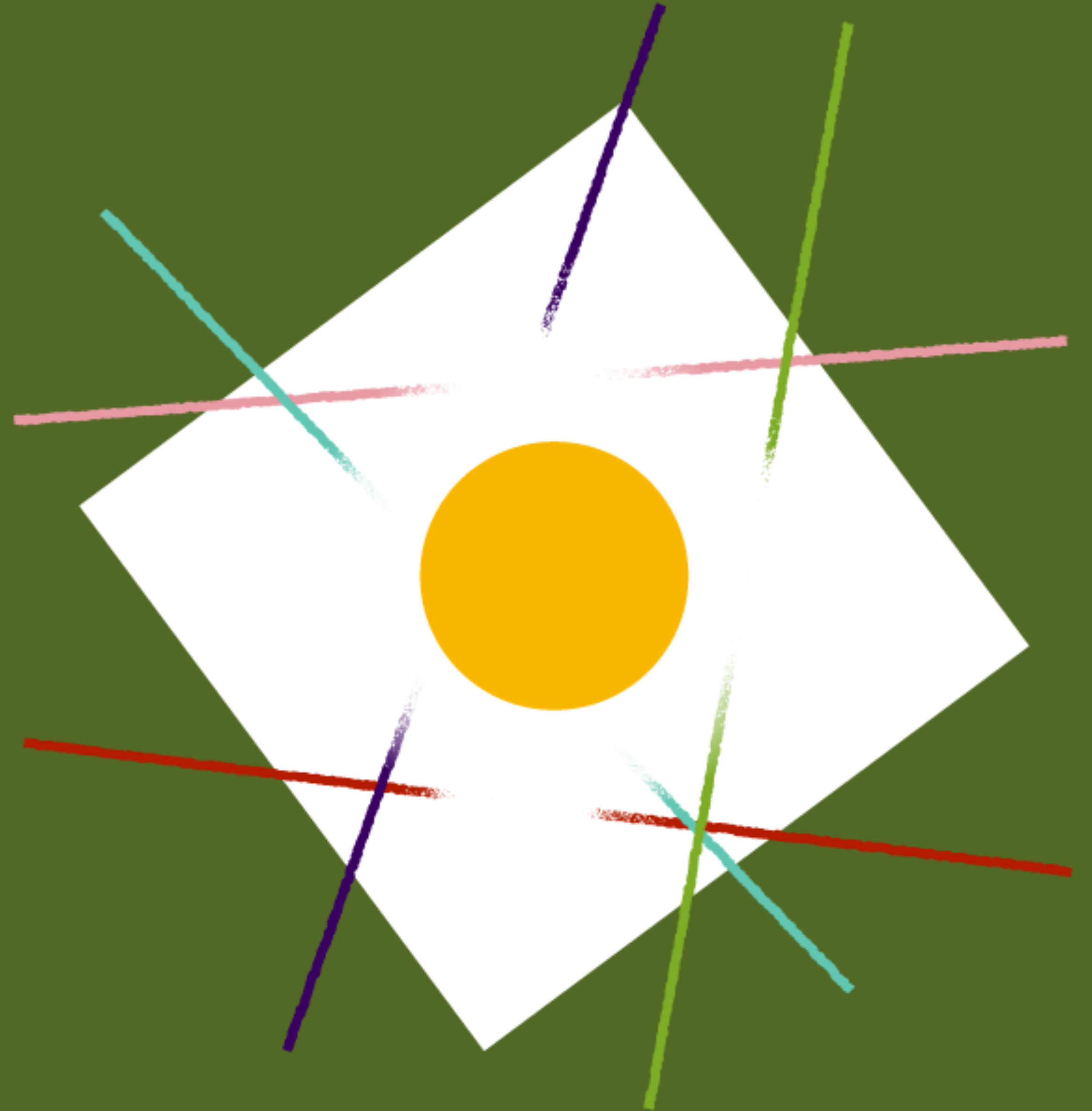


Sermon Series

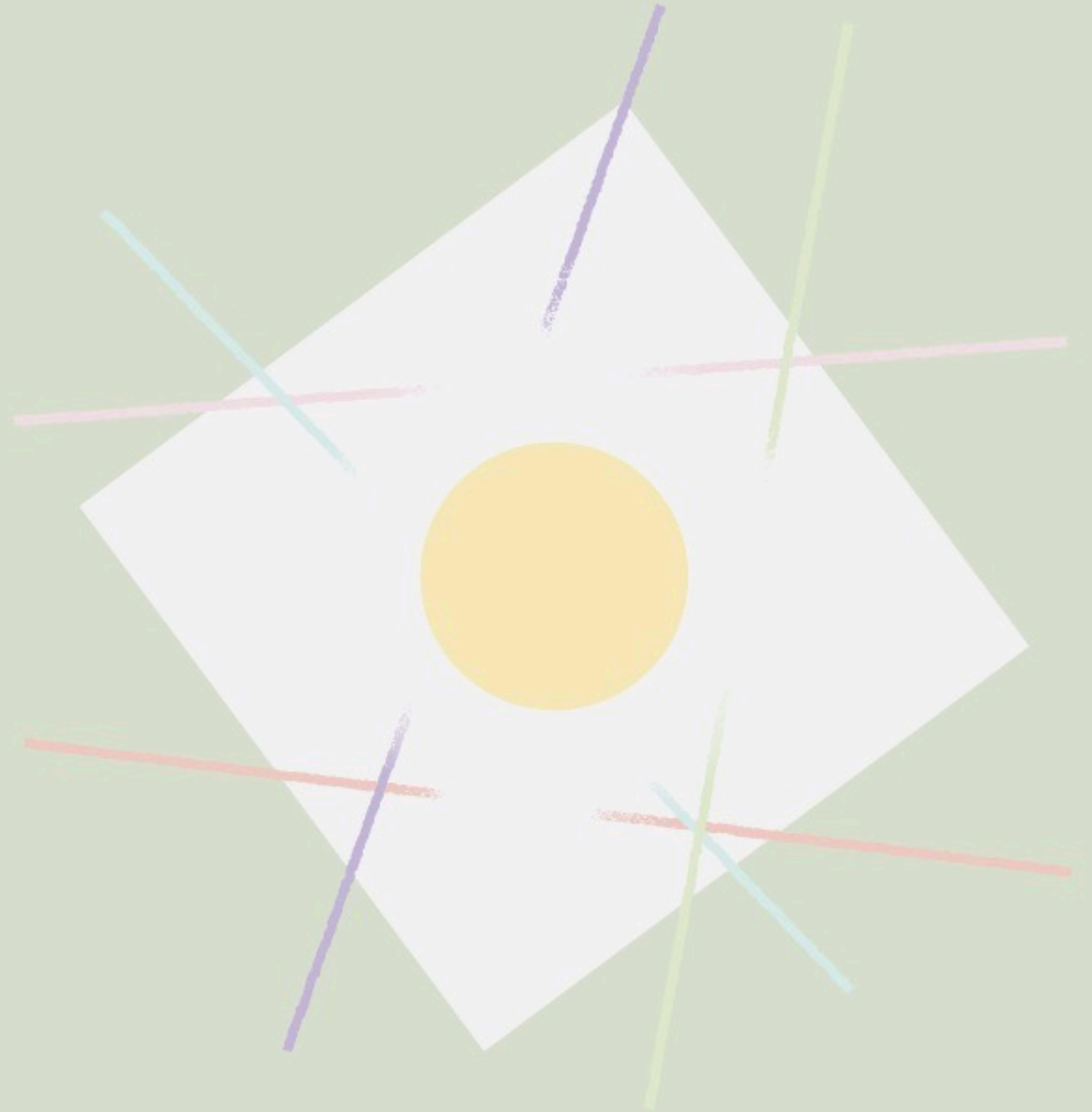
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# Stories of Jesus

In the Gospel of Mark

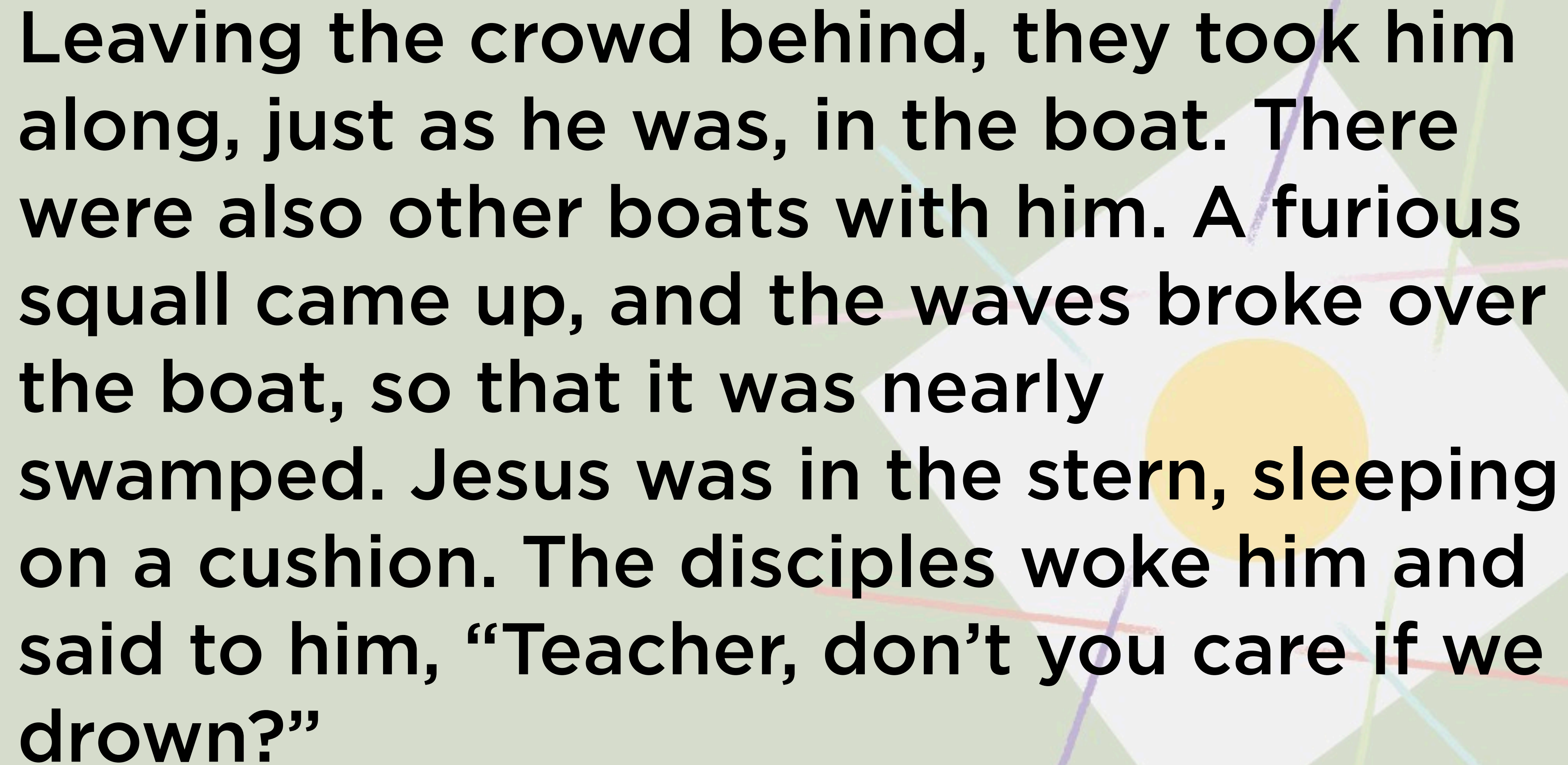


# Mark 4:36-41



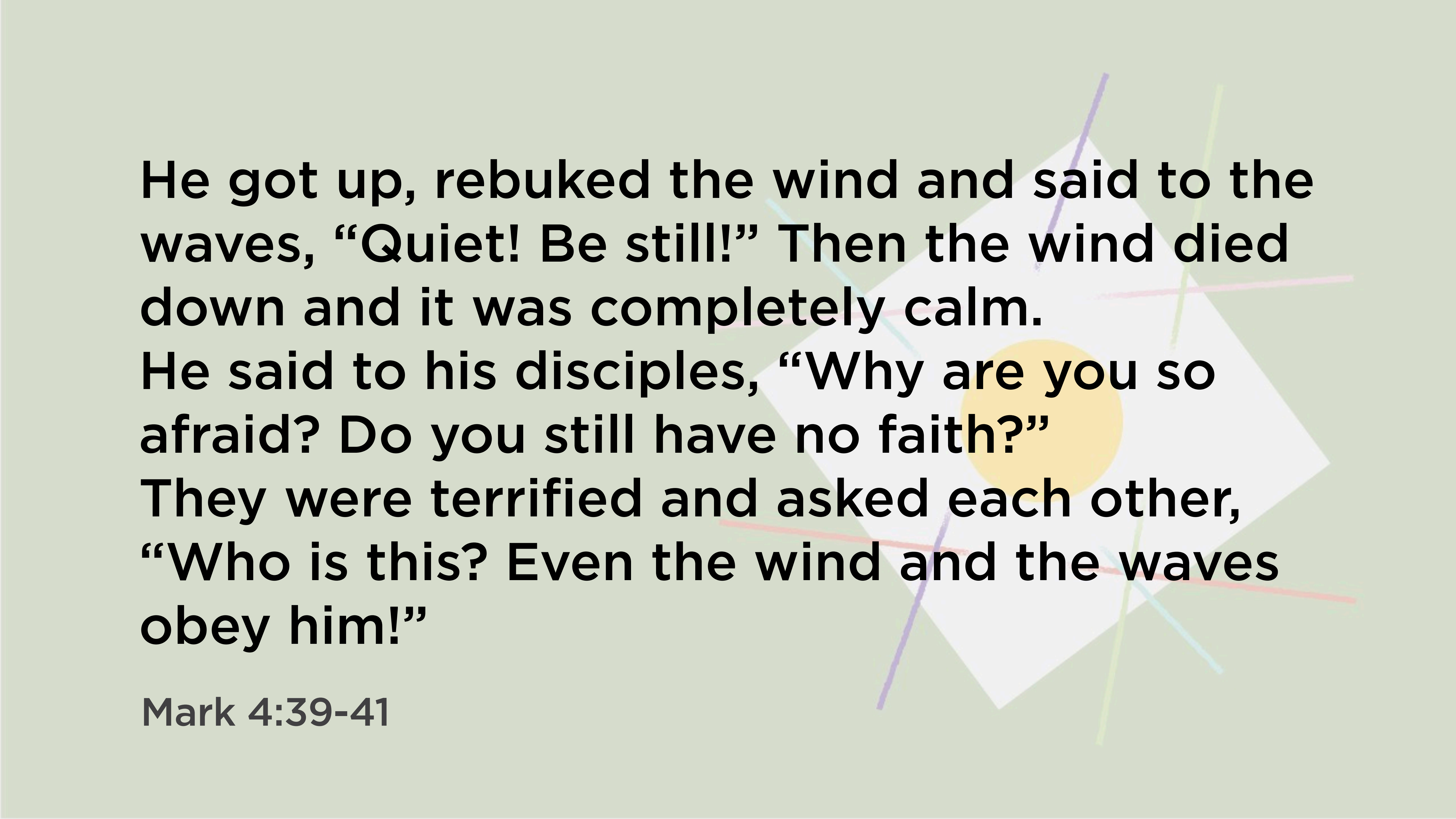
**If Jesus is our centre, then what kind of centre is he? What sort of centre does Jesus create?**





**Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”**

**Mark 4:36-38**



**He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.**

**He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”**

**They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”**

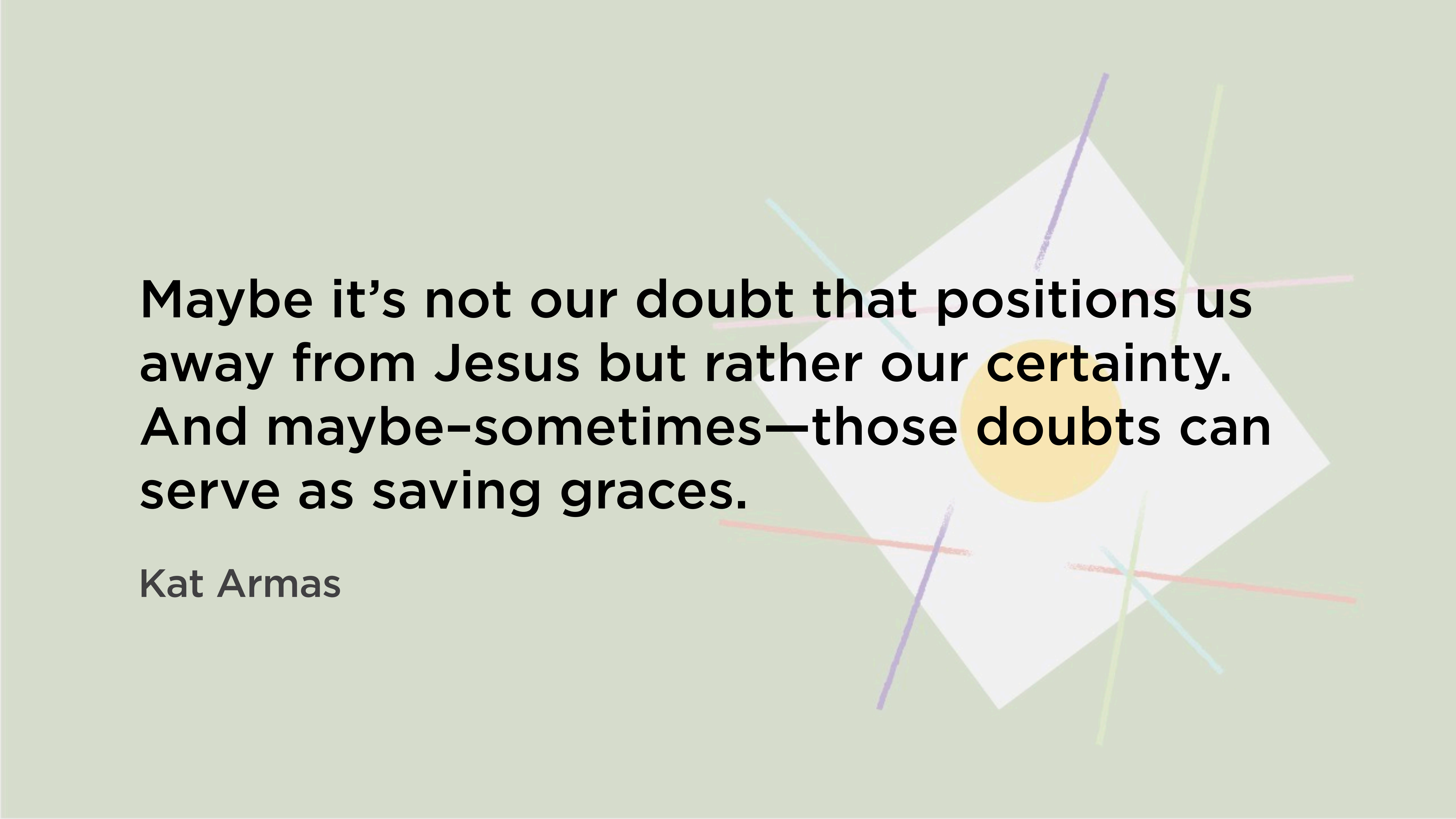
**Mark 4:39-41**

**Psalm 10:1 - Why, LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?**

**Psalm 44:23 - Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever.**

**Job 30:20 - I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me.**

**Jesus on the cross - My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**



**Maybe it's not our doubt that positions us  
away from Jesus but rather our certainty.  
And maybe-sometimes—those doubts can  
serve as saving graces.**

Kat Armas

An abstract graphic on a light green background. It features a white diamond shape with a yellow circle in the center. Several thin, colored lines (purple, cyan, green, pink, red) are scattered across the scene, some overlapping the diamond and circle.

**How does Jesus' question sit with you?**

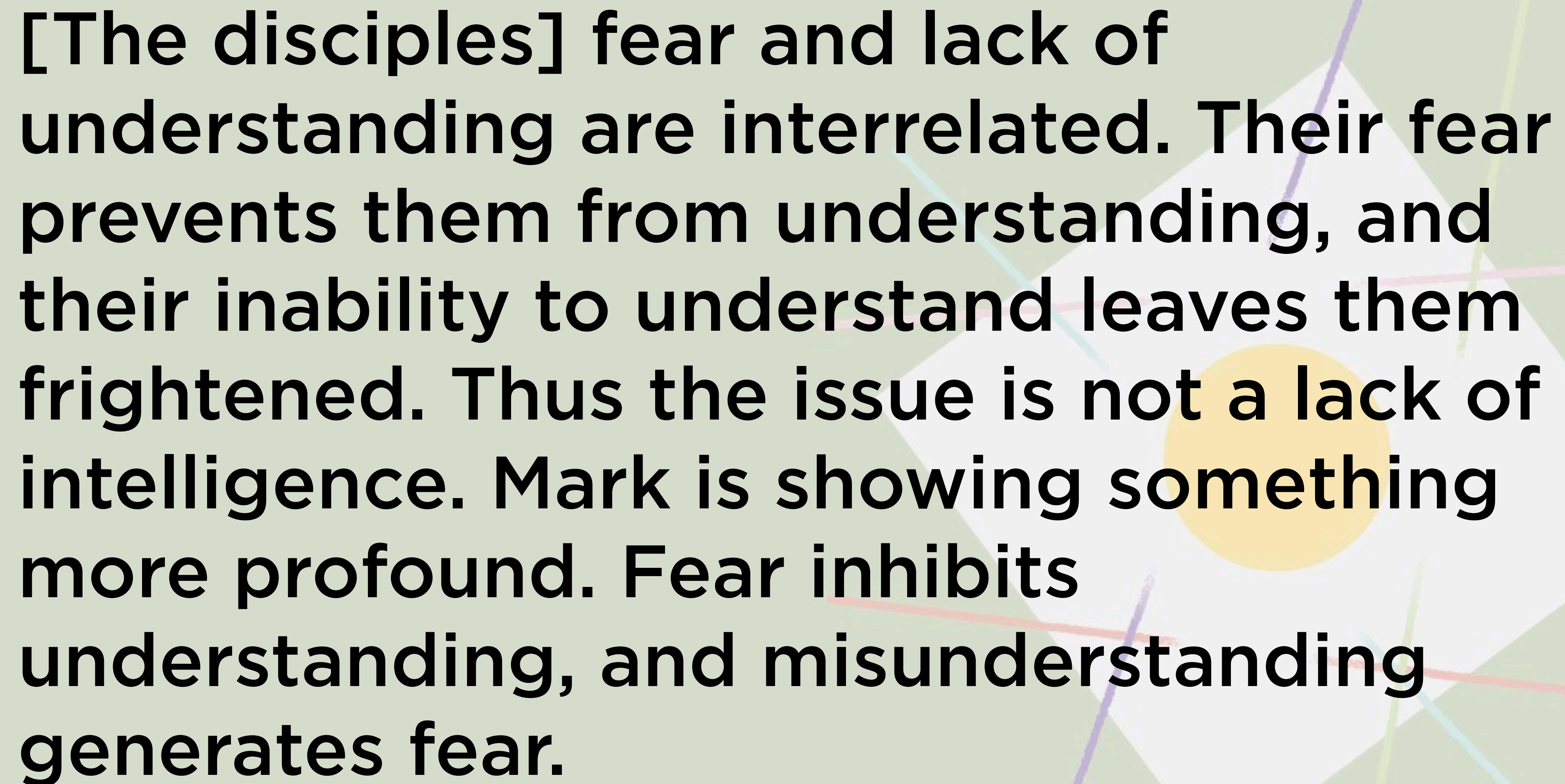
**What feelings or thoughts does it provoke  
in you?**



δειλοί (di-  
loi)

From δειλός: **fear  
driven**



The background features a light green field with a white diamond shape in the center. A yellow circle is positioned to the right of the diamond's center. Several thin, colored lines (purple, green, cyan, pink) intersect across the scene, creating a dynamic, abstract composition.

**[The disciples] fear and lack of understanding are interrelated. Their fear prevents them from understanding, and their inability to understand leaves them frightened. Thus the issue is not a lack of intelligence. Mark is showing something more profound. Fear inhibits understanding, and misunderstanding generates fear.**

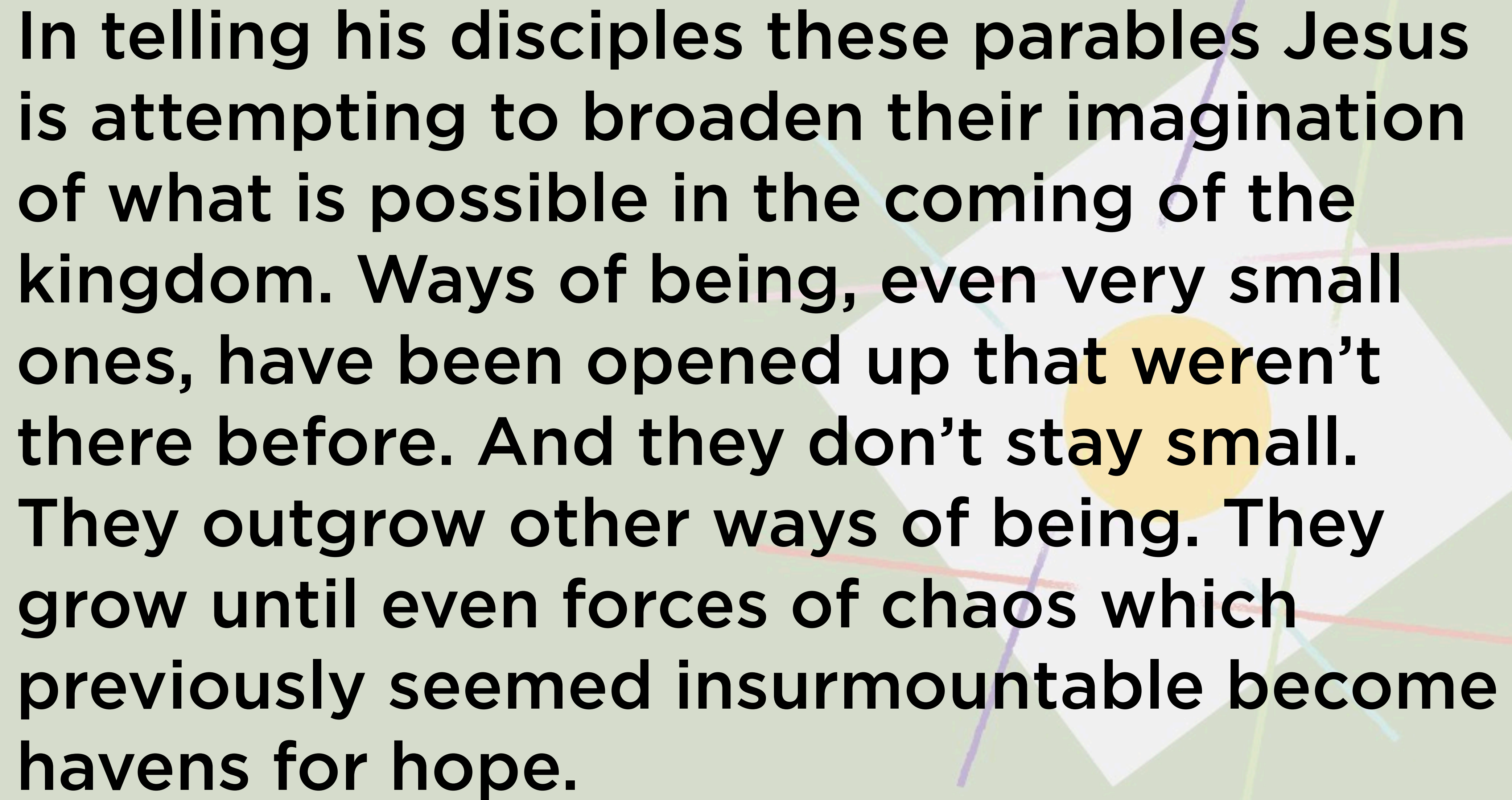
**Rhoads, D., Dewey, J., & Michie, D. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel***

## The Parable of the Growing Seed

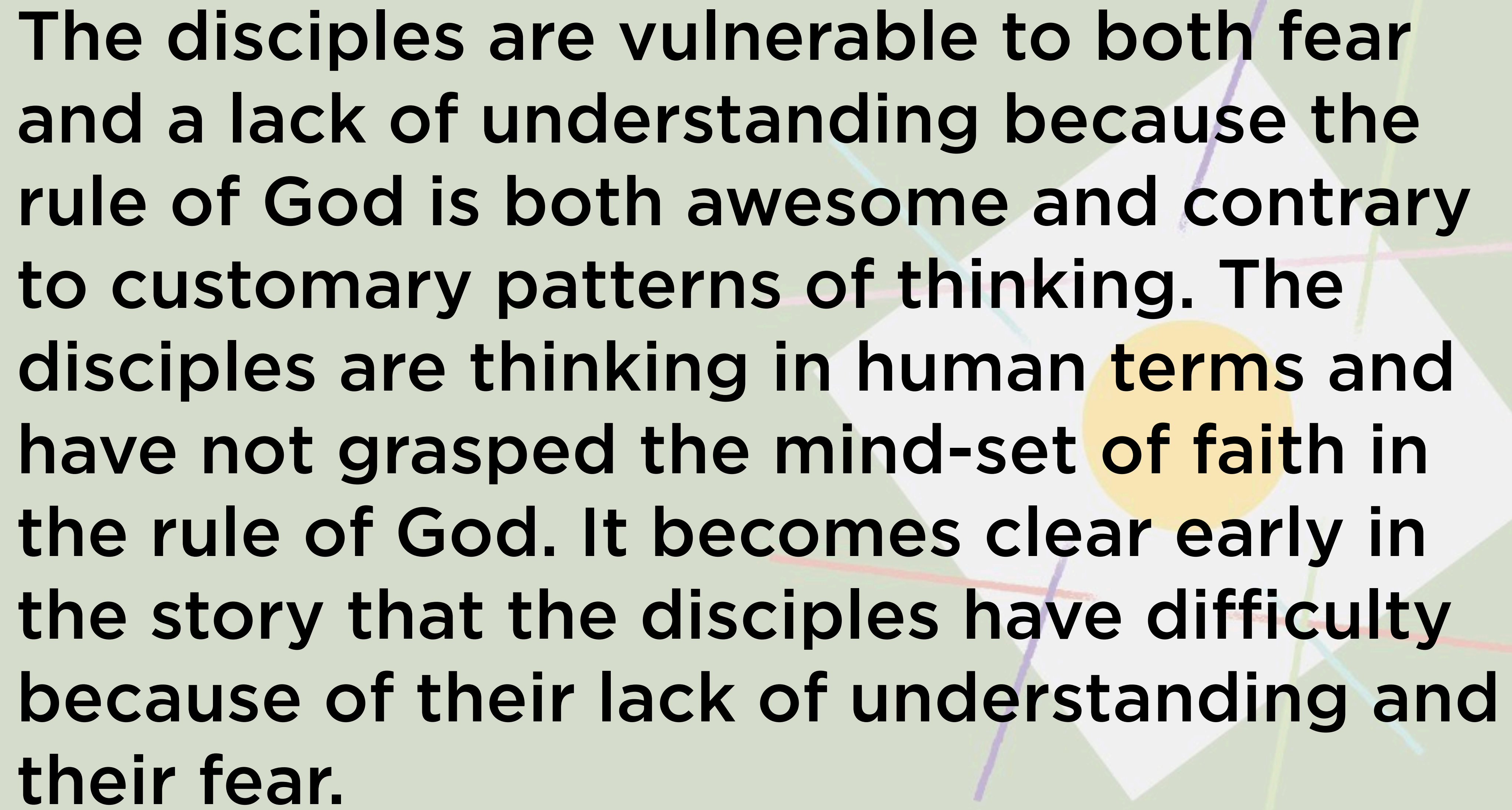
He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

## The Parable of the Mustard Seed

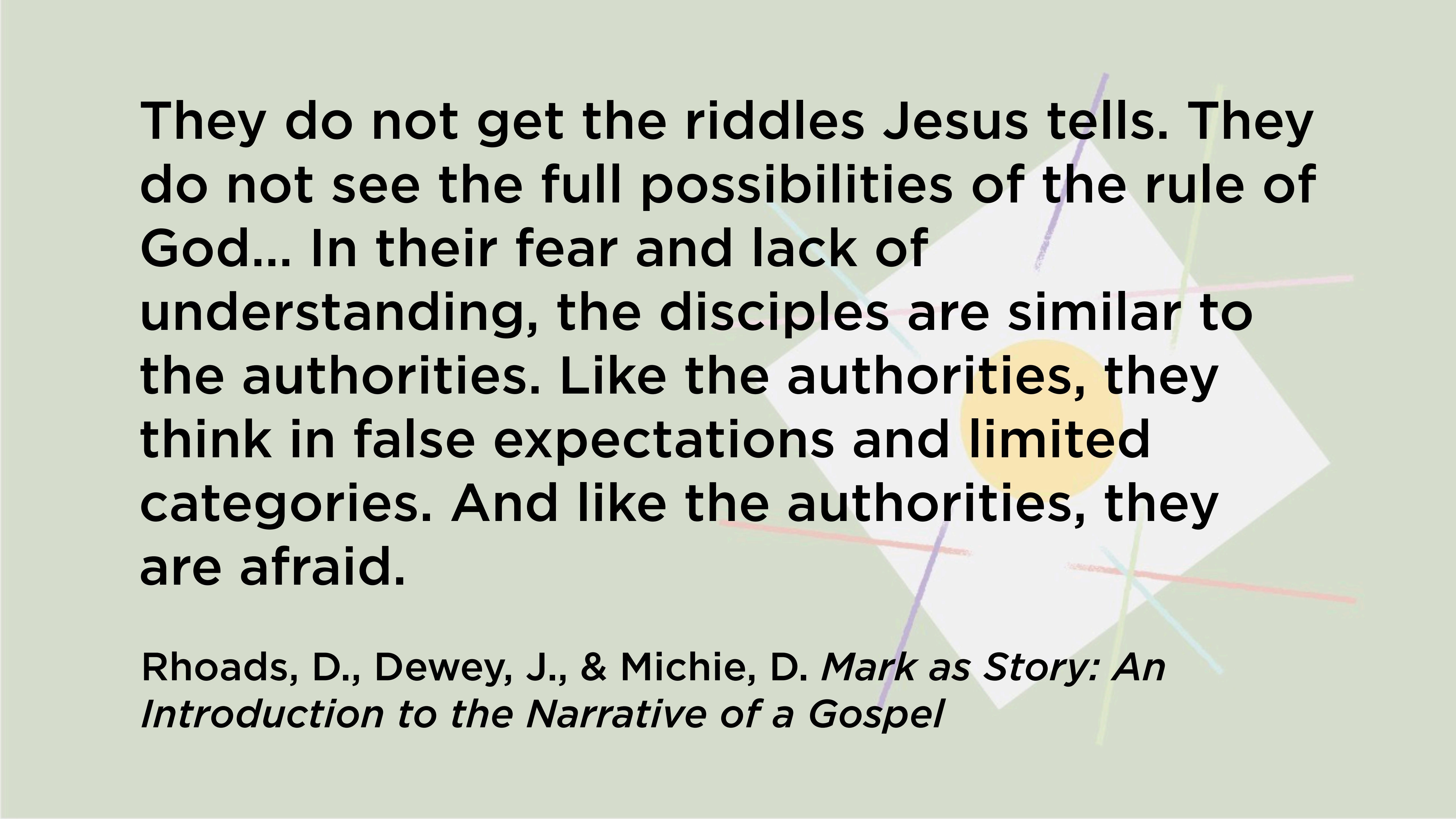
Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

The background features a light green gradient with a white diamond shape in the center. A yellow circle is positioned to the right of the text. Several thin, colored lines (purple, cyan, pink, green) intersect across the scene.

**In telling his disciples these parables Jesus is attempting to broaden their imagination of what is possible in the coming of the kingdom. Ways of being, even very small ones, have been opened up that weren't there before. And they don't stay small. They outgrow other ways of being. They grow until even forces of chaos which previously seemed insurmountable become havens for hope.**

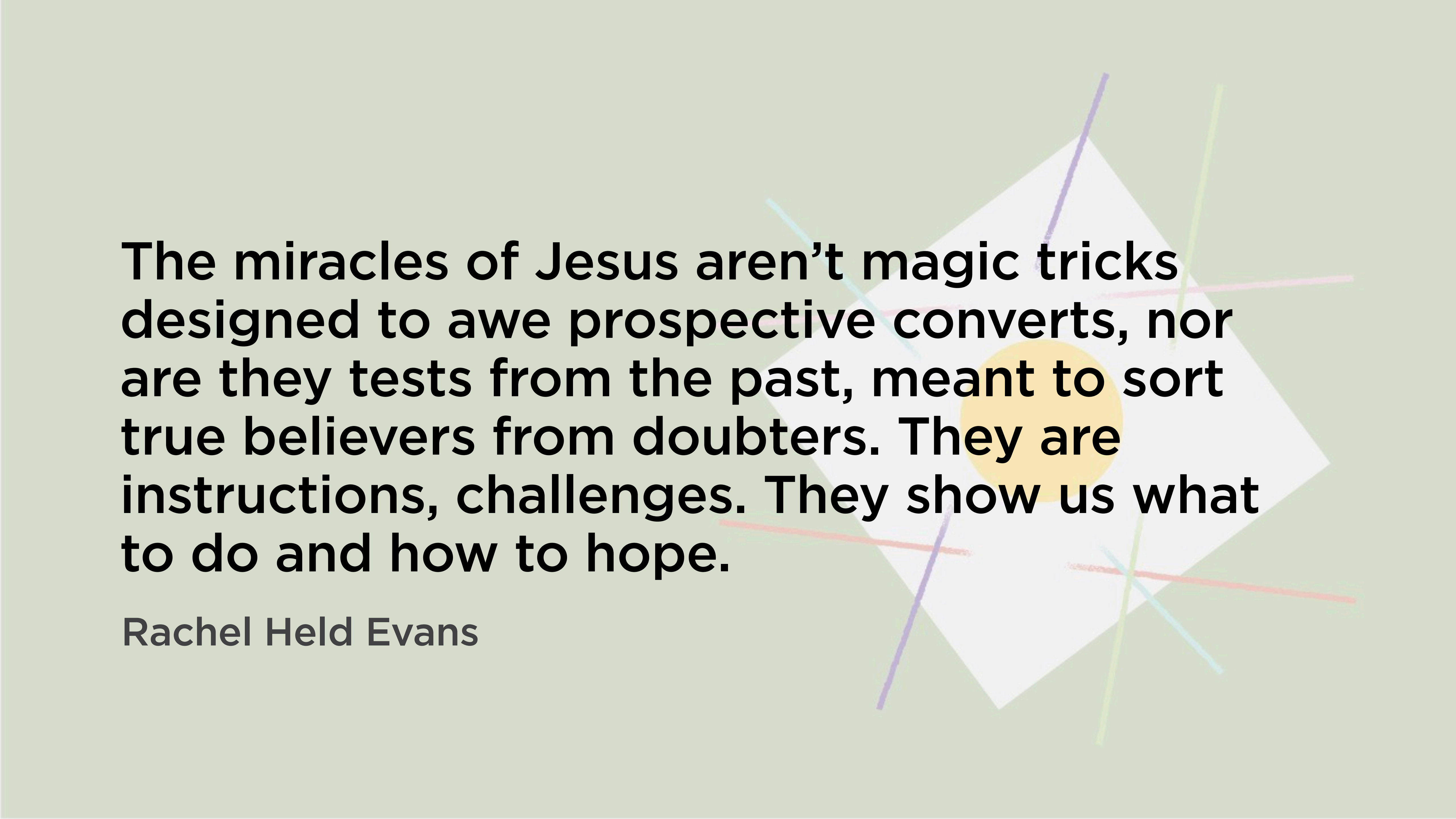
The background features a light green field with a white diamond shape in the center. A yellow circle is positioned to the right of the diamond. Several thin, colored lines (purple, cyan, pink, green) intersect across the scene, creating a dynamic, abstract composition.

**The disciples are vulnerable to both fear and a lack of understanding because the rule of God is both awesome and contrary to customary patterns of thinking. The disciples are thinking in human terms and have not grasped the mind-set of faith in the rule of God. It becomes clear early in the story that the disciples have difficulty because of their lack of understanding and their fear.**

The background features a light green gradient with a large, semi-transparent white diamond shape in the center. A bright yellow circle is positioned on the right side of the diamond. Several thin, colorful lines in shades of purple, green, red, and blue are scattered across the scene, some intersecting the diamond and the yellow circle.

They do not get the riddles Jesus tells. They do not see the full possibilities of the rule of God... In their fear and lack of understanding, the disciples are similar to the authorities. Like the authorities, they think in false expectations and limited categories. And like the authorities, they are afraid.

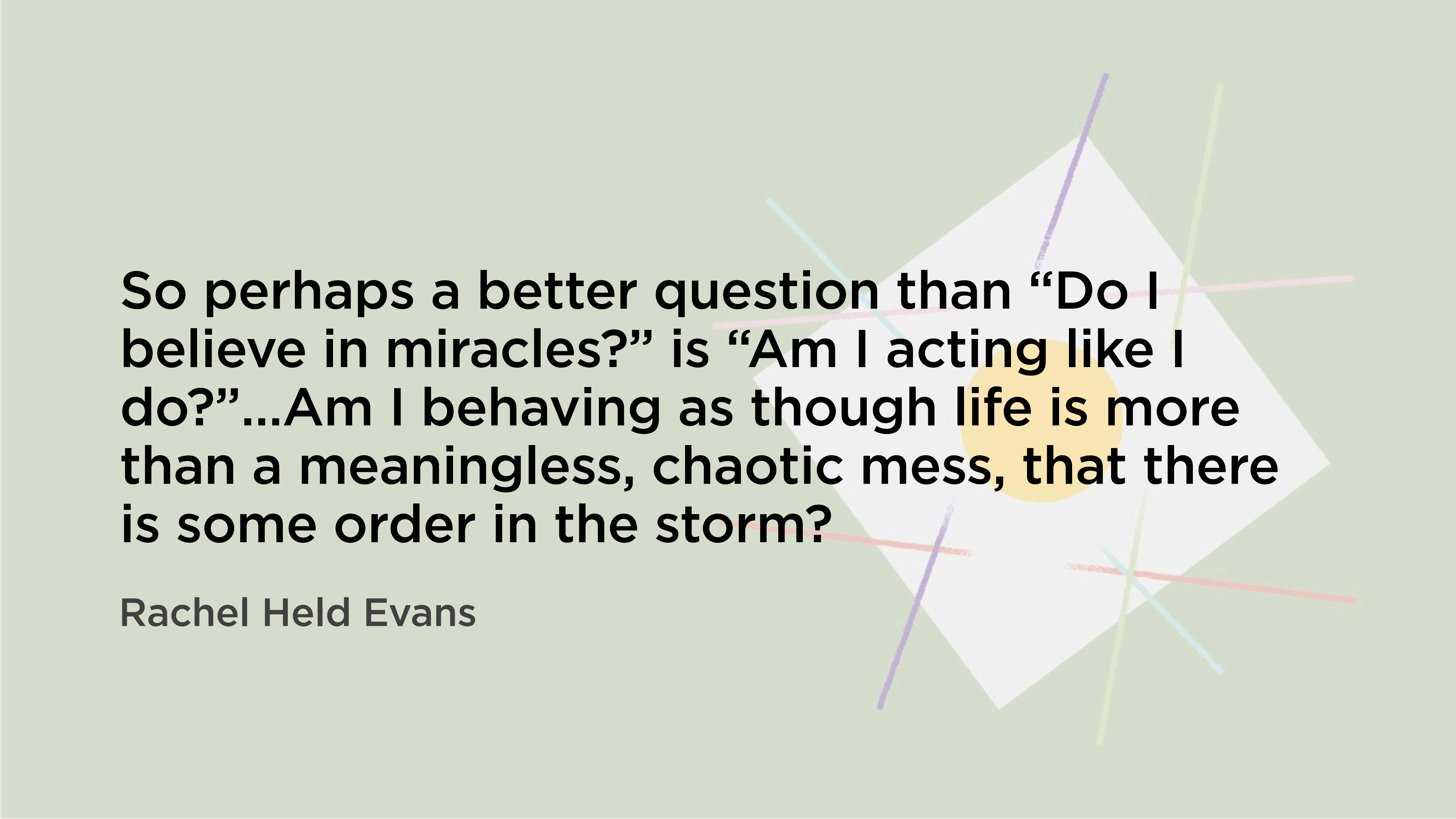
Rhoads, D., Dewey, J., & Michie, D. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*



**The miracles of Jesus aren't magic tricks designed to awe prospective converts, nor are they tests from the past, meant to sort true believers from doubters. They are instructions, challenges. They show us what to do and how to hope.**

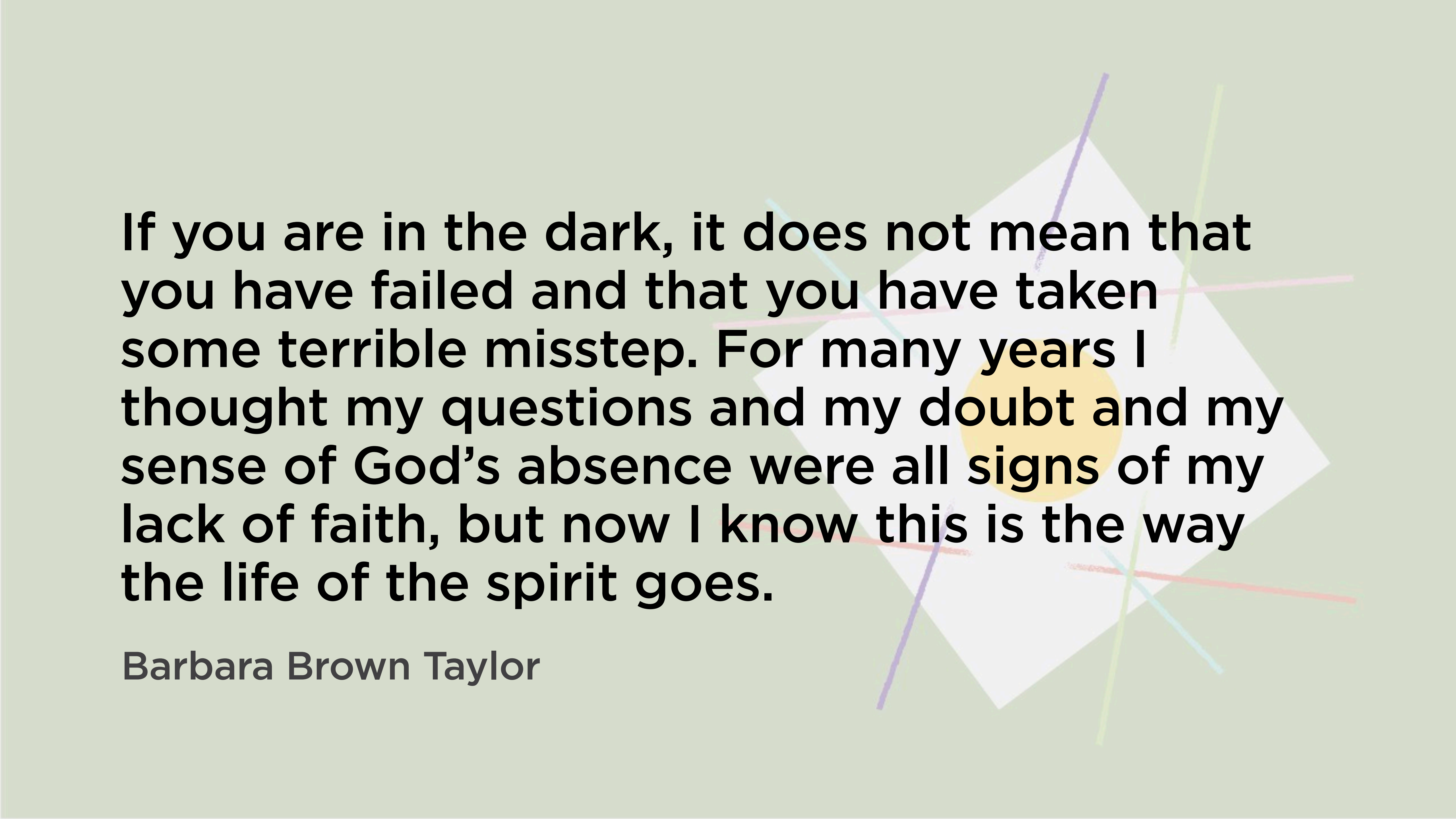
Rachel Held Evans





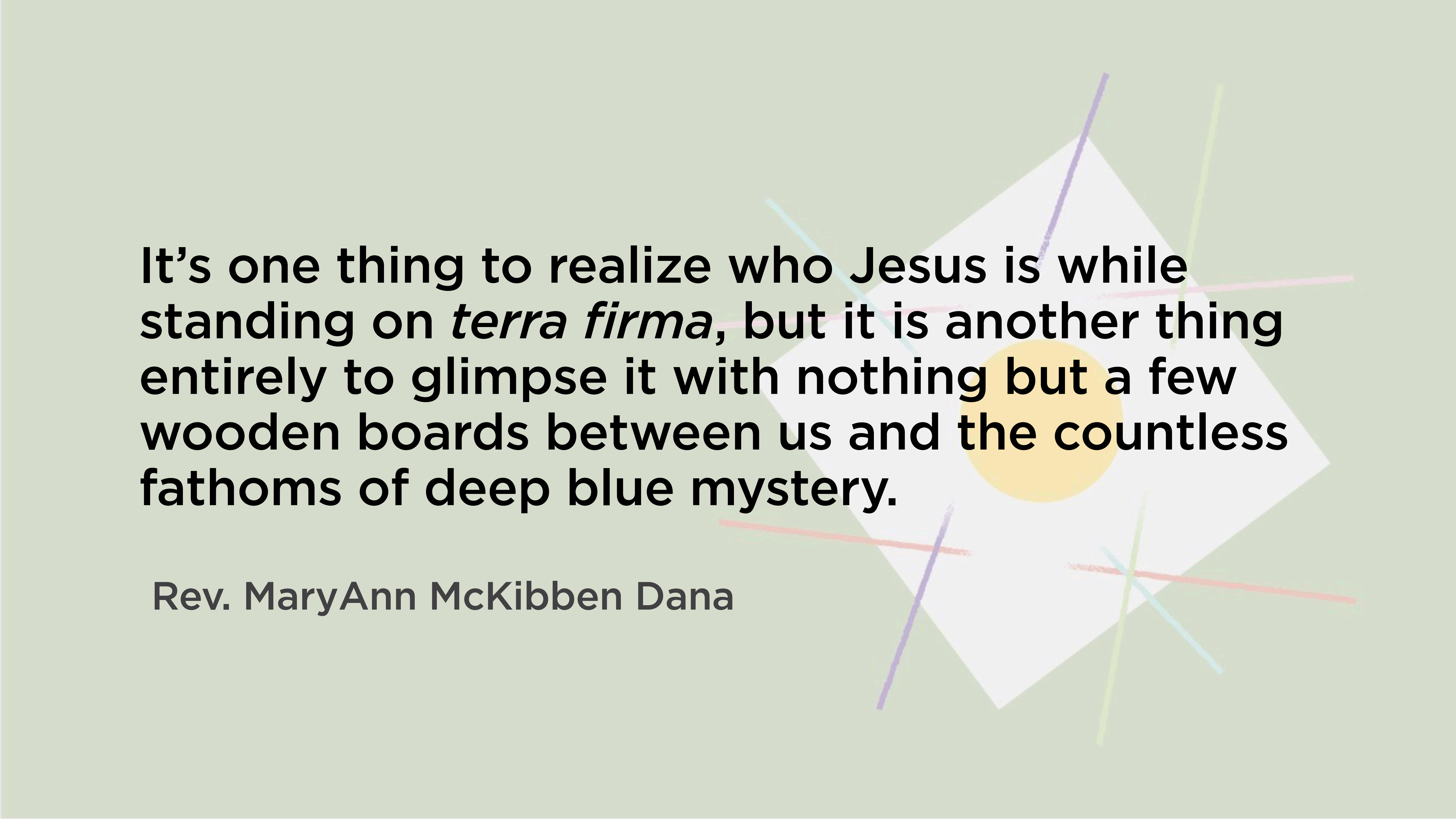
**So perhaps a better question than “Do I believe in miracles?” is “Am I acting like I do?”...Am I behaving as though life is more than a meaningless, chaotic mess, that there is some order in the storm?**

Rachel Held Evans



**If you are in the dark, it does not mean that you have failed and that you have taken some terrible misstep. For many years I thought my questions and my doubt and my sense of God's absence were all signs of my lack of faith, but now I know this is the way the life of the spirit goes.**

Barbara Brown Taylor




**It's one thing to realize who Jesus is while standing on *terra firma*, but it is another thing entirely to glimpse it with nothing but a few wooden boards between us and the countless fathoms of deep blue mystery.**

Rev. MaryAnn McKibben Dana

# How Can You Laugh at a Time Like This?

Tommy Welty

What's the use? Hope's little feathers flutter  
and for what? Why? Not again, I say,  
not if the sky will tear, or time stutter,  
the red rivers rise and fields become clay,  
not if we're caught up with some trumpet blare.  
What's left to adjust as the day draws near?  
I read the sign I'm looking for declare  
truth I'm sure I knew: *Love what you will here.*  
When's the last time anyone saw a bee?  
Who gets to pick the last flower that bloomed?  
What point is there not sinking in the sea?  
I'm scared too. Hold my hand and share the wound.  
Yes, child, yes. Never let go. Look! Son,  
can you see islands on the horizon?

The background features a light green field with a large white diamond shape. A bright yellow circle is positioned on the right side of the diamond. Several thin, colorful lines in shades of purple, cyan, pink, and lime green are scattered across the scene, some intersecting the diamond and the yellow circle.