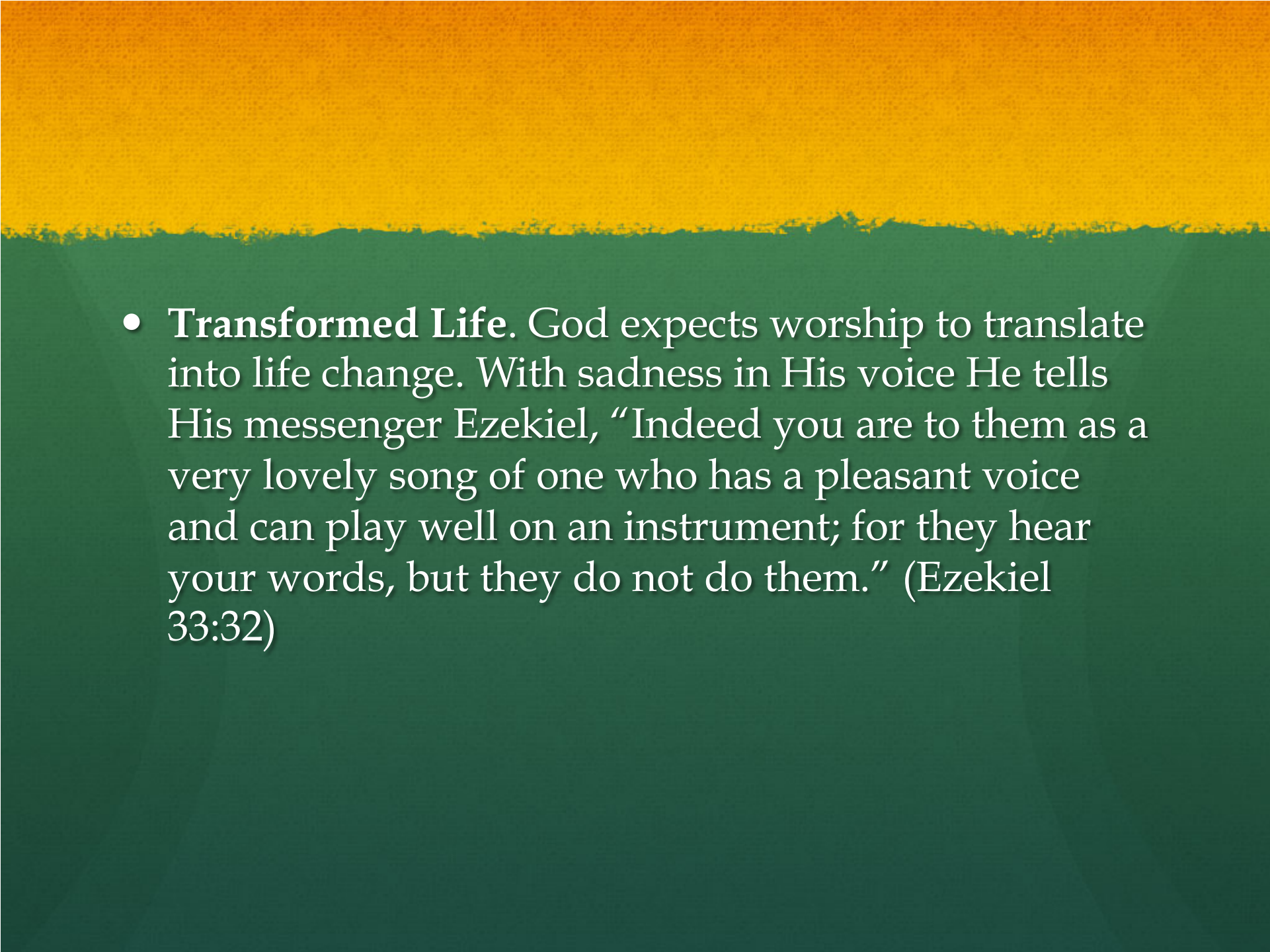
5 – Leading to Transformation

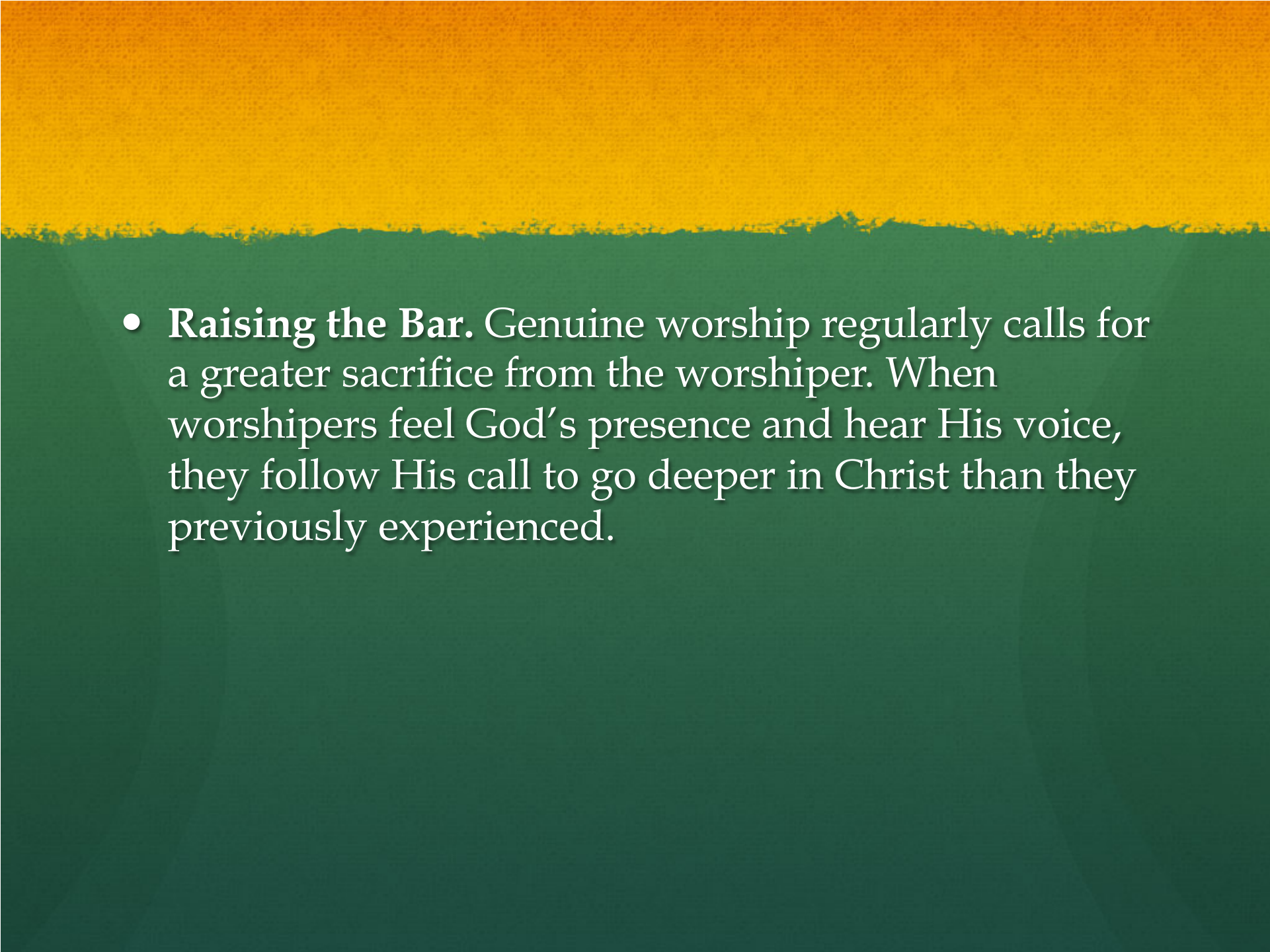


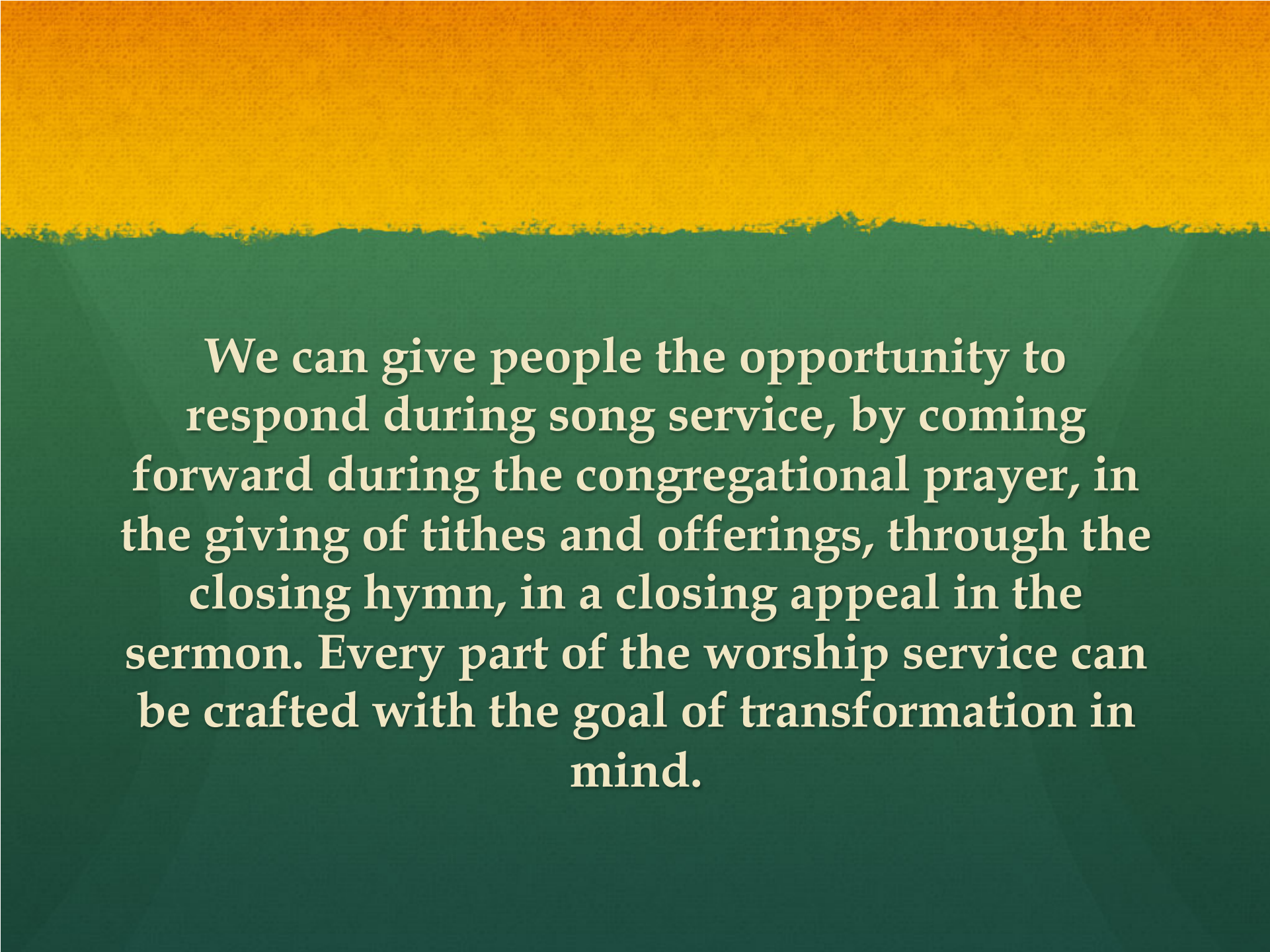
The activity of most churches is centered around the Sabbath morning service, what is called the “worship hour.” This does not guarantee, though, that people are really worshipping! Worship is responding from the heart to God for who he is and what He has done.

Each time we encounter God afresh, He changes us. True worship results in life change. Worship brings us closer to God, reveals our sinful nature and our needs for Him and motivates us to Him to come and change us. Worship never allows us to remain the same person because it impacts us in several ways:

- 
- **Heart-response.** Worship is not legitimate unless it comes from the heart. In worship we give God the worth that He is due. The Lord could see through the hypocrisy of His people in Ezekiel's time, denouncing their empty praise: "With their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain" (Ezekiel 33:31). God is more impressed with our hearts than our mouths.

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- **Transformed Life.** God expects worship to translate into life change. With sadness in His voice He tells His messenger Ezekiel, “Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them.” (Ezekiel 33:32)

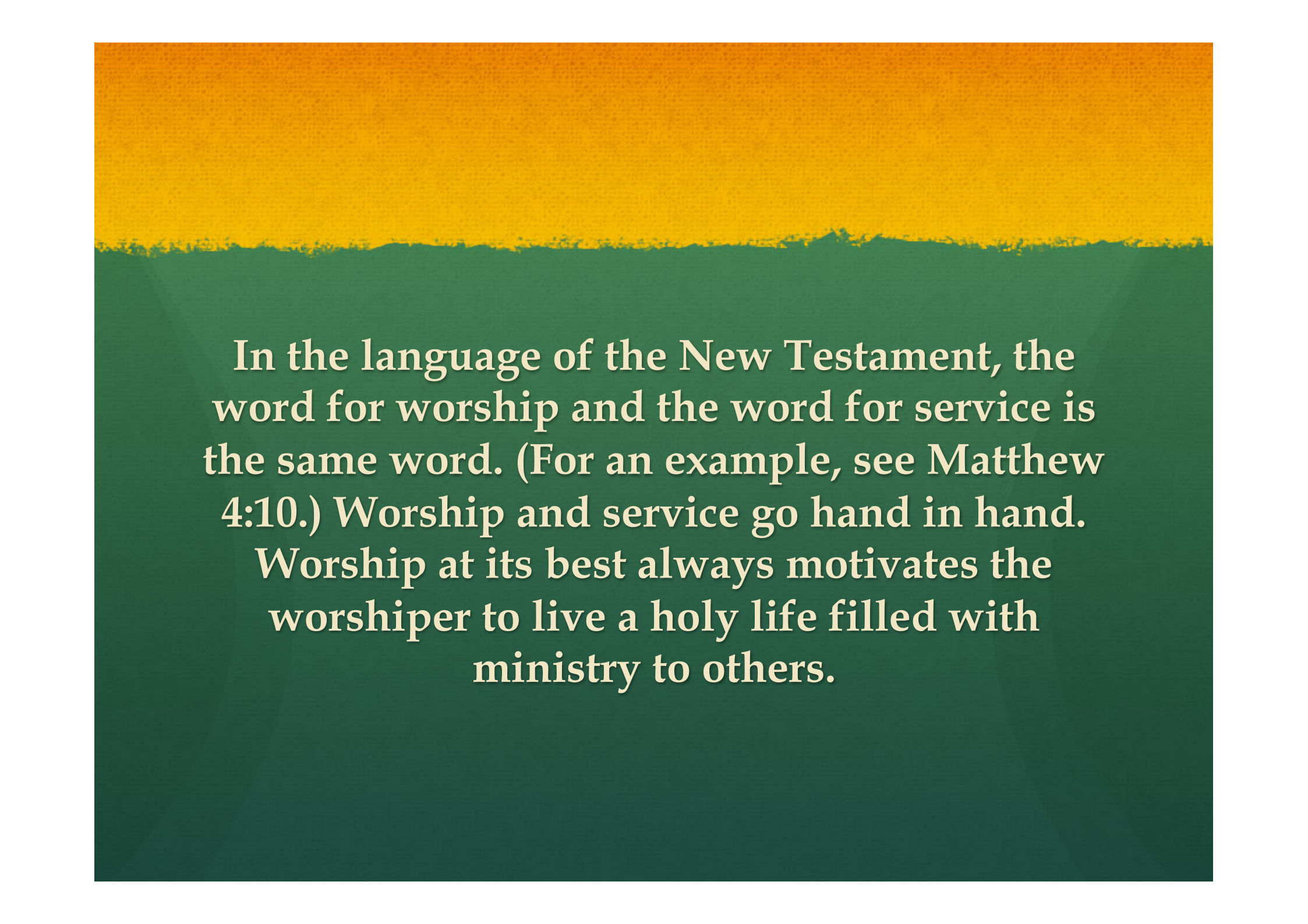
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- **Raising the Bar.** Genuine worship regularly calls for a greater sacrifice from the worshiper. When worshipers feel God's presence and hear His voice, they follow His call to go deeper in Christ than they previously experienced.



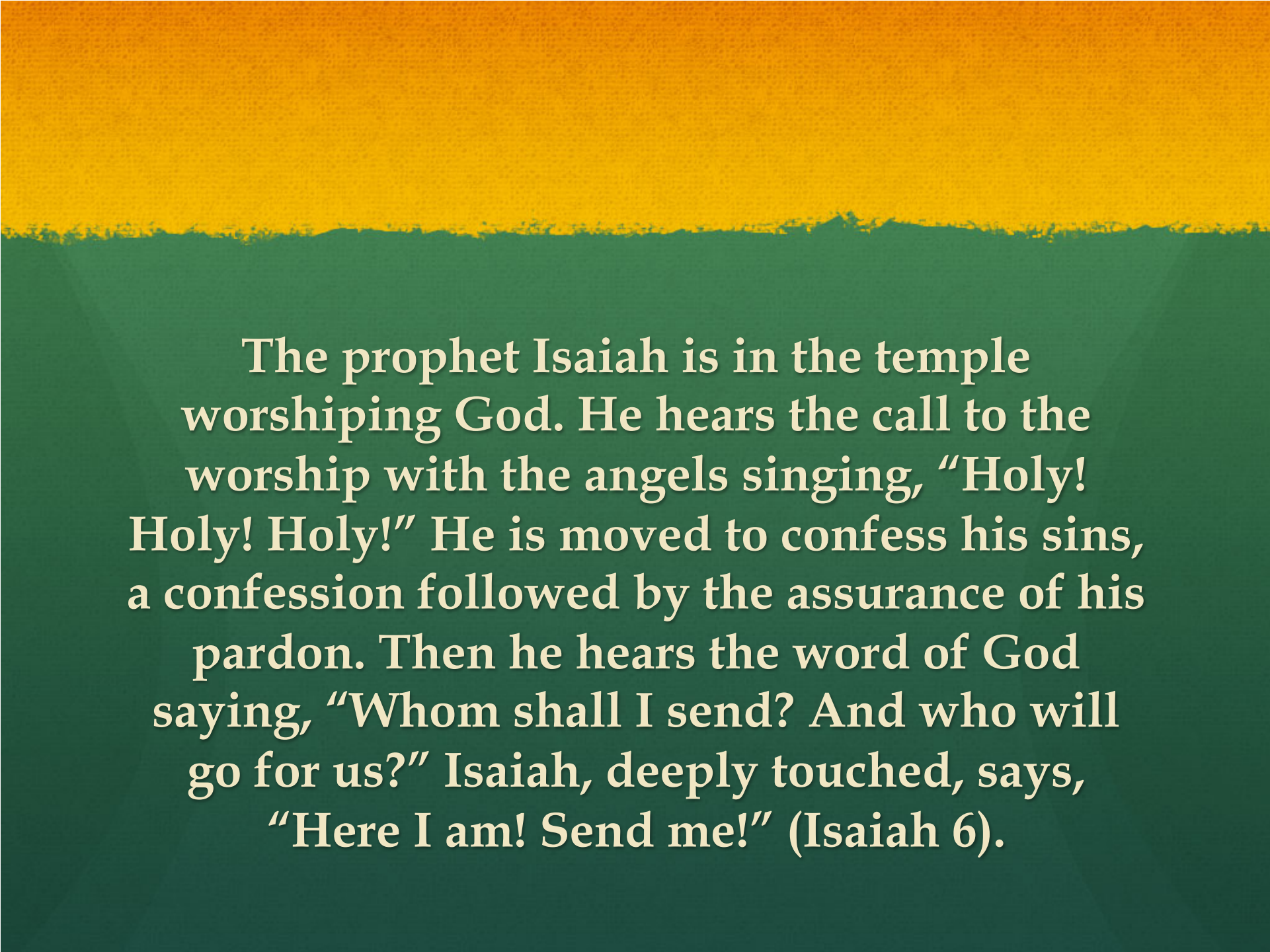
We can give people the opportunity to respond during song service, by coming forward during the congregational prayer, in the giving of tithes and offerings, through the closing hymn, in a closing appeal in the sermon. Every part of the worship service can be crafted with the goal of transformation in mind.



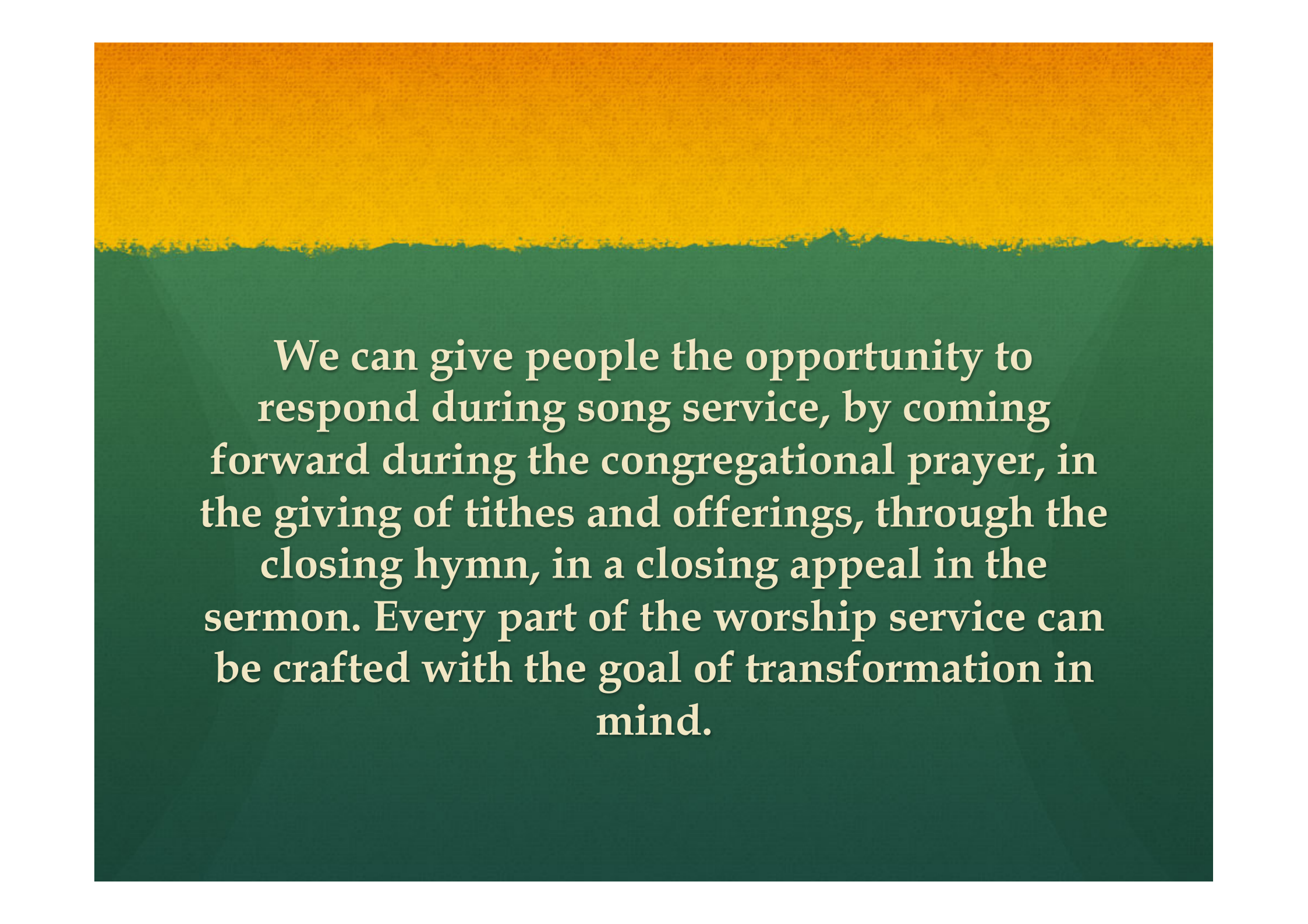
6 – Resulting in Service



In the language of the New Testament, the word for worship and the word for service is the same word. (For an example, see Matthew 4:10.) Worship and service go hand in hand. Worship at its best always motivates the worshiper to live a holy life filled with ministry to others.



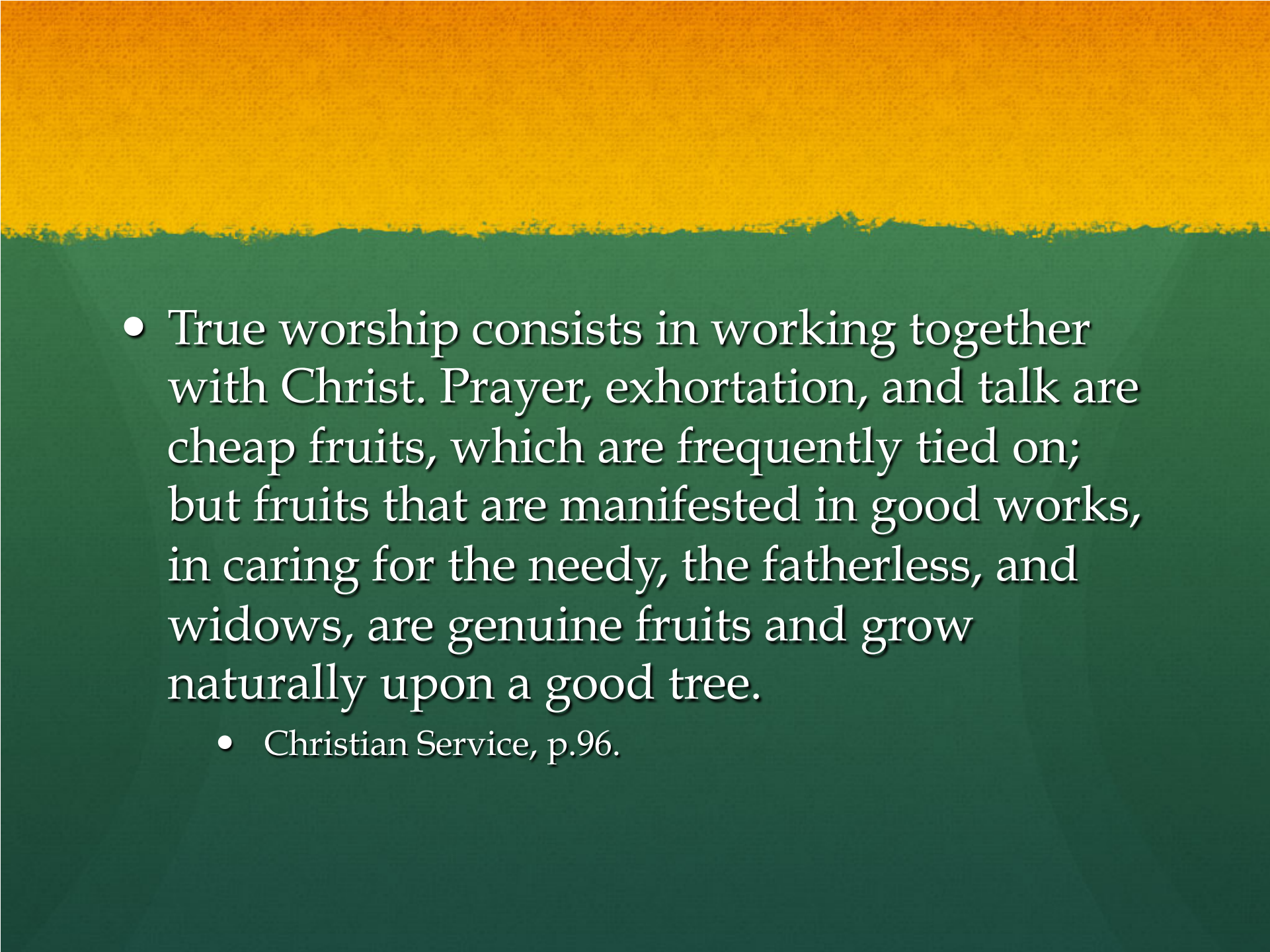
The prophet Isaiah is in the temple worshiping God. He hears the call to the worship with the angels singing, "Holy! Holy! Holy!" He is moved to confess his sins, a confession followed by the assurance of his pardon. Then he hears the word of God saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" Isaiah, deeply touched, says, "Here I am! Send me!" (Isaiah 6).



We can give people the opportunity to respond during song service, by coming forward during the congregational prayer, in the giving of tithes and offerings, through the closing hymn, in a closing appeal in the sermon. Every part of the worship service can be crafted with the goal of transformation in mind.



True worship will always result in service. Christians often make the mistake of limiting their worship to one hour each week, but God is no less worthy the rest of the time! One way to worship Him all week is through a life of service and ministry to others.

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- True worship consists in working together with Christ. Prayer, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on; but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits and grow naturally upon a good tree.
 - Christian Service, p.96.

Two Models of Worship

- God is the producer, the pastor is the actor and the congregation are audience.
- In true worship, God is the audience, the people are the actors, and the pastor is prompter.



7 – Done with Excellency

One Friday night I received a call from a member of the church where I had recently become the pastor. She had just two questions for me.

“What’s your sermon about for tomorrow?” she asked.

“I’m preaching on the book of Hosea.”

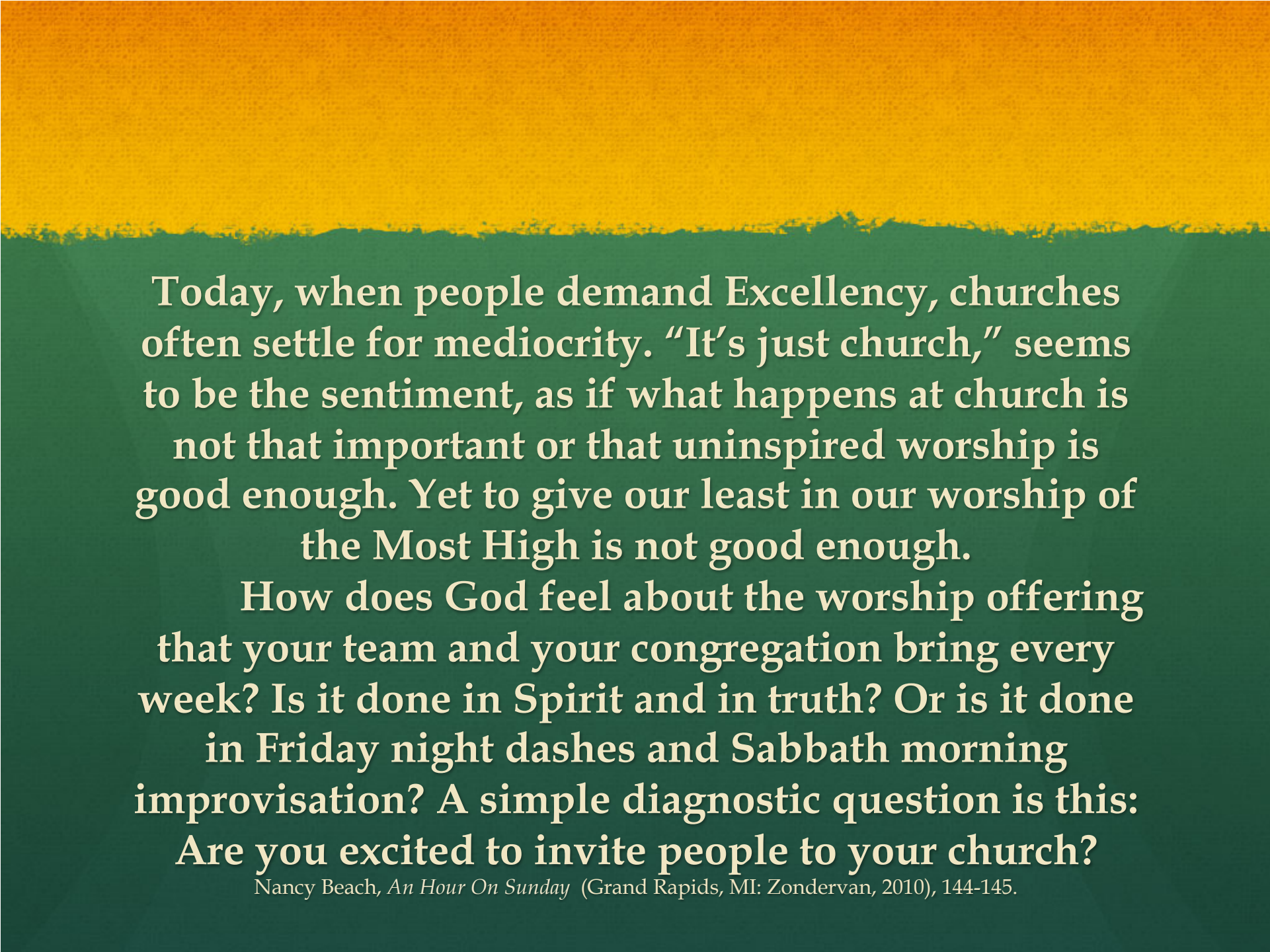
“And what is going to be the theme of your sermon?”

“I will be preaching on the love of God.”

Upon that, she thanked me and hung up.

Intrigued, I called her back and asked about her interest in my sermon. She told me that her Lutheran family was coming to visit for the weekend. She considered inviting them to church, but she wanted to make sure that the sermon wouldn’t embarrass her or turn off her visiting family.

And that’s really not too much to ask, is it?



Today, when people demand Excellency, churches often settle for mediocrity. “It’s just church,” seems to be the sentiment, as if what happens at church is not that important or that uninspired worship is good enough. Yet to give our least in our worship of the Most High is not good enough.

How does God feel about the worship offering that your team and your congregation bring every week? Is it done in Spirit and in truth? Or is it done in Friday night dashes and Sabbath morning improvisation? A simple diagnostic question is this: **Are you excited to invite people to your church?**

Nancy Beach, *An Hour On Sunday* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 144-145.

Another matter which should receive attention, both at our camp meetings and elsewhere, is that of a company of the best singers, whose voices can lead the congregation, and then let all who will, unite with them... They should devote some time to practice, that they may employ this talent to the glory of God.

- Voice in Speech and Song, p. 434.



- In the meetings held, let a number be chosen to take part in the song service. And let the singing be accompanied with musical instruments skillfully handled. We are not to oppose the use of instruments of music in our work. This part of the service is to be carefully conducted; for it is the praise of God in song. The singing is not always to be done by a few. As often as possible, let the entire congregation join.
 - G.W., pp. 357, 358

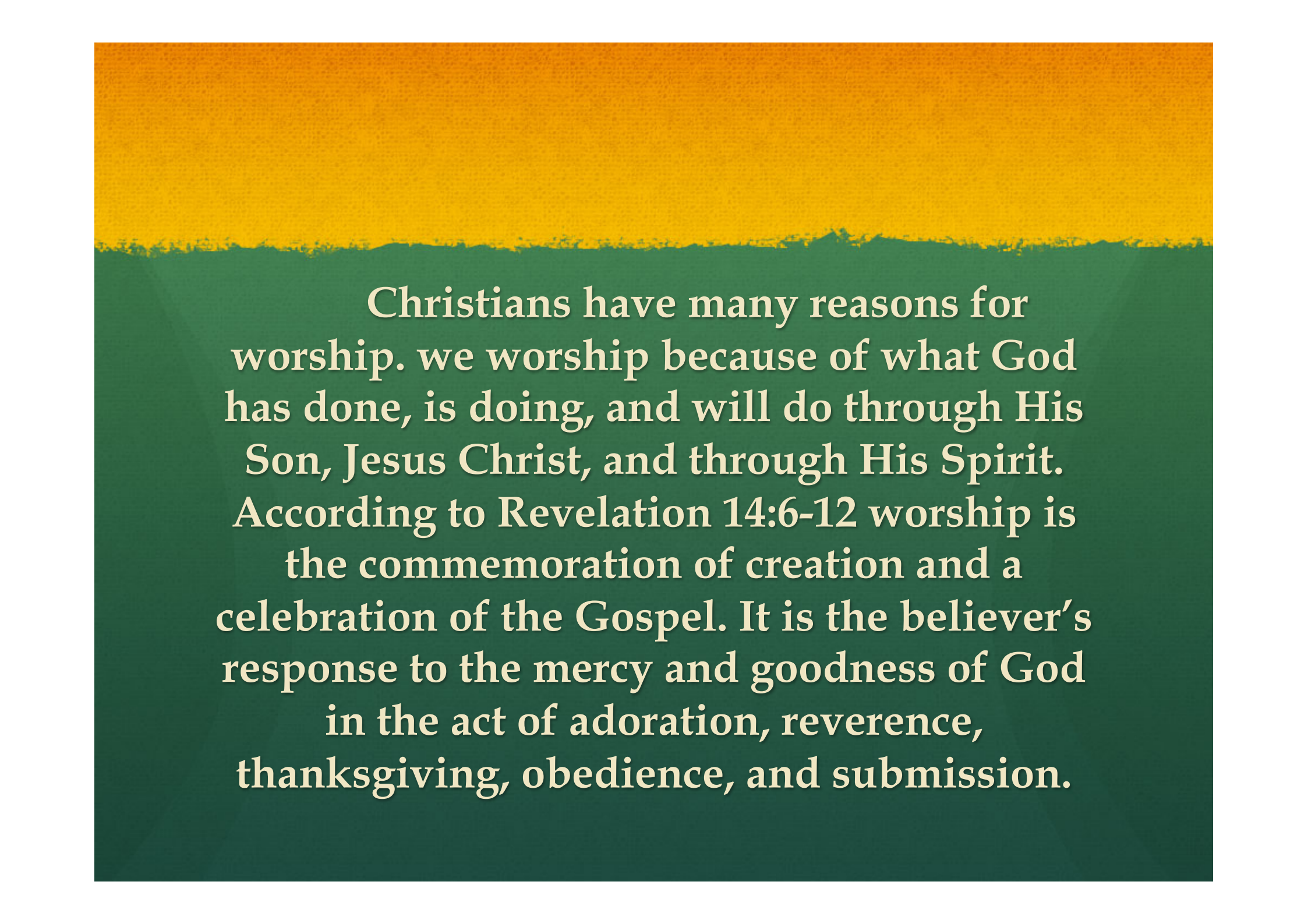


Here are some ideas that will help improve the excellence of your worship services:

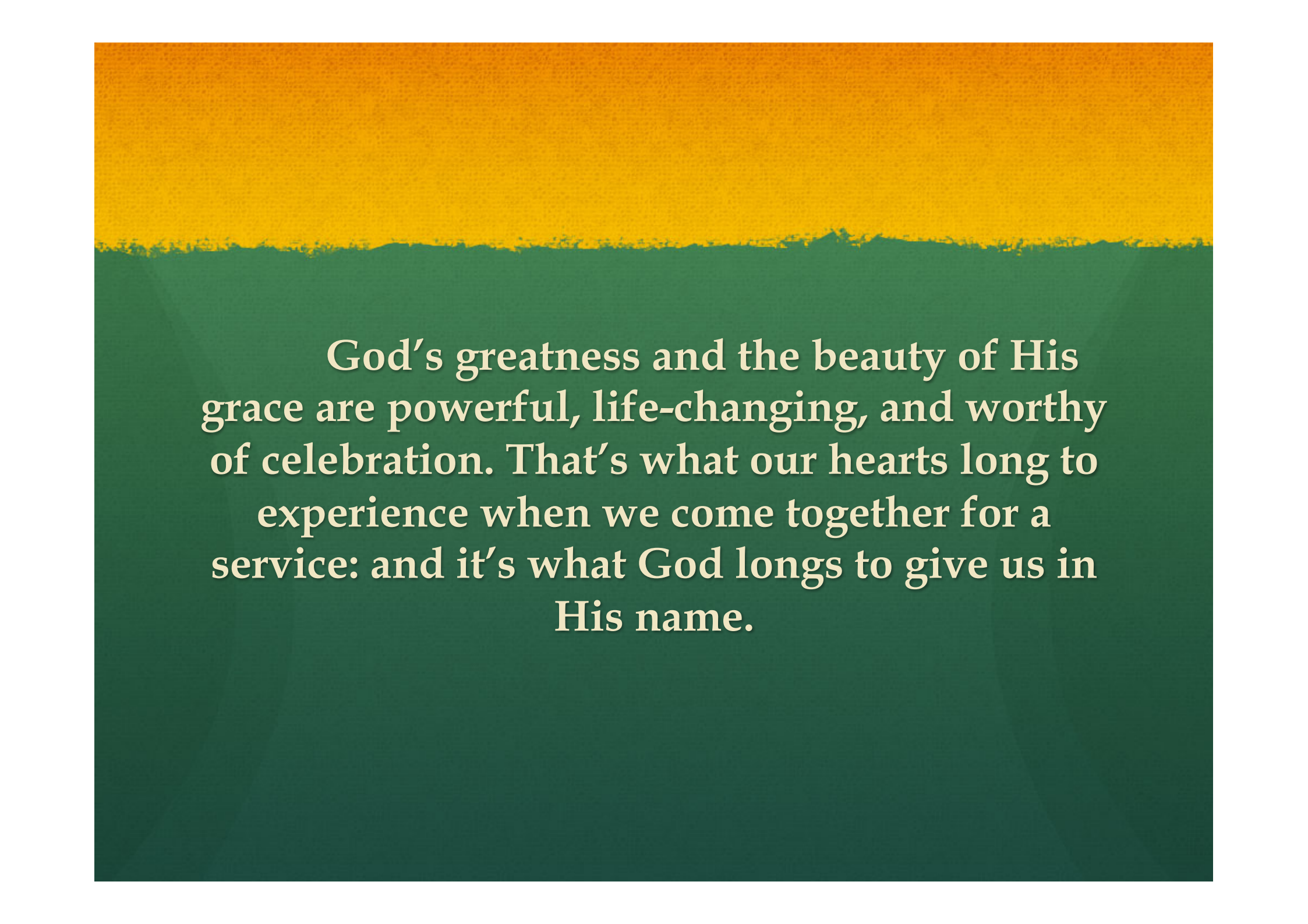
- Recruit worship teams of people who are fully engaged with God.
- Begin a talent development process.
- Plan at least a month in advance.
- Have one theme running through the whole service.
- Rehearse your services.

Here are some ideas that will help improve the excellence of your worship services:

- Communicate using images, props, and audio elements.
- Invest the time needed to prepare inspiring sermons
- Aim for the head and heart.
- Eliminate dead time.
- Freshen the look of the service: bright décor, bright lighting, adequate sound.



Christians have many reasons for worship. we worship because of what God has done, is doing, and will do through His Son, Jesus Christ, and through His Spirit. According to Revelation 14:6-12 worship is the commemoration of creation and a celebration of the Gospel. It is the believer's response to the mercy and goodness of God in the act of adoration, reverence, thanksgiving, obedience, and submission.

The background of the slide is a landscape. The top half is a bright, textured orange and yellow sky, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The bottom half is a dark green field, possibly a grassy area or a forest floor, with a dark silhouette of a treeline or hills in the distance. The text is centered in the green field.

God's greatness and the beauty of His grace are powerful, life-changing, and worthy of celebration. That's what our hearts long to experience when we come together for a service: and it's what God longs to give us in His name.



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