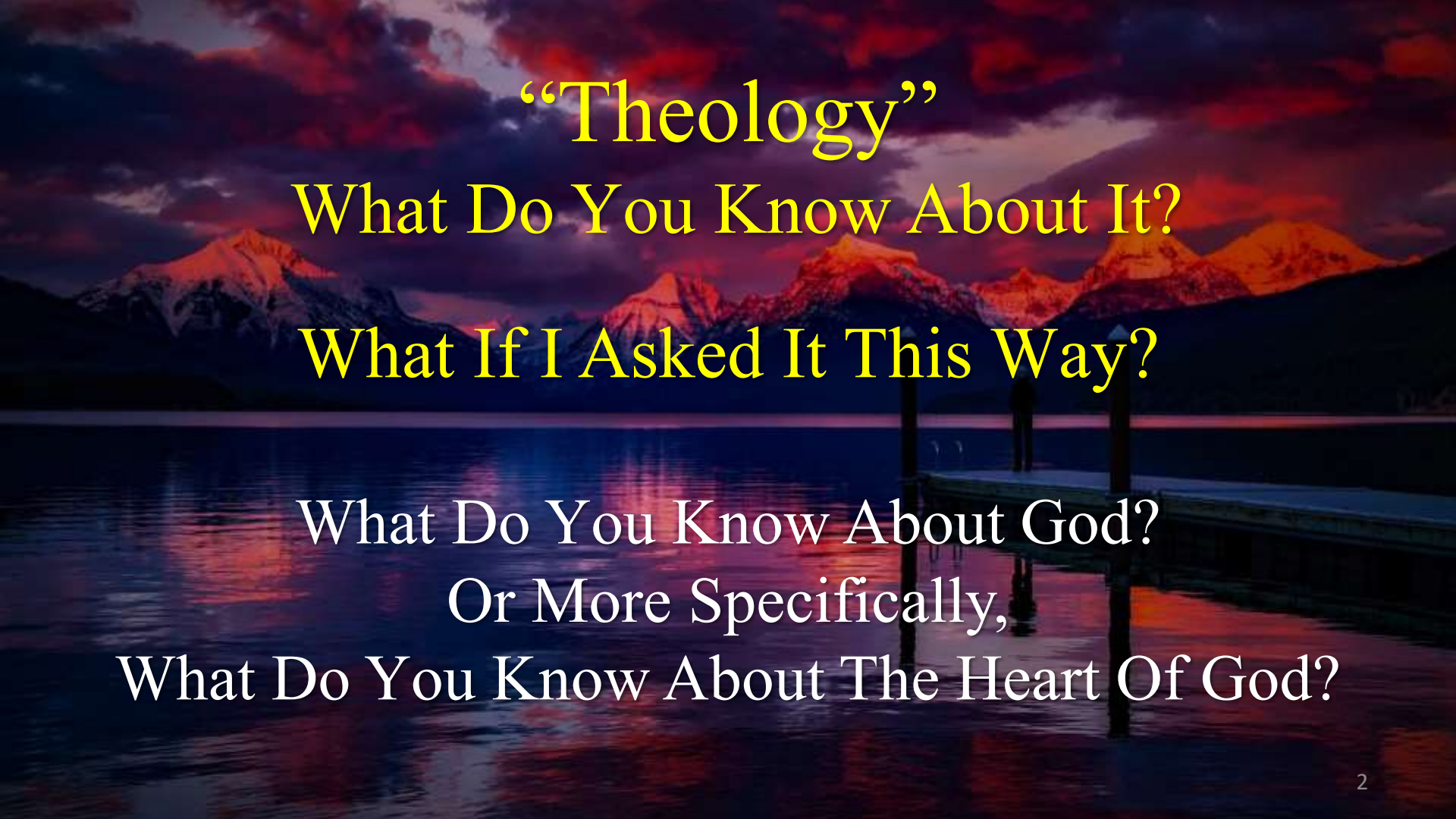




Seeking the Heart of God

“The God Who Loves Us!”



“Theology”
What Do You Know About It?
What If I Asked It This Way?

What Do You Know About God?
Or More Specifically,
What Do You Know About The Heart Of God?

Being A Disciple Is Being An Imitator Of God.

- *"Be imitators of God as dear children."* Eph. 5:1.
- Discipleship is living in the image of God in whatever life situation we find ourselves.
- Our submission to God as followers depends on our view of him.
- What do you know about God?



Howard Butt Suggests:

“God's view of himself is Jesus Christ.”
"Jesus" is the human name of God, with
name, rank, and serial number; God with a
Galilean accent.”

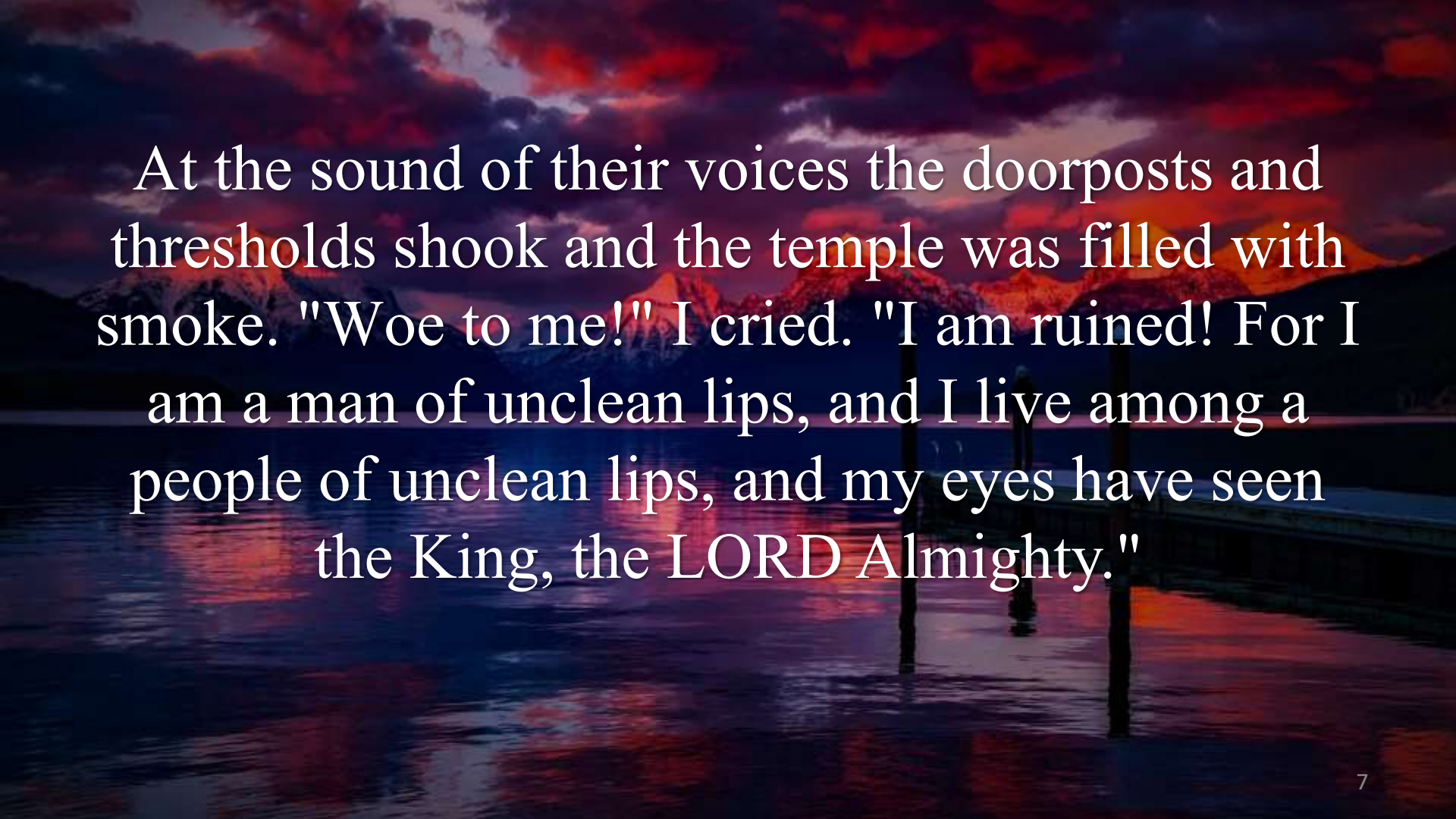
Jesus not only lived for God, He lived as God.

God Has a History

- That history is revealed in scripture, the biblical story, and that story comes to climax in the story of Jesus of Nazareth.
- That story that must shape our lives as the covenant people of God and as God's disciples.
- God reveals himself in many ways; some of them are frightening.

Isaiah 6:1-5

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."



At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."



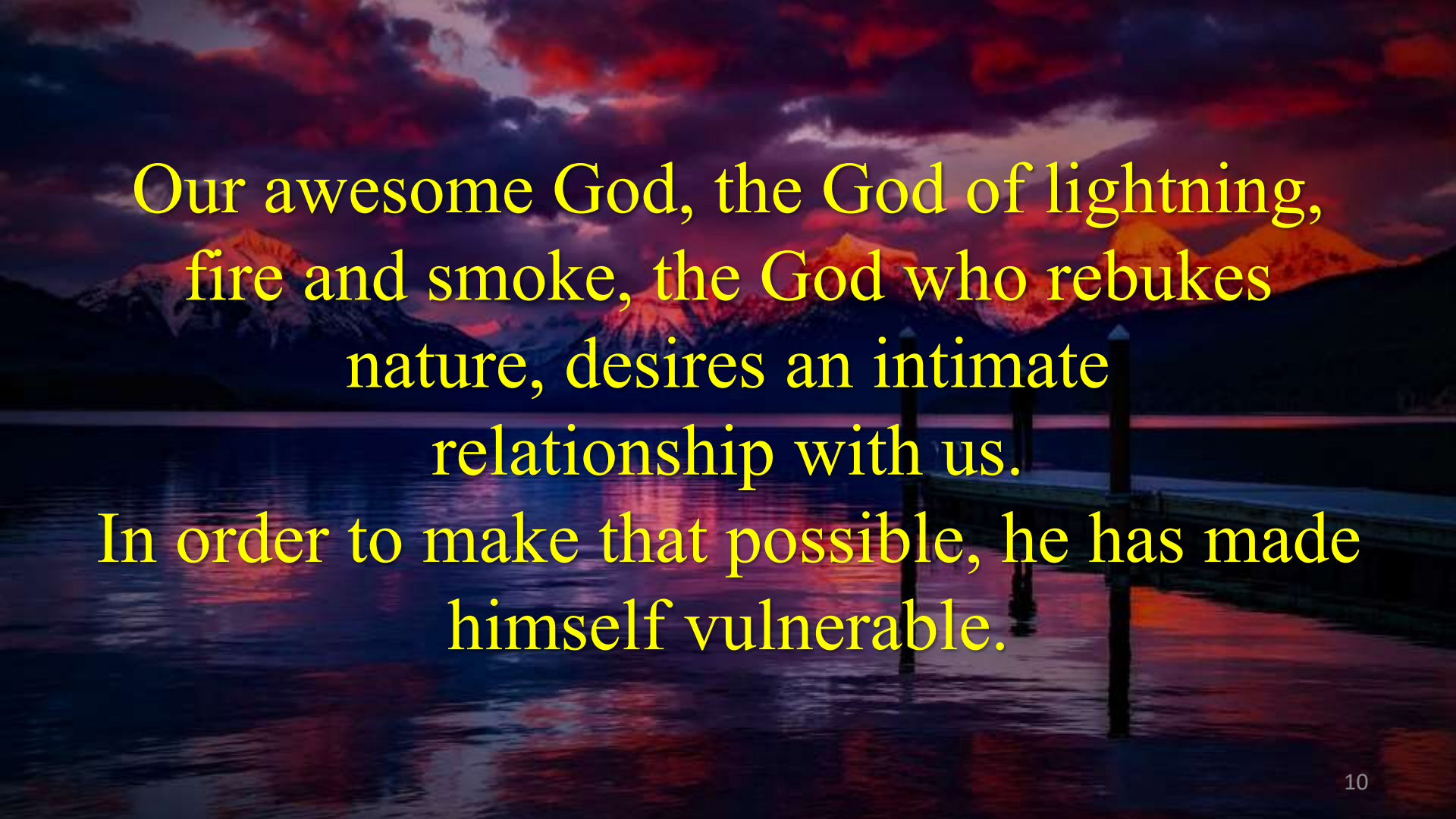
When Jesus Rebuked The Winds And Waves, The Disciples Responded...

"What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

~ Matthew 8:27

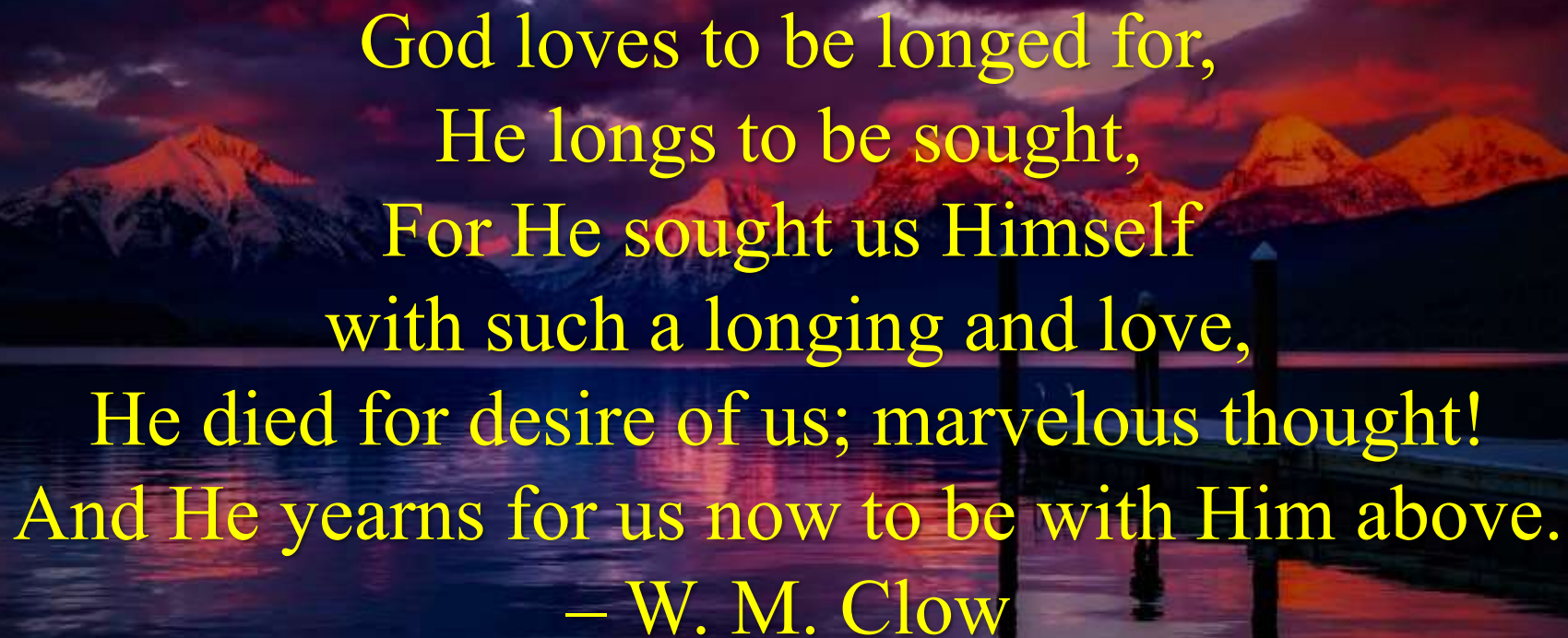
Then After The Resurrection...

- As Thomas saw the residual effects of a Roman crucifixion...
 - The welts on his face from the lashes of the whip
 - The scabs on his forehead from a crown of thorns
 - The prints left by the nails in his hands
 - The scar where a spear had pierced his side
 - He didn't say, " *Well, you're alive after all.* "
 - He simply said, " *My Lord and my God!* "



Our awesome God, the God of lightning,
fire and smoke, the God who rebukes
nature, desires an intimate
relationship with us.

In order to make that possible, he has made
himself vulnerable.



God loves to be longed for,
He longs to be sought,
For He sought us Himself
with such a longing and love,
He died for desire of us; marvelous thought!
And He yearns for us now to be with Him above.
— W. M. Clow

For Love, God Sent Jesus On A Rescue Mission.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

- Jesus was Emanuel, God with us, and died for us.



- BREAKING NEWS -

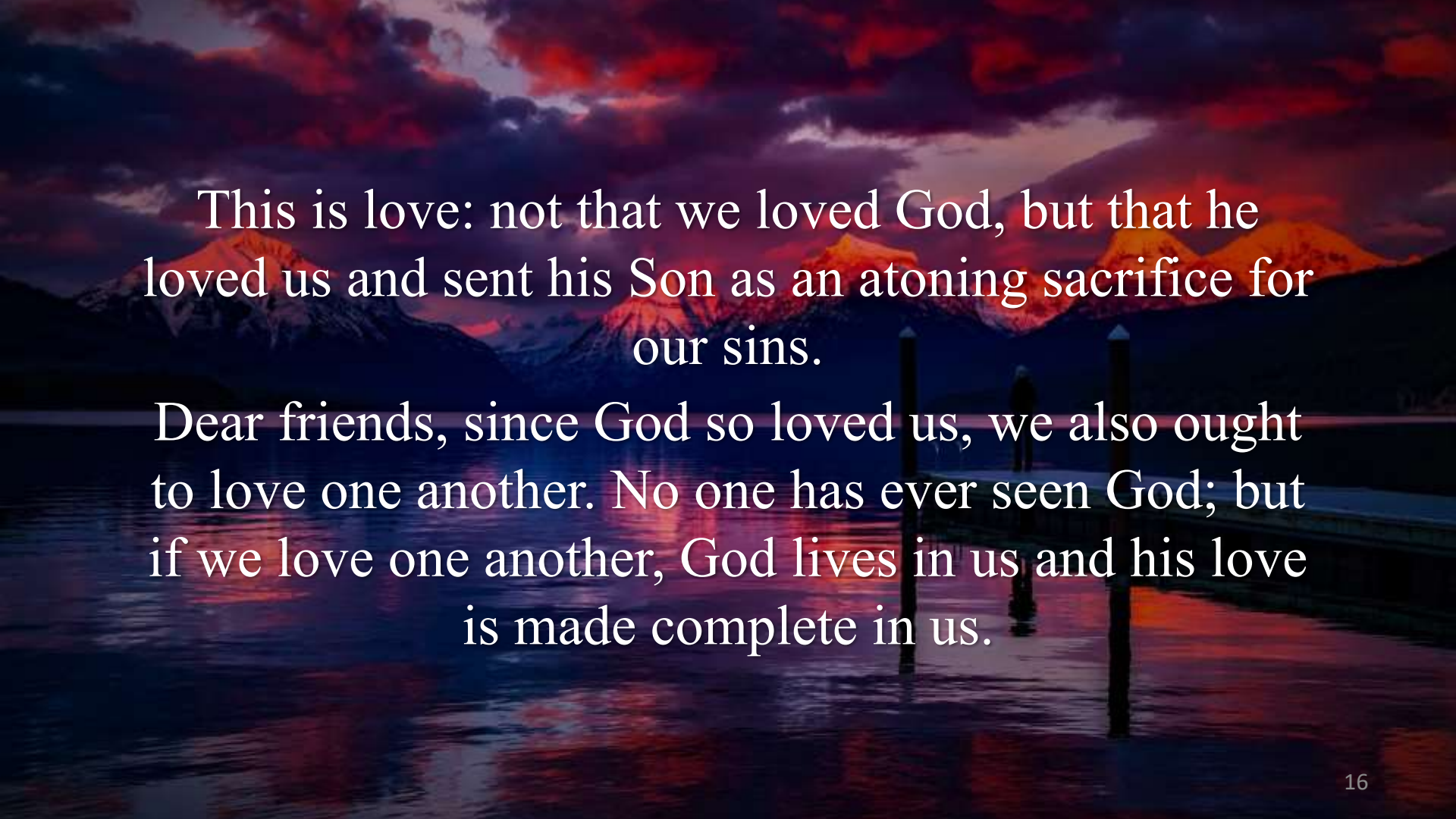
**CREATOR OF THE
UNIVERSE GIVES
HIMSELF TO
REDEEM A PLANET
CALLED EARTH!**

Why Would He Bother?

- If we are honest we cannot help but ask that question.
- Look at the evil, the murder, the terrorism, the hate, the immorality, the greed, the callousness, the 1001 ways we find to hurt each other.
- Still, we can't help but ask, "Why?" would he do this?
- My only answer, "It has more to do with who God is than with who we are."
- God is Love. Love is not a choice for God; Love is who He is. He cannot be other than who he is.

1 John 4:7-12

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

The background image is a scenic landscape at sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds that are illuminated from below by a low sun, creating a vibrant orange and red glow. In the distance, a range of mountains is visible, their peaks also catching the low light. In the foreground, a calm body of water reflects the colors of the sky and the silhouettes of the mountains. A wooden pier or dock extends from the right side into the water, with a few vertical posts visible. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

"Why Did My Savior Come To Earth?" by John G. Dailey

Why did my Savior come to earth
And to the humble go?

Why did He choose a lowly birth?
Because He loved me so!

Refrain:

He loved me so, He loved me so;
He gave His precious life for me, for me,
Because He loved me so!

The background image is a scenic landscape. In the foreground, a wooden pier extends from the right side into a calm body of water. A small figure of a person stands on the pier, looking out over the water. The water reflects the colors of the sky and the mountains. In the background, a range of mountains is visible, with the peaks covered in snow and illuminated by the warm, golden light of the setting or rising sun. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds that are tinged with orange and red from the low sun. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Why Did He Bother?
Because He Loves Us.

And,
His Love Endures Forever

From Creation To Redemption, His Love Endures Forever.

Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!

His faithful love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods.

His faithful love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords.

His faithful love endures forever.

Give thanks to him who alone does mighty miracles.

His faithful love endures forever.



Give thanks to him who made the heavens so skillfully.

His faithful love endures forever.

Give thanks to him who placed the earth among the waters.

His faithful love endures forever.

Give thanks to him who made the heavenly lights.

His faithful love endures forever.

The sun to rule the day,

His faithful love endures forever.

And the moon and stars to rule the night.

His faithful love endures forever.



He remembered us in our weakness.

His faithful love endures forever.

He saved us from our enemies.

His faithful love endures forever.

He gives food to every living thing.

His faithful love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of heaven.

His faithful love endures forever.

Honesty Says We Must Ask The Hard Questions.

- If God so loves us, how do we explain some of the awful realities of our world?
- Natural disasters, human suffering, and evil all want to deny the loving nature of God.
- Frozen wastelands, harsh deserts, killer hurricanes and tornadoes, earthquakes, parasites, predatory animals, and murders, maiming, cancer, COVID, children with leukemia, birth deformities, and 1000s more. They all tell a story and it is not a love story.

Honesty Also Says That Evil Is Not The Whole Story.

- For every harshness to explain,
there is a beauty to enjoy.
- For every illness to endure,
there is health to celebrate.
- For every unconscienceable evil,
there is breath-taking goodness.
- For every callous indifference,
there is extraordinary love and sacrifice.

The background image is a scenic landscape at dusk or dawn. In the foreground, a wooden pier with several vertical posts extends from the right side into a calm body of water. The water's surface is dark but reflects the vibrant colors of the sky. In the middle ground, a range of mountains is visible, with their peaks partially covered in snow and also reflecting the sky's colors. The sky itself is filled with large, dark clouds that are illuminated from below by the setting or rising sun, creating a palette of deep reds, oranges, and purples. The overall mood is serene yet powerful.

The History Of The World Is God's Story,
His Drama, And The Story Is Not
Complete.

The Story Asks Us To...

- Trust God until the drama gets to its conclusion.
- Trust that the one who created us in love, is working things out for our eternal good and blessing.
- Own our responsibility for much of the pain and all of the evil that is in the world.
- Remember that we rebelled against a loving God and disaster fell all over us.
- Recall that God did not wash his hands of us; he came for us in the person of Jesus. Immanuel, God with us.

Some Questions Will A Remain A Mystery

- Martin Dalby has said,
"Bad religion answers the unanswerable; good religion cherishes the mystery."
- Joseph Parker confessed,
"There is something that baffled me more than why Jesus chose Judas; "Why did he choose me?"
- There is no answer, but that He loves us!

John 1:1-5, 14 (NLT2)

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.

The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it...

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

The background image is a scenic landscape at dusk or dawn. A calm lake in the foreground reflects the vibrant colors of the sky. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, some of which are illuminated from below by a low sun, creating a dramatic play of light and shadow. The colors in the sky range from deep purples and blues to bright oranges and reds. In the distance, a range of mountains is visible, with some peaks covered in snow and also reflecting the warm light from the sun. On the right side of the image, a wooden pier or dock extends into the water. A single person is standing on the pier, looking out towards the mountains. The overall mood is serene yet powerful, evoking a sense of awe and contemplation.

Next Week We Begin A Series Of
Sermons That Will Take Us Deep
Into The Heart
Of Our Loving God.