

**Courage to Care
in a Culture of Death**

Caring with love, grace, and truth

Willingdon Church

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September 20, 2024

Photo of our own Milky Way by Thomas Ciszewski from Unsplash

1

A proper perspective...

Psalm 8

¹ LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory in the heavens.

² Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.

³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:

⁷ all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,
⁸ the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

⁹ LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

2

Anne of Green Gables Disclaimer:

“...and although I say far too much,
yet if you only knew how many things I want to say and don’t,
you’d give me some credit for it.”

Anne to Marilla in *Anne of Green Gables* by L. M. Montgomery

Just focus on a few things that stand out for you.
I will make these slides available too.

I will stay afterward and speak to you personally
(until the staff needs to close the building)

PEI dunes courtesy of Kim Briggs; GG image courtesy of government of PEI

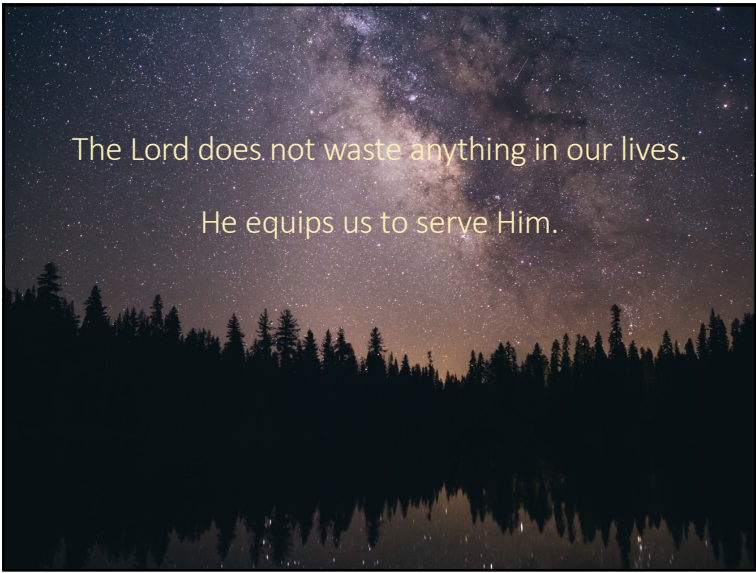
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Compassion disclaimer:
...many here will have already suffered as a result of MAiD

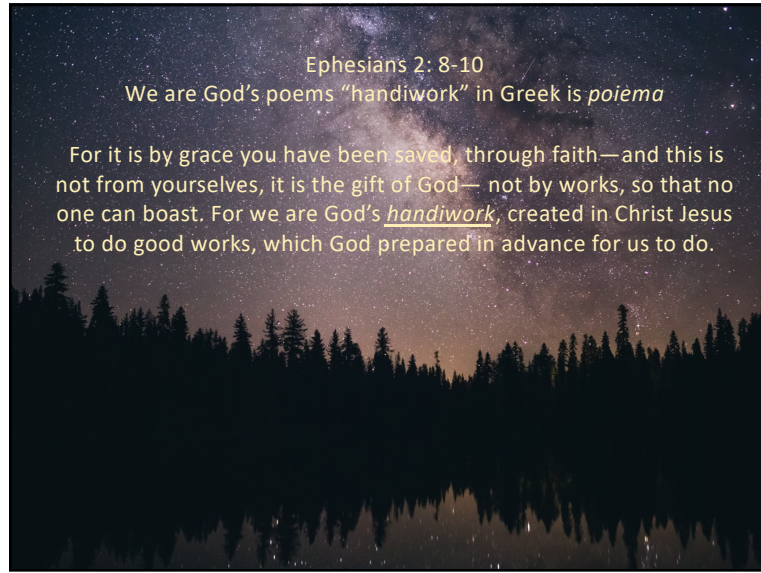
I know that some of my remarks may be hard to hear,
but we must still discuss these difficult issues
as we try to follow Christ.

Please contact the pastors here at Willingdon Church for help.
If necessary, they can contact me on your behalf.

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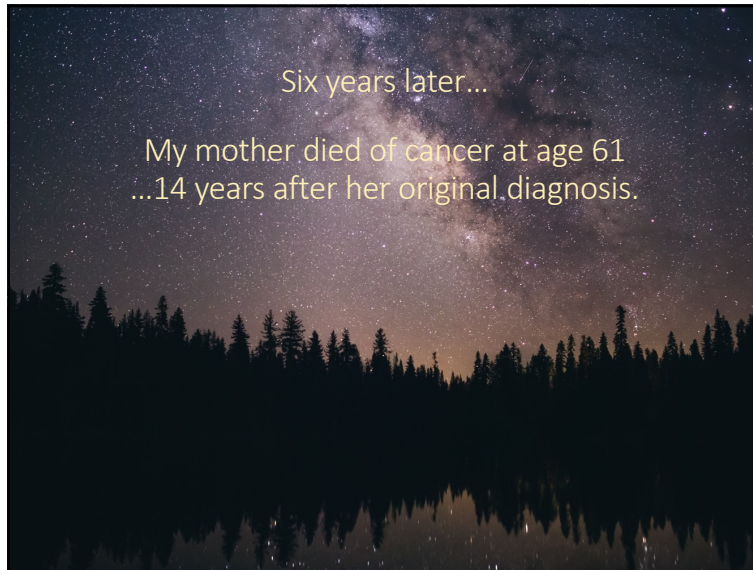
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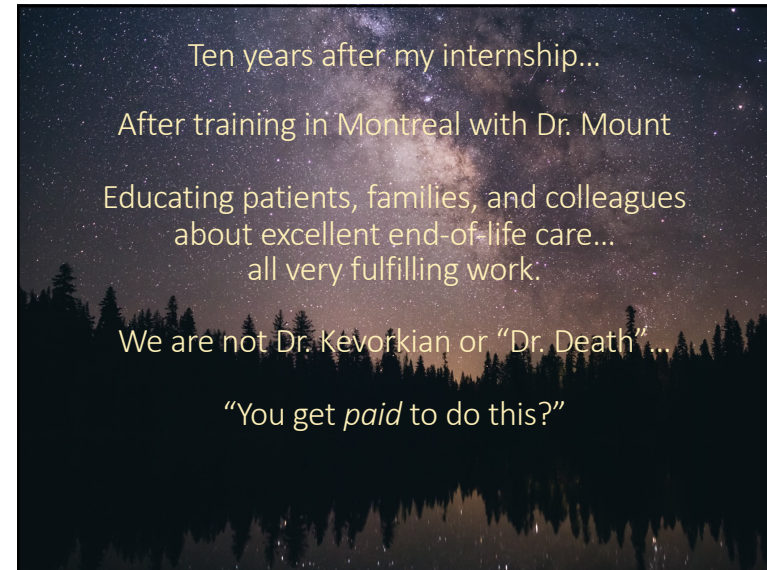
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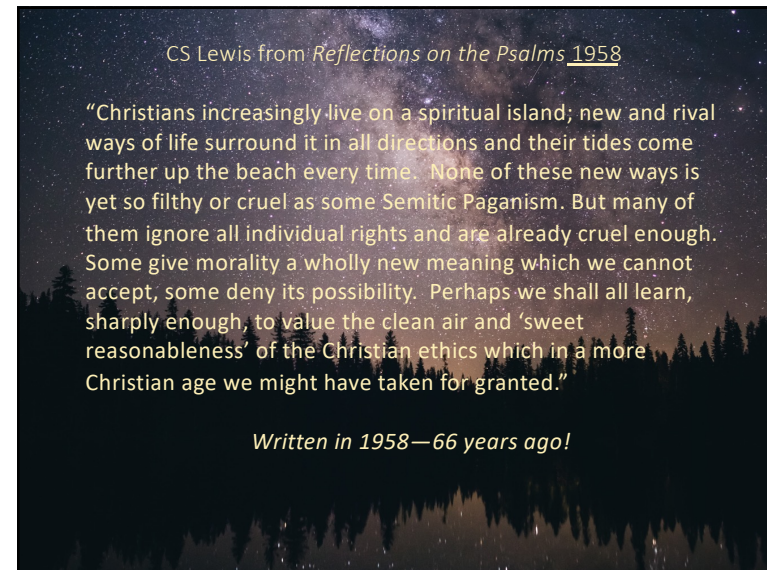
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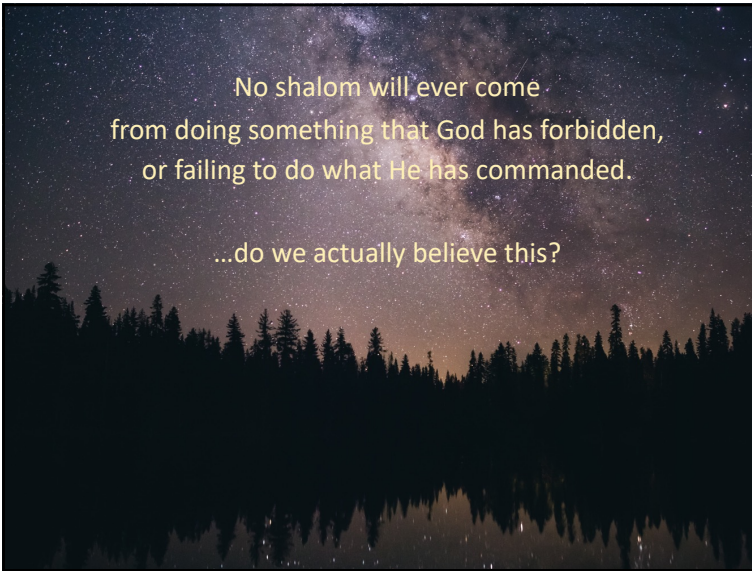
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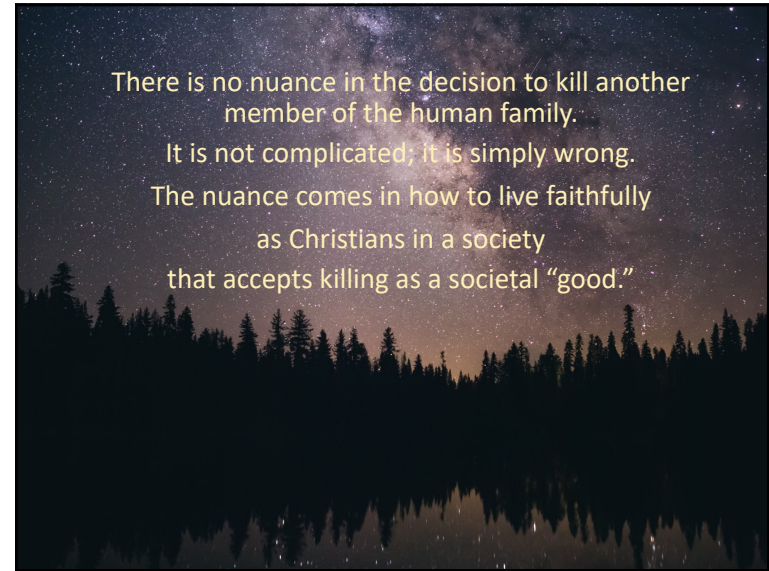
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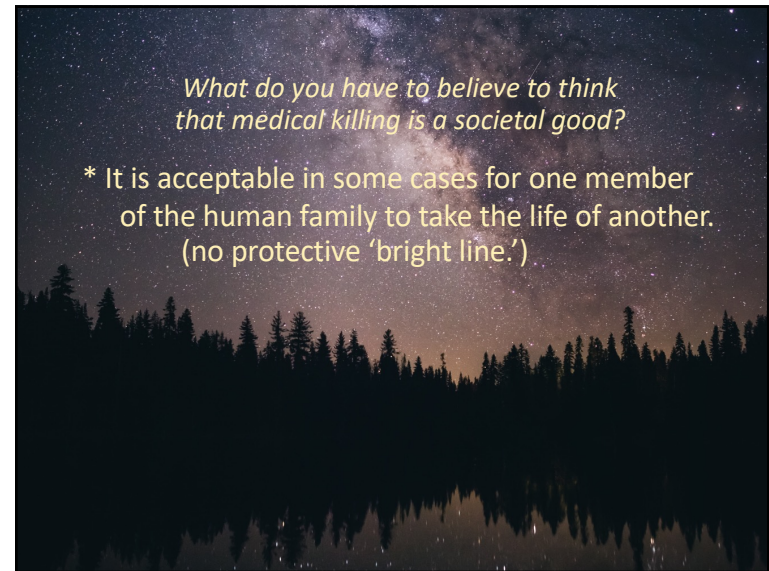
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16

*What do you have to believe to think
that medical killing is a societal good?*

- * It is acceptable in some cases for one member of the human family to take the life of another. (no protective 'bright line.')
- * Some lives are not worth living (suicide prevention double standard)

17

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18

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- * Some lives are not worth living (suicide prevention double standard)
- * Benefits outweigh risks to society
- * At least sometimes, killing is better than caring

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Independence is NOT a Christian virtue..
...interdependence is.

Duty to care
..and to be cared for...

Autonomy is an illusion and a lie.

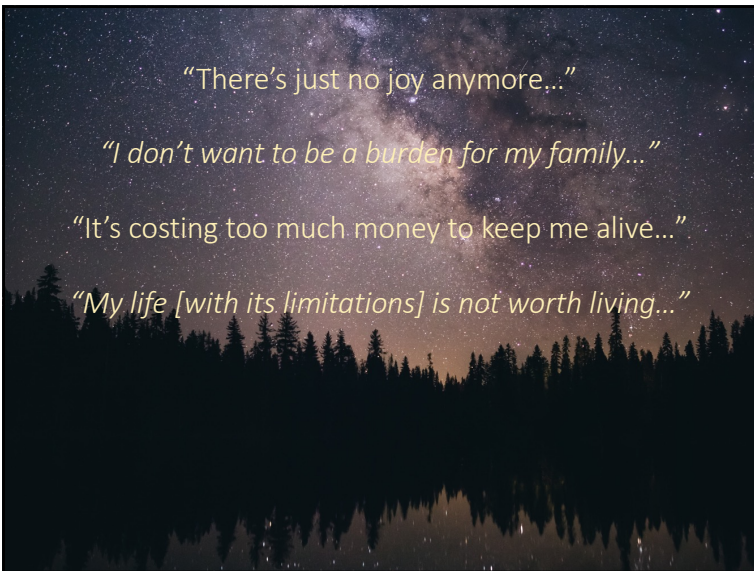
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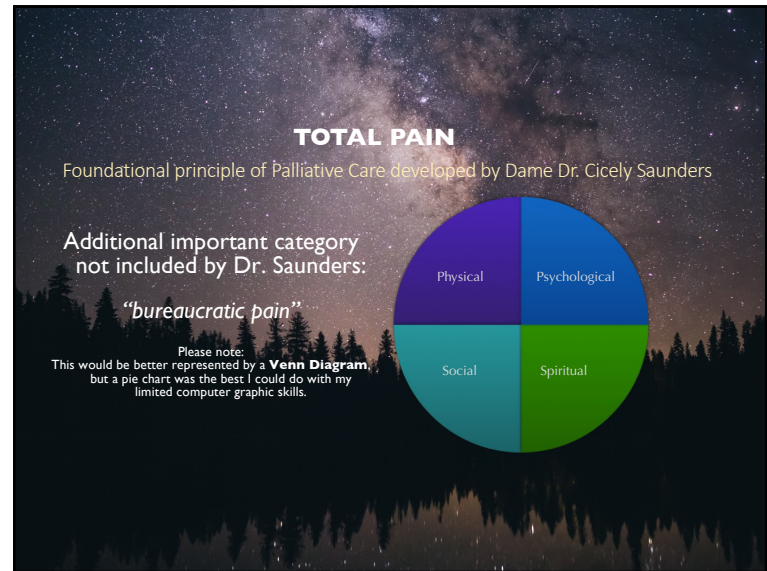
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24

Jen

- 28 year-old; serious gynecological cancer with intractable pelvic pain
- Extreme difficulty controlling pain
- Excellent example of Total Pain
 - physical
 - spiritual
 - social/psychological

25

Jen

...after her son had his bicycle, her pain was well-controlled with **half** the amount of medication that had previously **not** been controlling the pain.

26

Dignity Question:

“What do I need to know about you as a person to give you the best care possible?”

Dr. Harvey Max Chochinov

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Some of the Dignity Therapy Questions...

- *Please tell me a little about yourself...
- *What has been your greatest joy or accomplishment?
- *When did you feel most alive?
- *What are the most important roles you have played?
- *Are there things you would want your family to know or remember about you?
- *What are your hopes and dreams for your loved ones?
- *Is there anything you feel you still need to do or to say?
- *In creating this permanent record, are there other things that you would like included?

Dignity Therapy: Final Words for Final Days; Harvey Max Chochinov; Oxford University Press, 2012

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Practical ways to help...

- *Careful discernment of needs (**Ask!**)
- *Practical helps: locally and from afar
- *Organize meals, cleaning, rides, etc.
- *Pay attention to special requests

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Practical ways to help...

From a societal perspective:

- *Become informed and speak up
- *Have a reasonable “elevator speech”
- *Be winsome and compassionate but do not cave
- *Resist evil and do not fear (Ephesians 6)
- *Do not allow yourself to be deceived by our culture

30

Practical ways to help...

Personally:

- *Accompany those who are suffering
- ***Insist on excellent symptom control**
- *Remind those for whom you care that it is a **gift to you** to be allowed to care for them
- *Bear witness that caring and accompanying is a greater adventure than killing and abandonment

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90% of caring is just showing up.

“You can do this Nana!”

Presence over perfection

“Do the dishes.”

Your “words fitly spoken” can be
“apples of gold in settings of silver.”

Proverbs 25:11

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Gold refined by fire

"You would stand alone!"

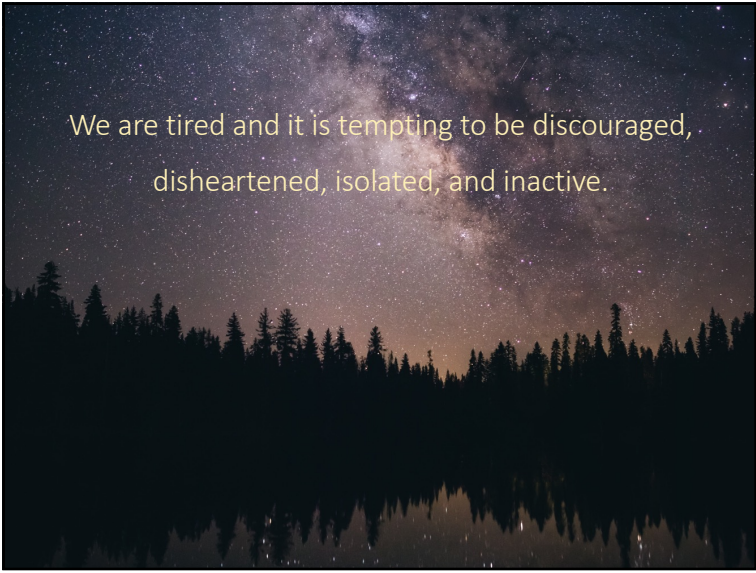
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Goodness running after me...

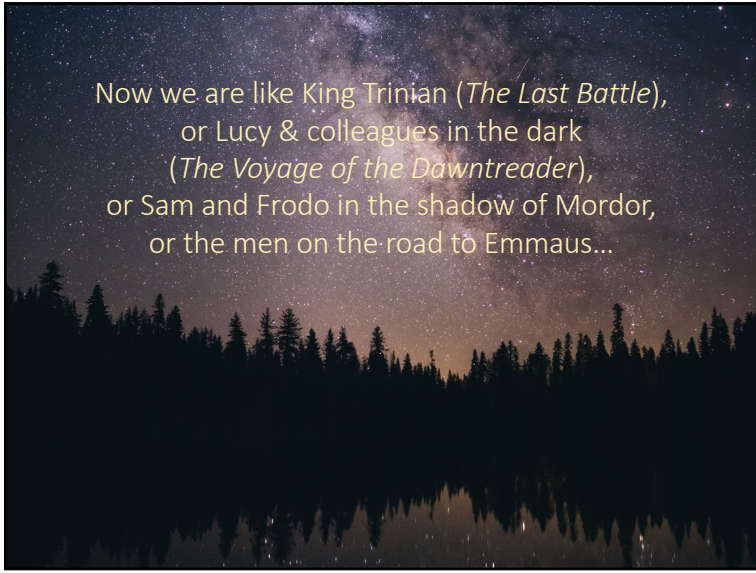
Aslan is not a tame lion, but he is good.

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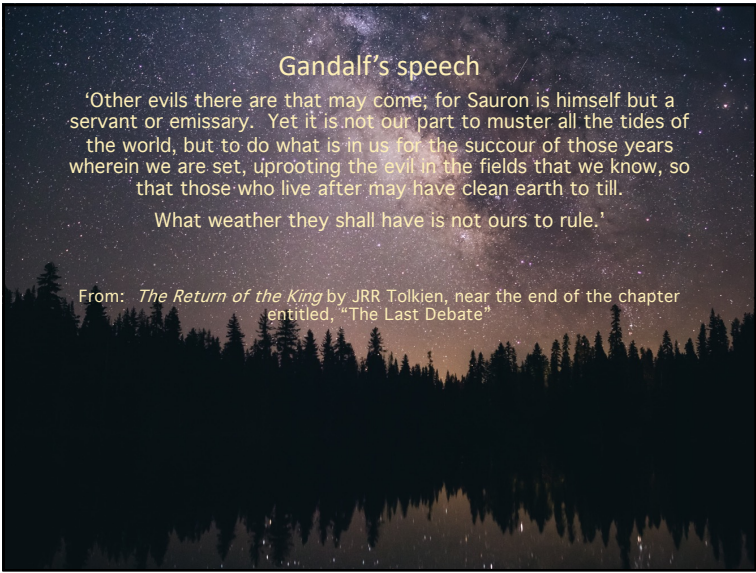
We are tired and it is tempting to be discouraged,
disheartened, isolated, and inactive.

35



Now we are like King Trinian (*The Last Battle*),
or Lucy & colleagues in the dark
(*The Voyage of the Dawnreader*),
or Sam and Frodo in the shadow of Mordor,
or the men on the road to Emmaus...

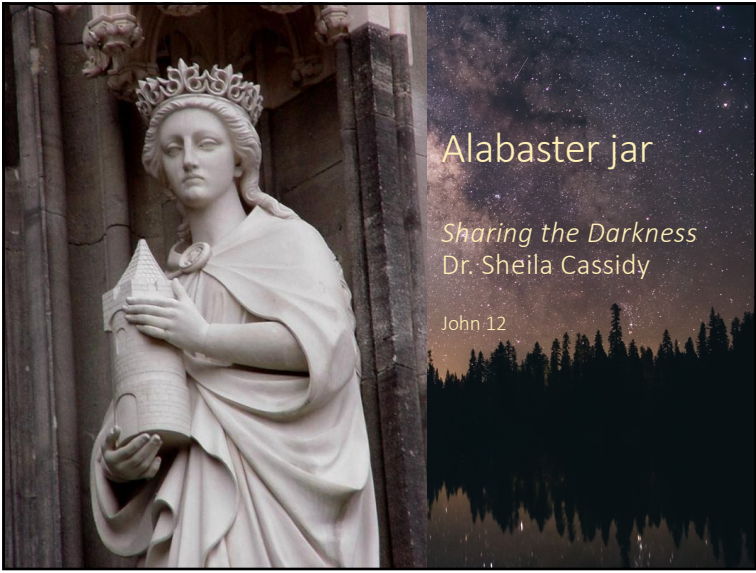
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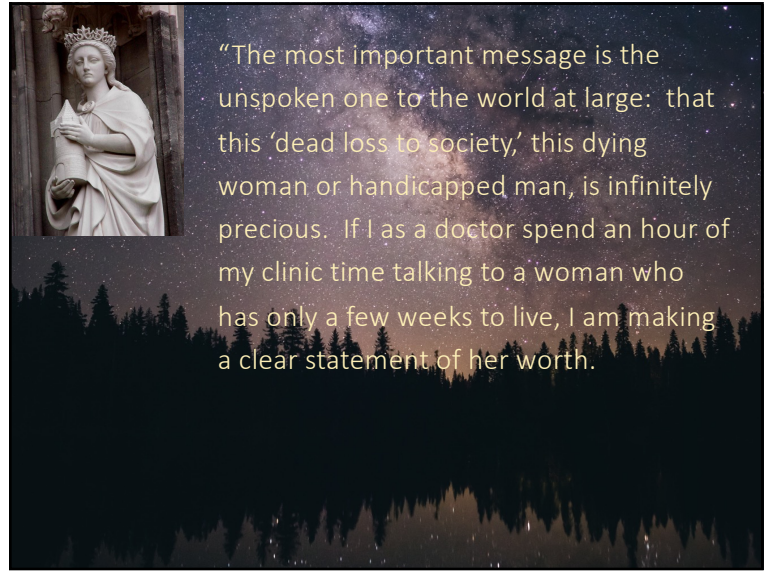
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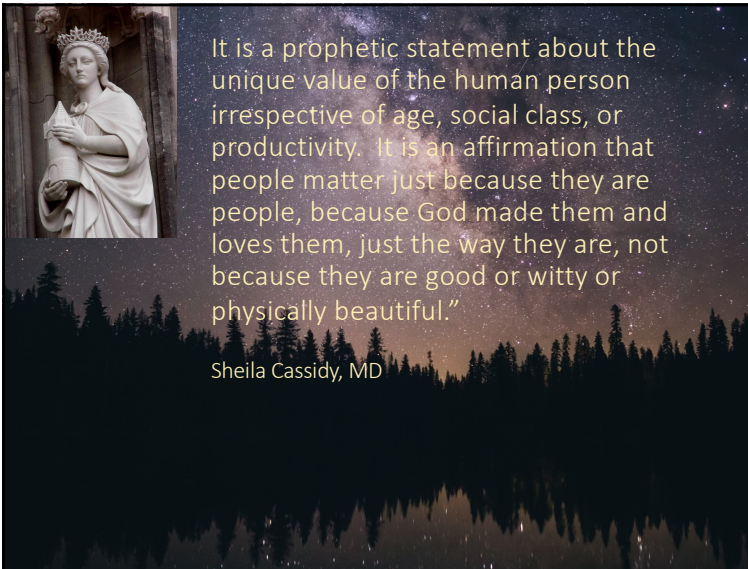
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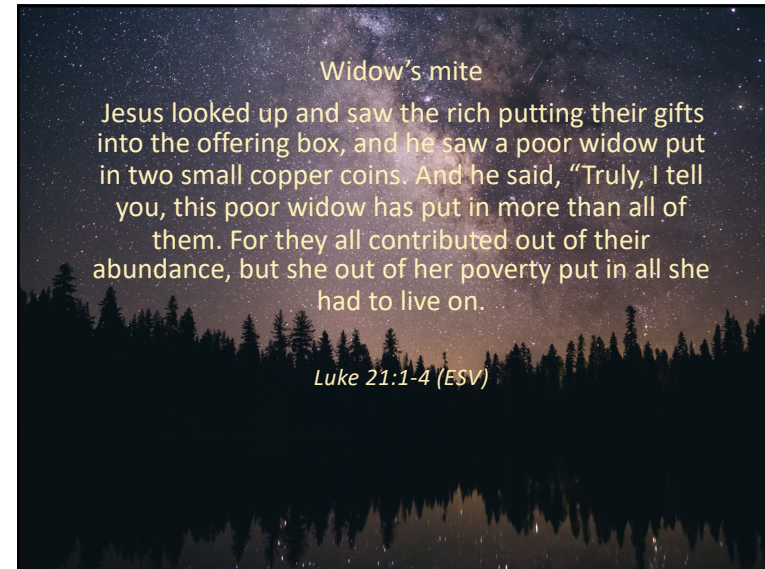
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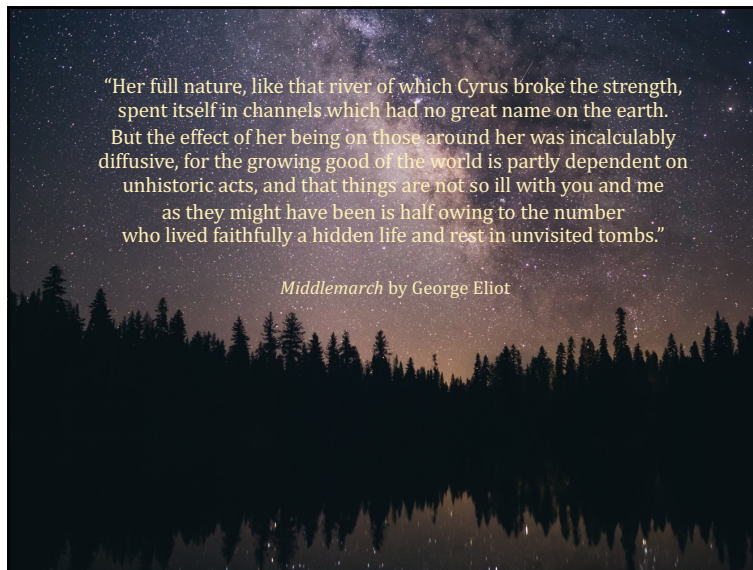
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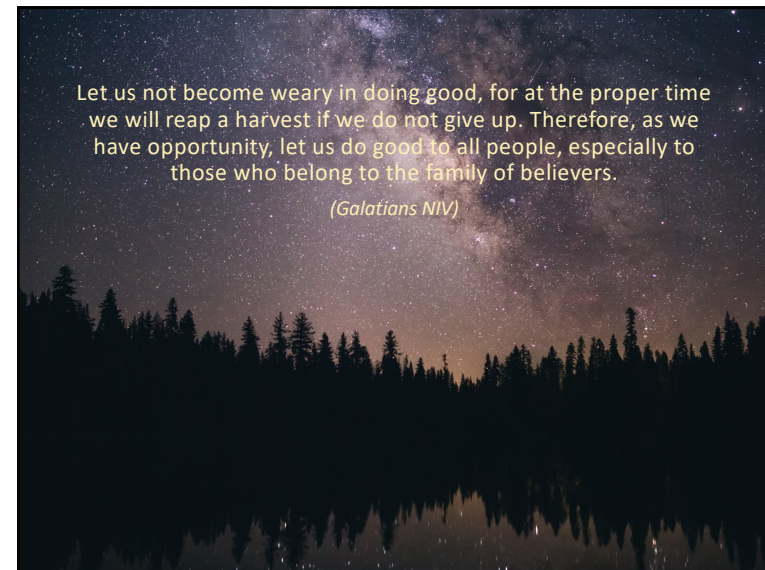
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Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication..

Ephesians 6

45

Emmaus triptych

46

Emmaus and beyond

A maelstrom of holy anguish tears through Jerusalem
Grinds Hosannas to dust--
Rips open ancient graves, the temple veil

Swept home to Emmaus
Our steps and words in mournful cadence
...*We had hoped...we had hoped...we had hoped*
Eyes, throats, hearts
scoured raw with grief

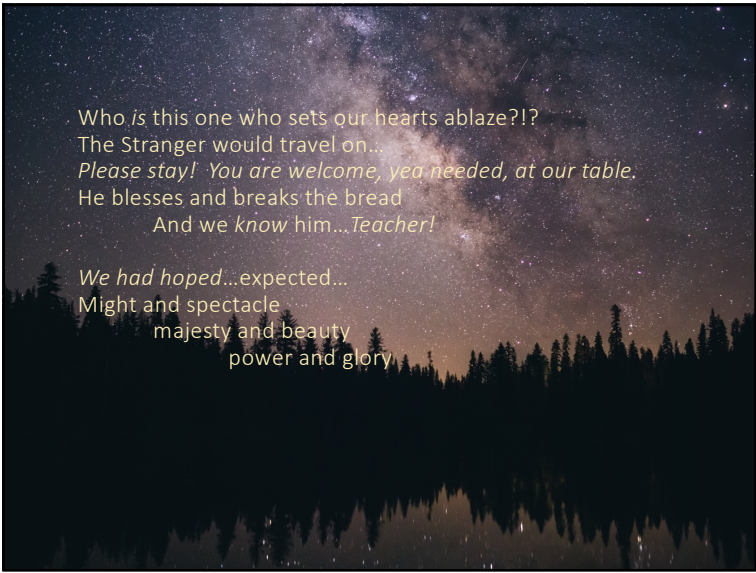
The Stranger, joining us, wonders at our sorrow

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Are you the only one who does not know?
The Teacher is dead
who fed, healed, forgave, performed miracles,
raised the dead,
knew us ...was with us...loved us
We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel...
Now, bewildering reports
an empty tomb...angels insisting he lives...

The stranger smiles
"And everlasting, relentless Love?
...the buried seed
...the tender blade from Jesse's root
...the dry ground defied by Life?
As it was breathed...
...as it is written...
...just as he said...?"

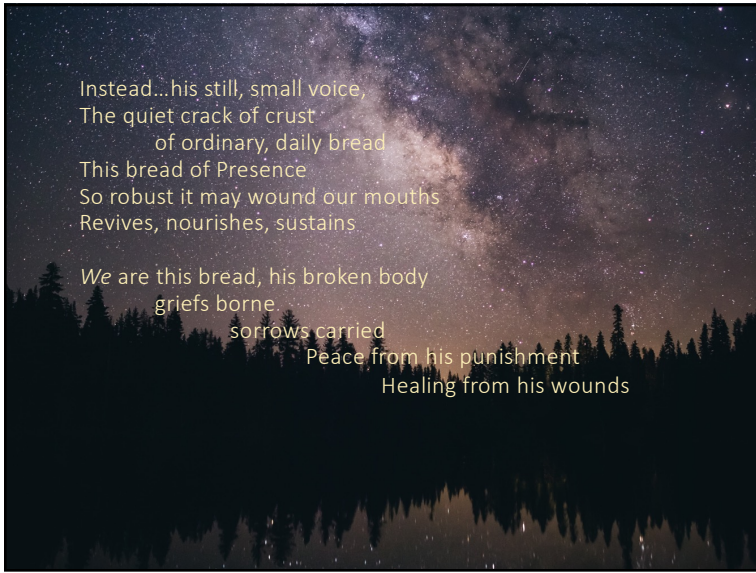
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Who is this one who sets our hearts ablaze?!?
 The Stranger would travel on..
Please stay! You are welcome, yea needed, at our table.
 He blesses and breaks the bread
 And we know him...Teacher!

We had hoped...expected...
 Might and spectacle
 majesty and beauty
 power and glory

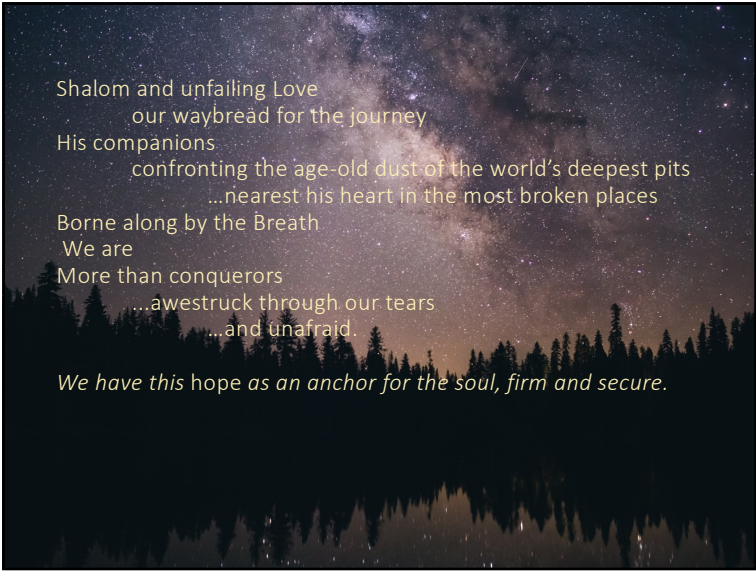
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Instead...his still, small voice,
 The quiet crack of crust
 of ordinary, daily bread
 This bread of Presence
 So robust it may wound our mouths
 Revives, nourishes, sustains

We are this bread, his broken body
 griefs borne
 sorrows carried
 Peace from his punishment
 Healing from his wounds

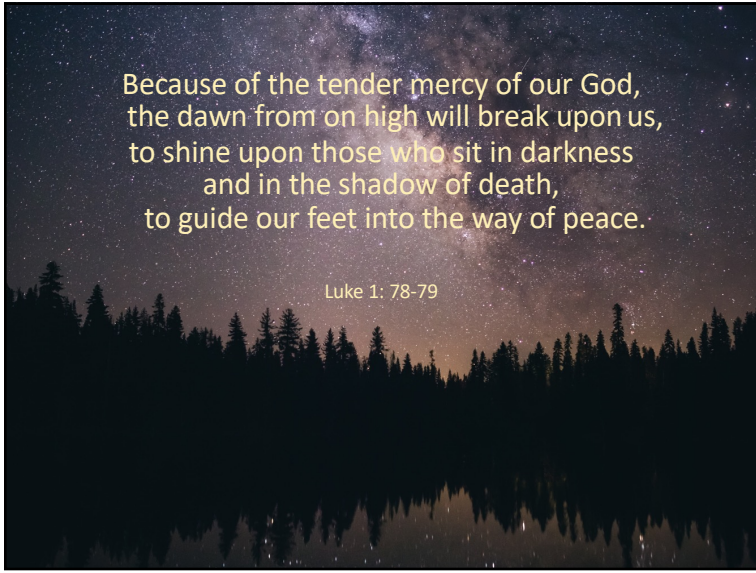
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Shalom and unfailing Love
 our waybread for the journey
 His companions
 confronting the age-old dust of the world's deepest pits
 ...nearest his heart in the most broken places
 Borne along by the Breath
 We are
 More than conquerors
 ...awestruck through our tears
 ...and unafraid.

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

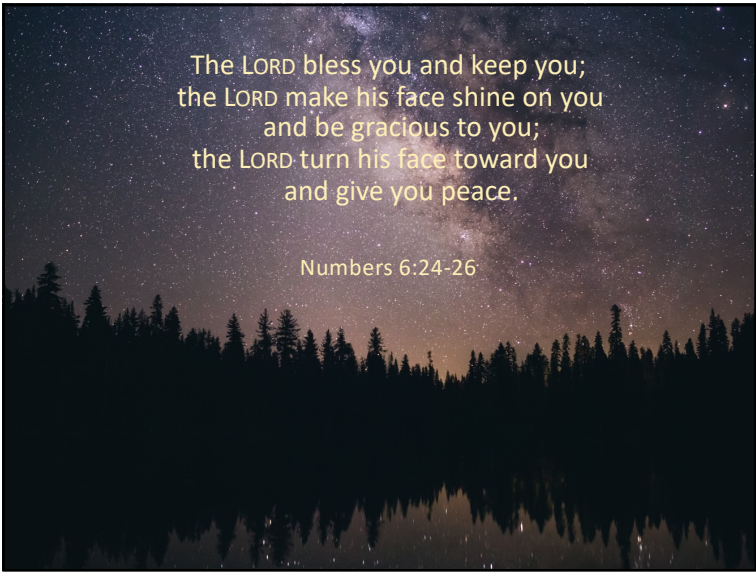
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Because of the tender mercy of our God,
 the dawn from on high will break upon us,
 to shine upon those who sit in darkness
 and in the shadow of death,
 to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1: 78-79

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The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

53



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