

Sermon Series

ACTS:

The Gospel of the Holy Spirit



The Holy Spirit had entered into them the same way it had entered into Mary, the mother of Jesus, and for the same reason. It was time for God to be born again—not in one body this time but in a body of believers who would receive the breath of life from their Lord and pass it on, using their own bodies to distribute the gift.

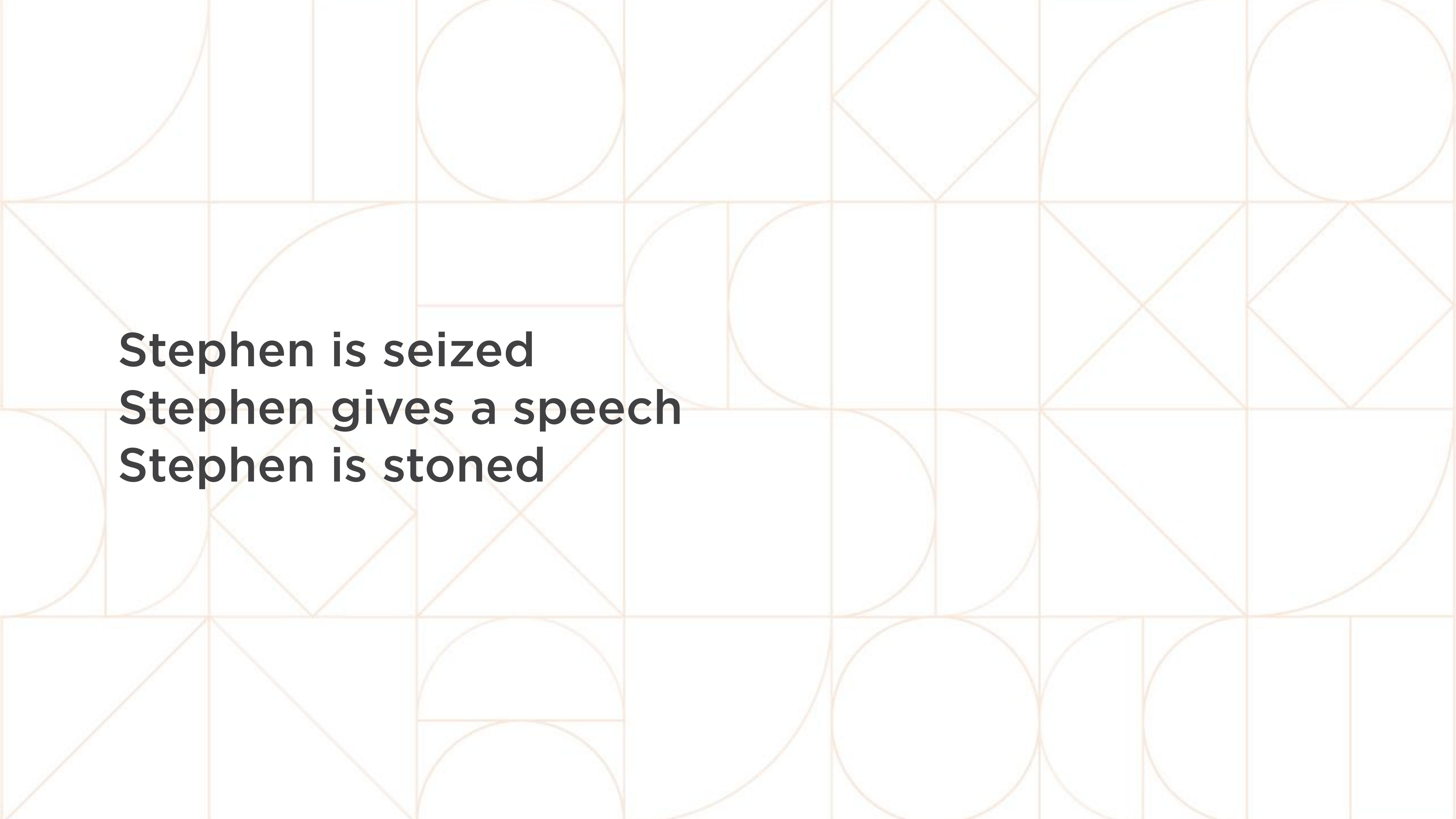
The book of Acts is the story of their adventures, which is why I like to think of it as the gospel of the Holy Spirit. In the first four books of the New Testament, we learn the good news of what God did through Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts, we learn the good news of what God did through the Holy Spirit, by performing artificial resuscitation on a room full of well-intentioned bumblerers and turning them into a force that changed the history of the world.

Barbara Brown Taylor

Acts 6:8-7:60

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**Stephen is seized
Stephen gives a speech
Stephen is stoned**

“The Trial, Testimony and Termination of Stephen”

Acts 5:12-16

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What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

Kelly Clarkson

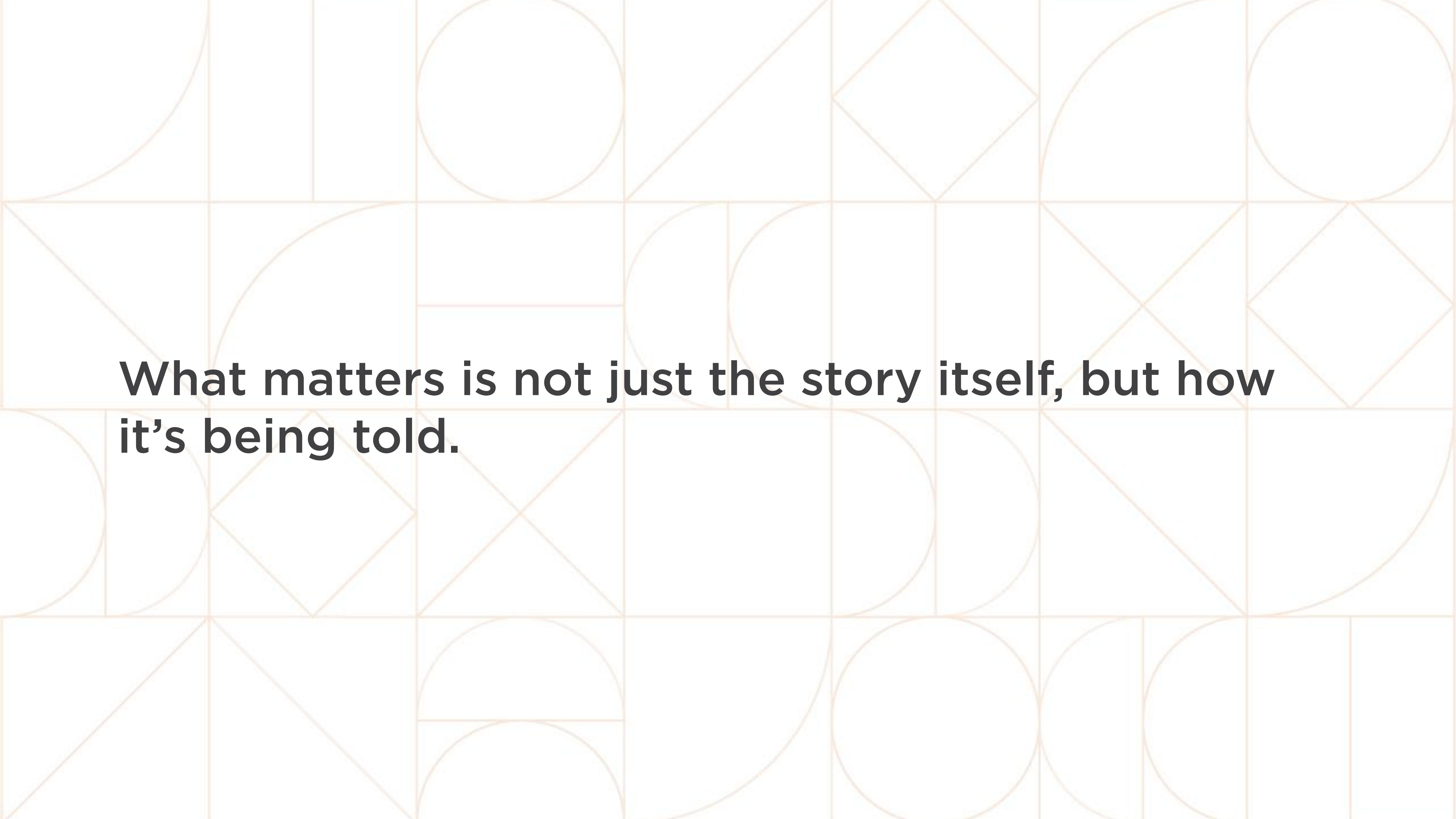
Stephen:

- “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (6:3)
- “full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (6:5)
- “full of God’s grace and power” (6:8)

Acts 6:8-7:1

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What matters is not just the story itself, but how it's being told.

Acts 7:2-3

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The story of the people of Israel...does not come as a separate, free-standing entity, but as a way of saying: this is how the creator God is acting to deal with the problem of human sin, social catastrophe, and cosmic disaster as set out in Genesis 3-11. The whole history of the people of Israel is to be understood under this rubric. The call of Abraham to be different, to leave his ancestral home and go to a new land (Acts 7:2-4), is a way of marking him out, of giving him a new vocation. Stephen isn't denying that. He's insisting on it.

N.T. Wright

Acts 7:9-13

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Acts 7:20-22

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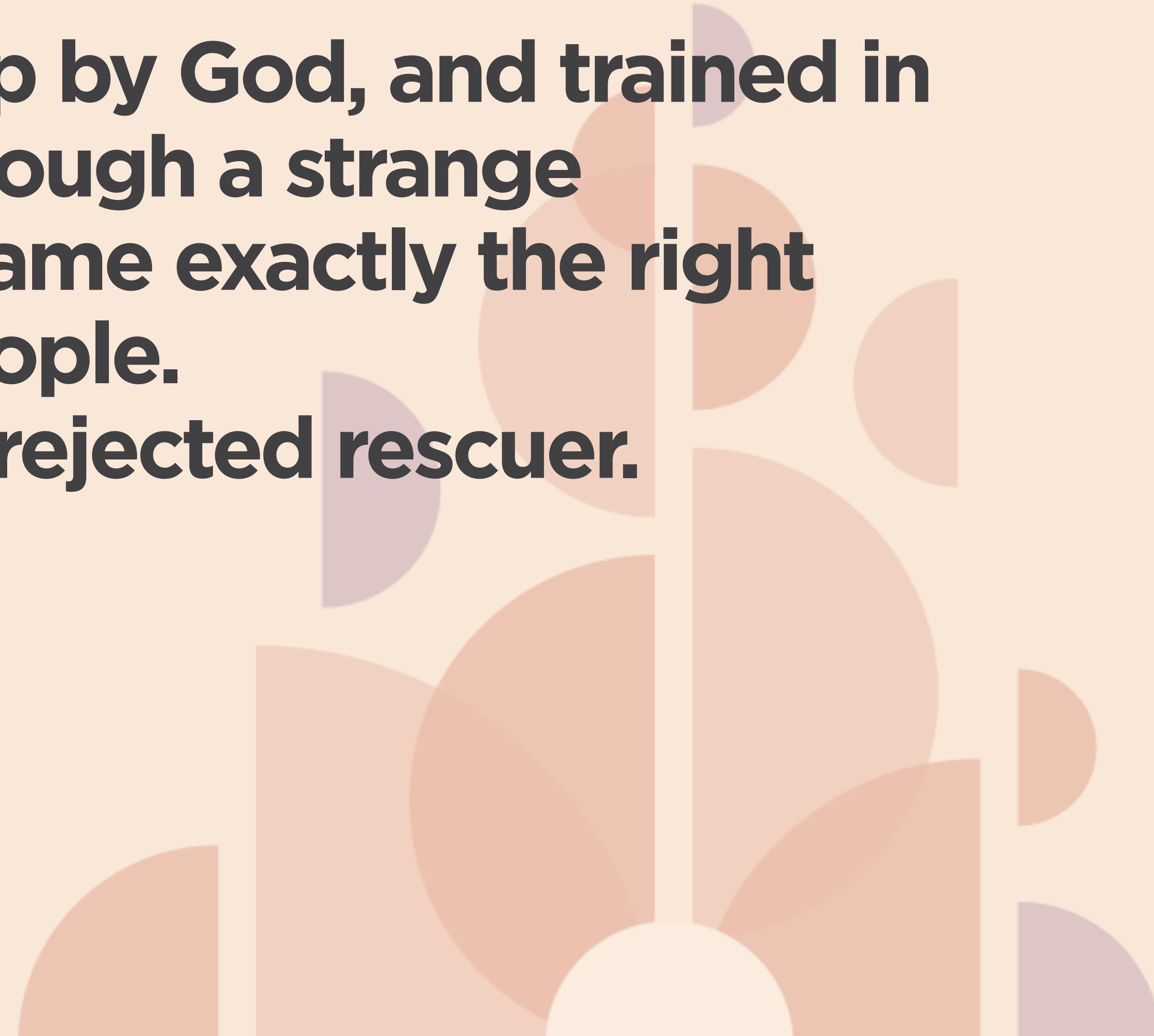


1. Moses was raised up by God, and trained in such a way that, through a strange providence, he became exactly the right leader for God's people.

Acts 7:23-29

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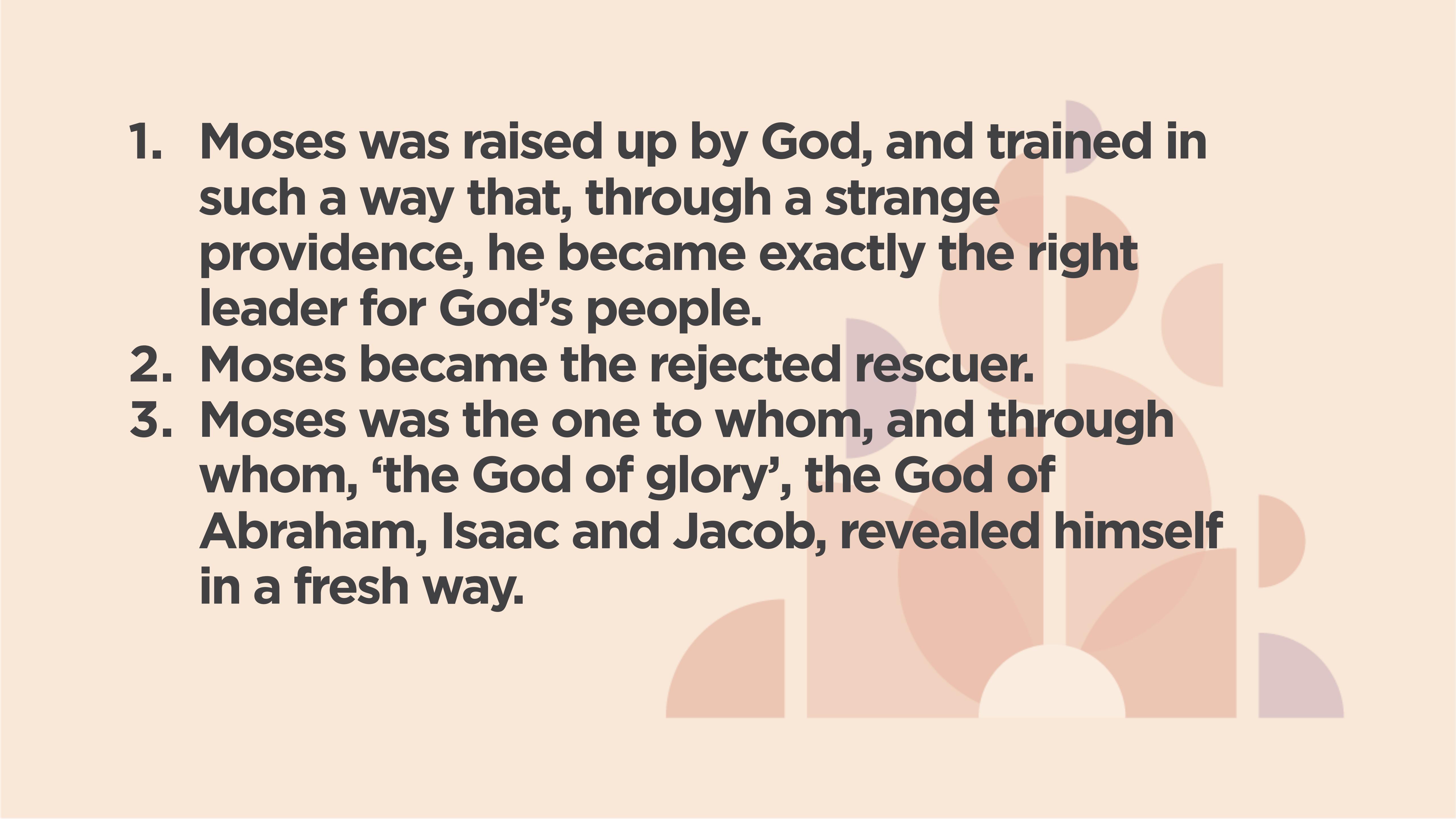


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- 1. Moses was raised up by God, and trained in such a way that, through a strange providence, he became exactly the right leader for God's people.**
 - 2. Moses became the rejected rescuer.**

Acts 7:30-34

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- 1. Moses was raised up by God, and trained in such a way that, through a strange providence, he became exactly the right leader for God's people.**
 - 2. Moses became the rejected rescuer.**
 - 3. Moses was the one to whom, and through whom, 'the God of glory', the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, revealed himself in a fresh way.**

Part of the point here, as always in early Christian explanation before fellow Jews, is that the God they have come to know in and through Jesus is not a different God from the one made known to their ancestors, but precisely the same one doing precisely the same thing, that is, rescuing his people in fulfilment of his ancient promises.

N.T. Wright

Acts 7:35-50

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But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly *themselves* before him in their worship.

Jesus (in John 4:22-24 - MSG)

There are no temples or shrines among us save those of nature. Being children of nature, we are intensely poetical. We would deem it sacrilege to build a house for the One who may be met face to face in the mysterious, shadowy aisles of the primeval forest, or on the sunlit bosom of virgin prairies, upon dizzy spires and pinnacles of naked rock, and in the vast jeweled vault of the night sky!

A God who is enrobed in filmy veils of cloud,
there on the rim of the visible world where our
Great-Grandfather Sun kindles his evening camp-
fire; who rides upon the rigorous wind of the
north, or breathes forth spirit upon fragrant
southern airs, whose war canoe is launched upon
majestic rivers and island seas—such a God
needs no lesser cathedral.

Kent Nerburn

Acts 7:54-60

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My student killed a motorcyclist in an accident.

It destroyed him. He dropped out of school. Severe depression. Want to know what pulled him out of it?

**The parents of the man he killed.
They asked him to meet for dinner.**

He goes now once a year.

Forgiveness is healing.

Heather Thompson Day

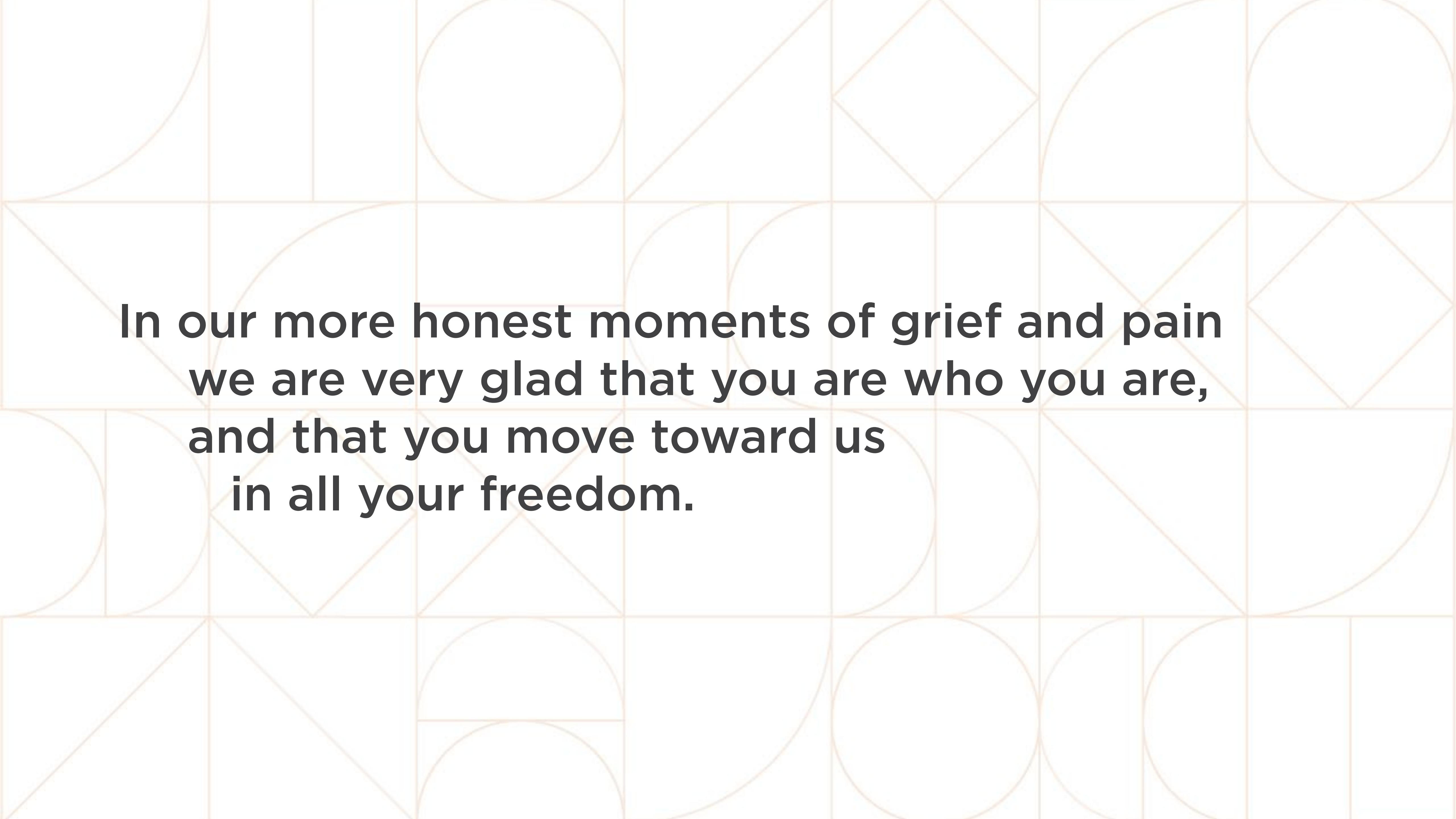
Prayer: The God we Would Rather Have

Walter Brueggemann



We are your people and mostly we don't mind,
except that you do not fit any of our
categories.

We keep pushing
and pulling
and twisting
and turning,
trying to make you fit the God we would
rather have,
and every time we distort you that way
we end up with an idol more congenial
to us.



**In our more honest moments of grief and pain
we are very glad that you are who you are,
and that you move toward us
in all your freedom.**

**So be your faithful self
and by your very engagement in the suffering
of the world,
blow the doors off our boxes and keep
remaking us.**

**We pray in the name of Jesus,
the Uncontainable One,
who is the sign of your suffering love.
AMEN.**