

This is why for thousands of years Christians have found the cross to be so central to life. It speaks to us of God's suffering, God's pain, God's broken heart. It's God making the first move and then waiting for our response.

Rob Bell.

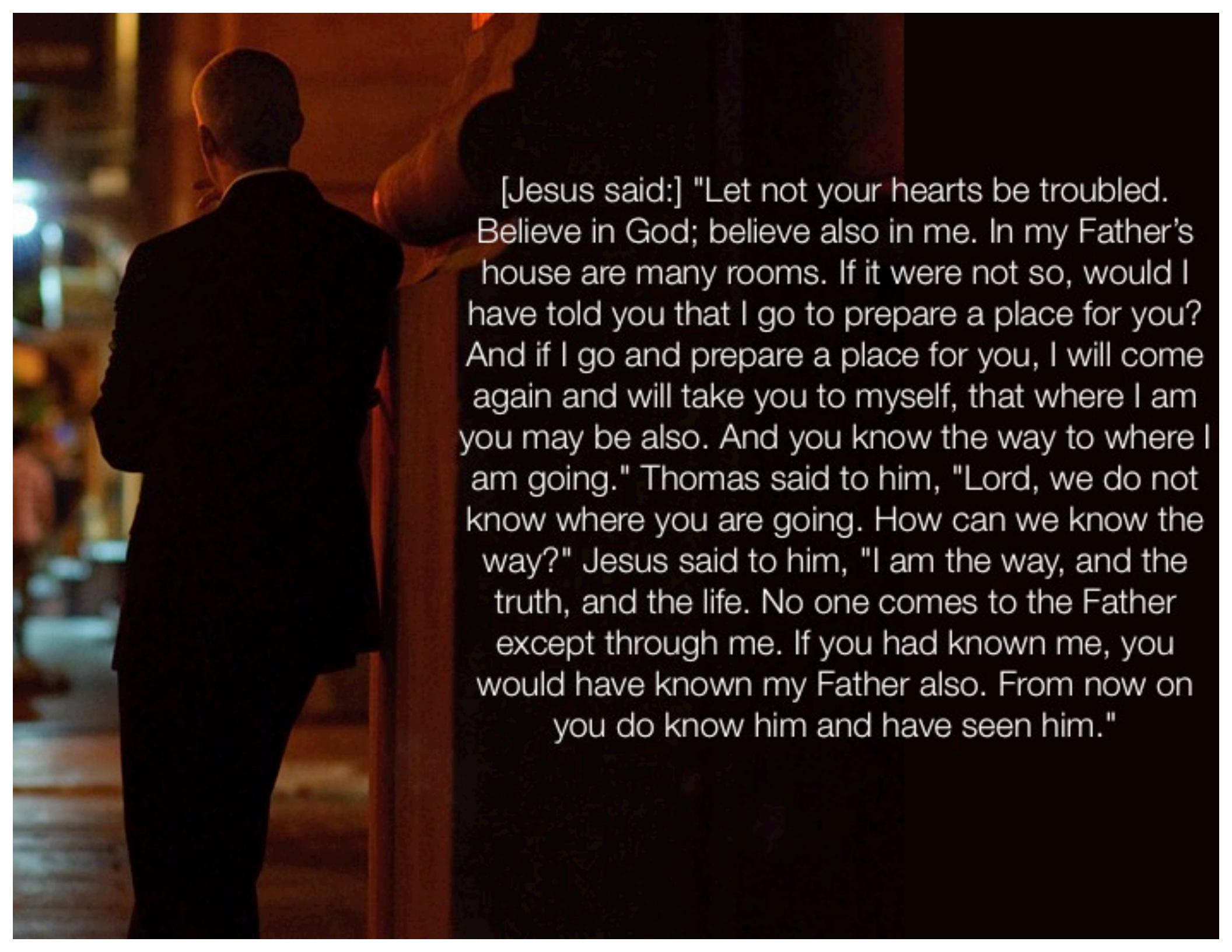
I am the way and the truth and the life.

Jesus

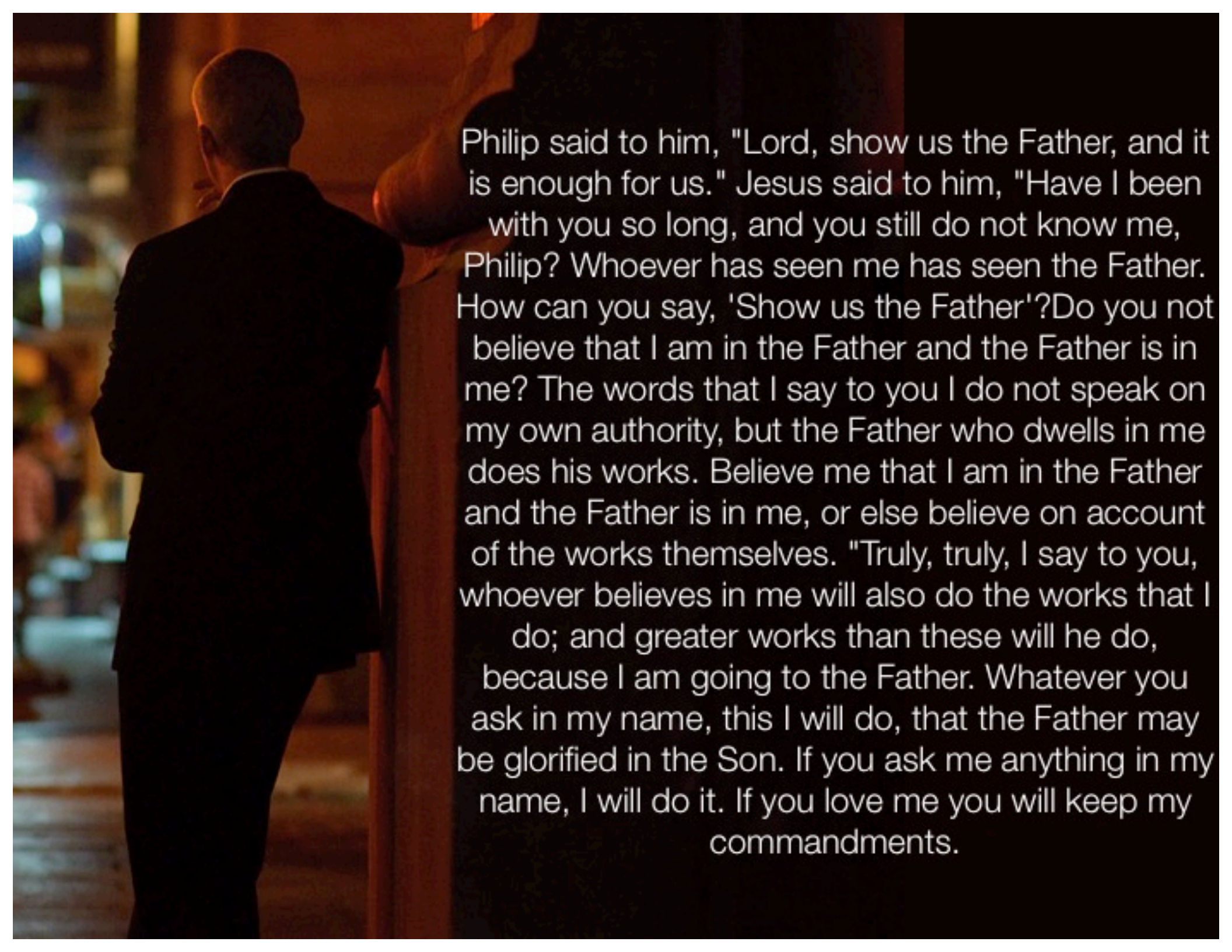


WORD
MADE
FLESH

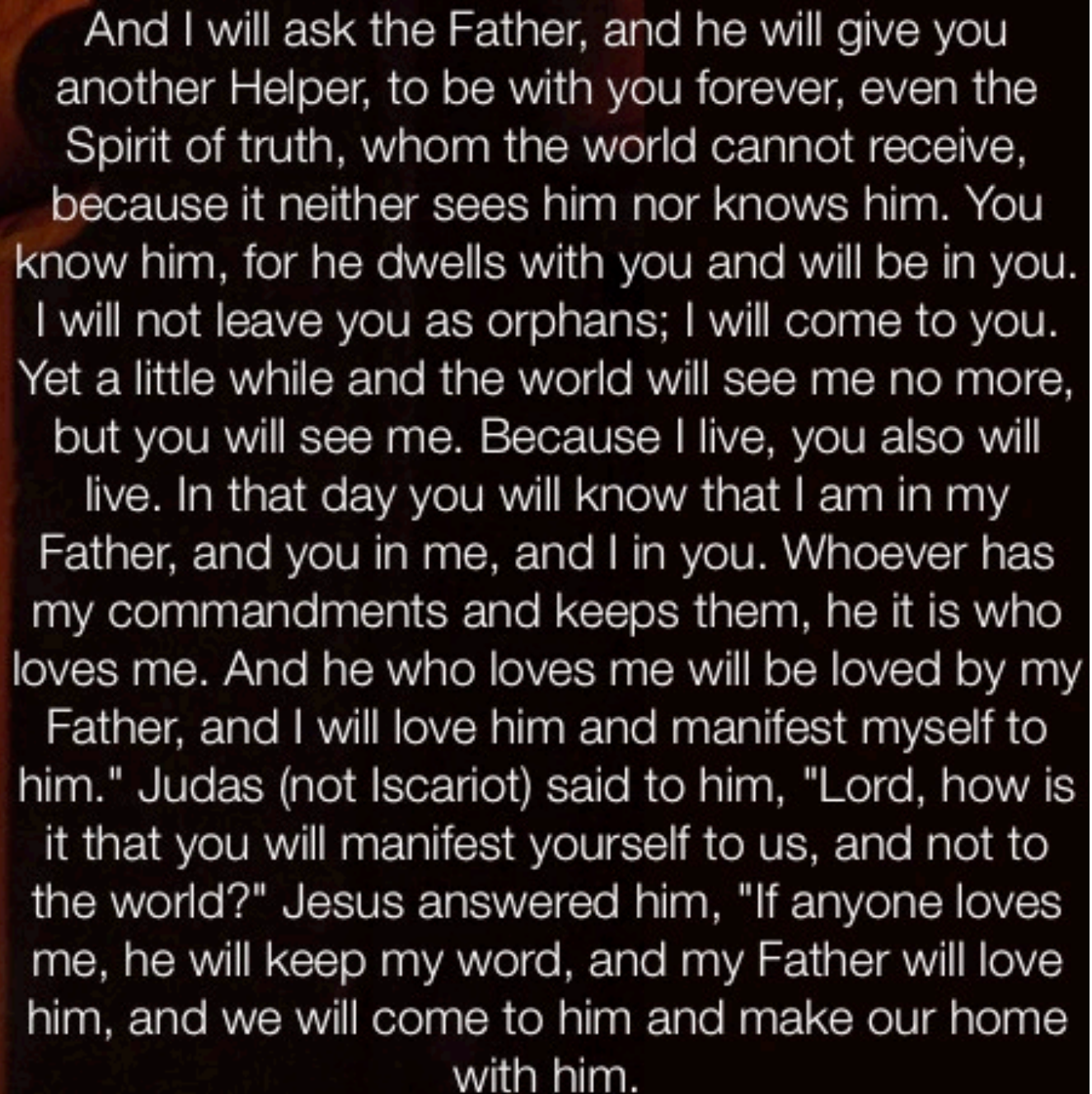
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[Jesus said:] "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

A silhouette of a man in a suit standing at night, looking towards a blurred city street with lights. The man is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing right. The background is a dark, out-of-focus urban scene with warm, glowing lights from buildings and street lamps. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me you will keep my commandments.

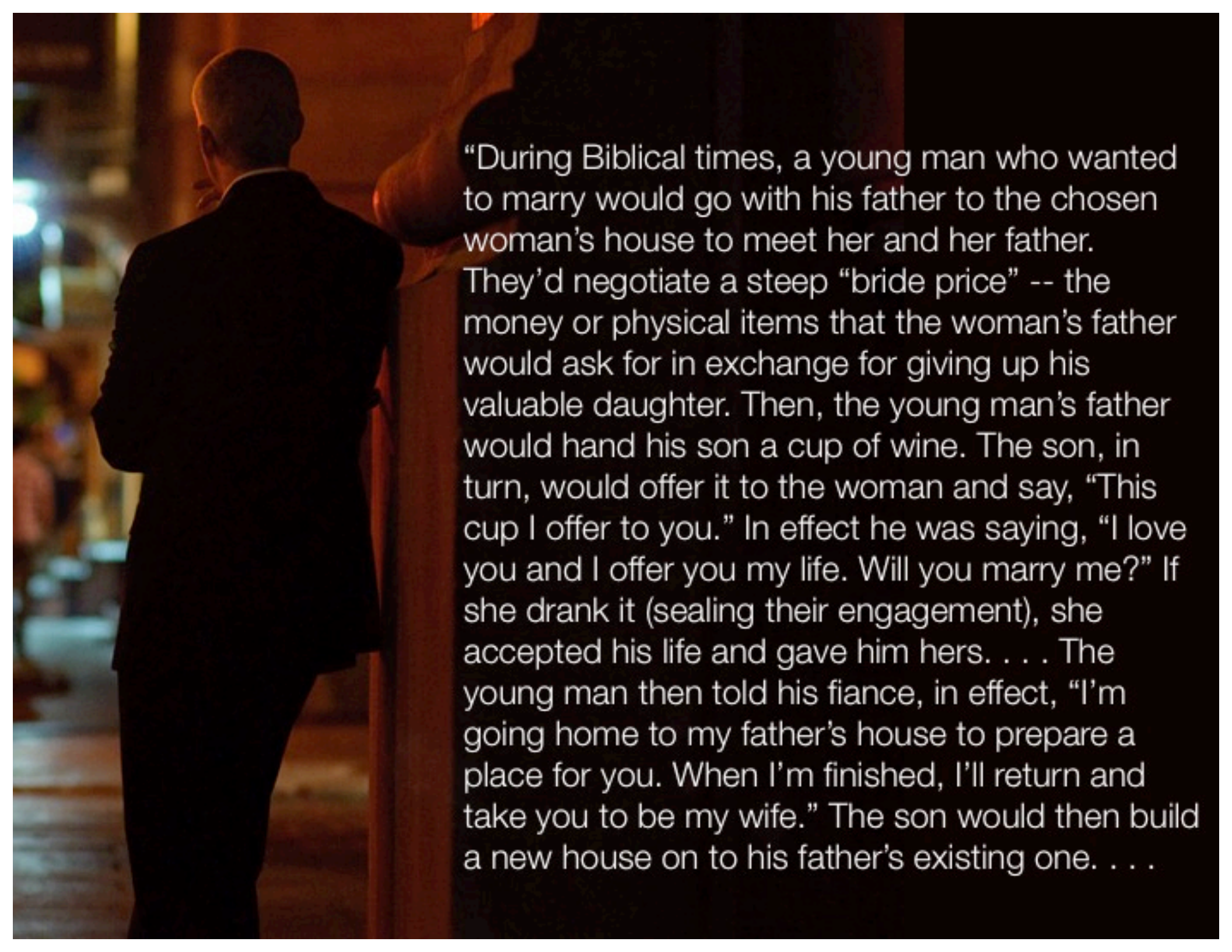


And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

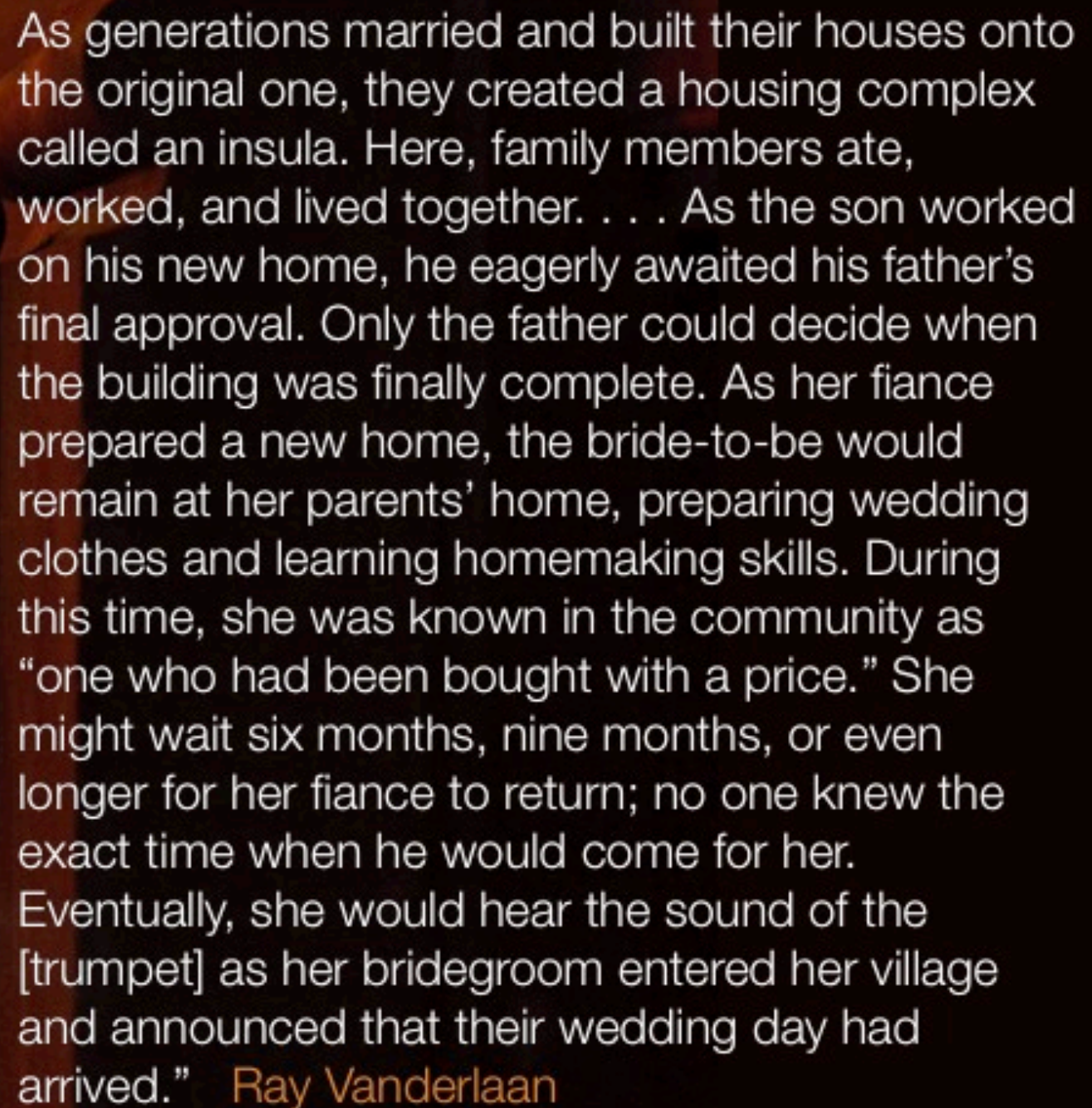
John 14:1-23

A man in a dark suit stands with his back to the camera, looking towards a blurred night scene. In the background, a wedding ceremony is taking place on a street at night, with people and lights visible. The scene is dimly lit, with warm tones from streetlights and cooler tones from the background lights.

*Jewish
Weddings*

A man in a dark suit is seen from the back, standing on a city street at night. He is looking out over a blurred cityscape with lights. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm glow from a light source behind him, possibly a street lamp or building light, creating a silhouette effect. The background shows the outlines of buildings and streetlights, suggesting an urban environment.

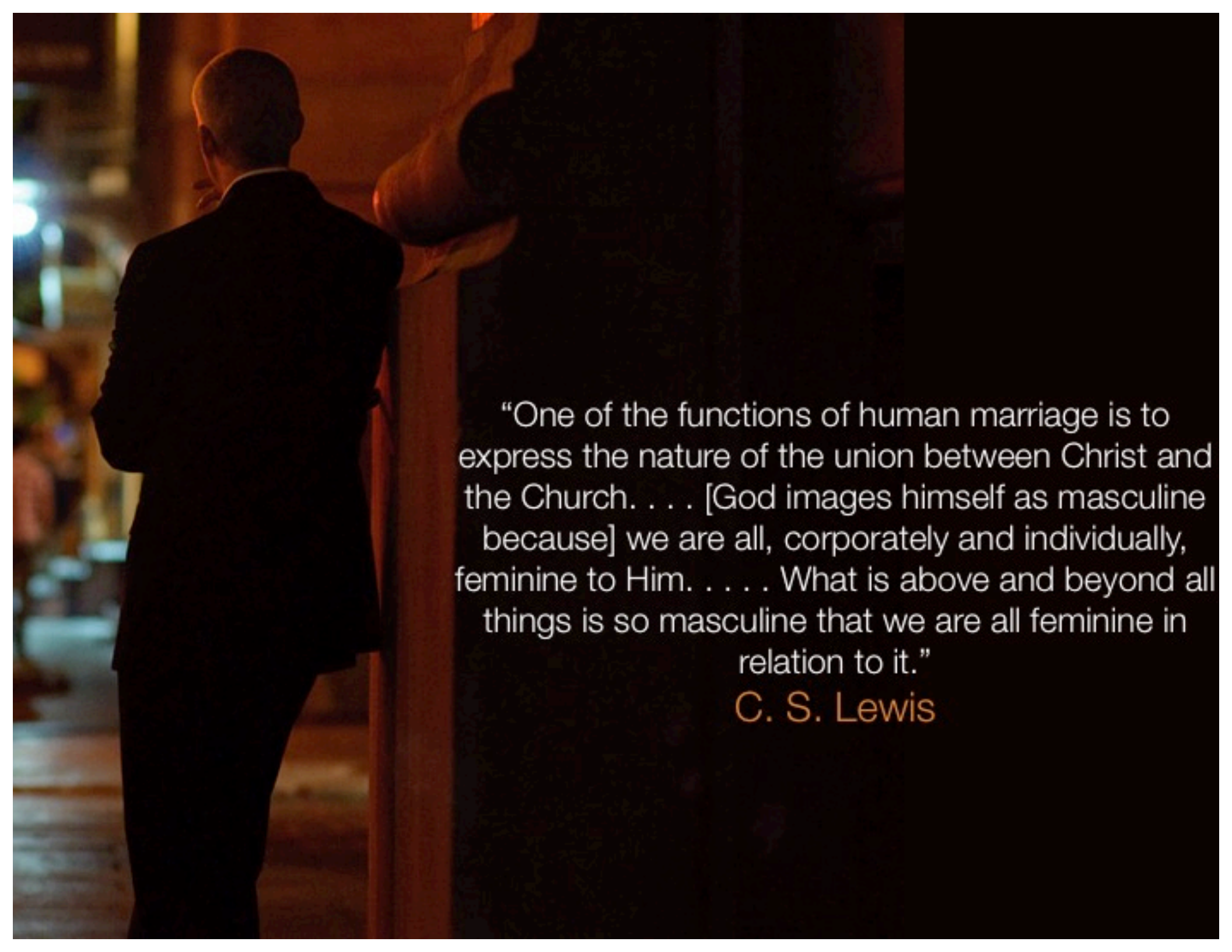
“During Biblical times, a young man who wanted to marry would go with his father to the chosen woman’s house to meet her and her father. They’d negotiate a steep “bride price” -- the money or physical items that the woman’s father would ask for in exchange for giving up his valuable daughter. Then, the young man’s father would hand his son a cup of wine. The son, in turn, would offer it to the woman and say, “This cup I offer to you.” In effect he was saying, “I love you and I offer you my life. Will you marry me?” If she drank it (sealing their engagement), she accepted his life and gave him hers. . . . The young man then told his fiance, in effect, “I’m going home to my father’s house to prepare a place for you. When I’m finished, I’ll return and take you to be my wife.” The son would then build a new house on to his father’s existing one. . . .



As generations married and built their houses onto the original one, they created a housing complex called an insula. Here, family members ate, worked, and lived together. . . . As the son worked on his new home, he eagerly awaited his father's final approval. Only the father could decide when the building was finally complete. As her fiance prepared a new home, the bride-to-be would remain at her parents' home, preparing wedding clothes and learning homemaking skills. During this time, she was known in the community as "one who had been bought with a price." She might wait six months, nine months, or even longer for her fiance to return; no one knew the exact time when he would come for her. Eventually, she would hear the sound of the [trumpet] as her bridegroom entered her village and announced that their wedding day had arrived." **Ray Vanderlaan**


A man in a dark suit is seen from behind, standing on a city street at night. He is looking towards a blurred background of lights and people. The scene is dimly lit, with warm streetlights and cooler blue lights from buildings in the distance. The overall mood is contemplative and mysterious.

The Pursuer

A man in a dark suit is seen from behind, standing on a city street at night. He is looking out over a blurred cityscape with lights. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm glow from a street lamp or building light in the foreground. The background shows a street with other people and buildings, all out of focus.

“One of the functions of human marriage is to express the nature of the union between Christ and the Church. . . . [God images himself as masculine because] we are all, corporately and individually, feminine to Him. . . . What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it.”

C. S. Lewis



Verbs/Actions of God:

going away to make ready a place for you
come again and take you

I am

performs his miraculous deeds

do whatever you ask

ask the Father

give you another Advocate

be with you forever

resides with you and will be in you

not abandon you . . . come to you

because I live, you will live too

I am in the Father and you are in me and I am in you

will love [you] and reveal myself to [you]

love [you] and come to [you]

take up residence with [you]

the Father sent the Son

Verbs/Actions of People:

believe in God

know the way . . . know God

ask Jesus anything in his name

love Jesus --> obey Jesus and his commandments

from John 14:1-23

A man in a dark suit is seen from behind, standing on a city street at night. He is holding a mobile phone to his ear. The background is filled with blurred lights and the silhouettes of other people, suggesting a busy urban environment. The lighting is warm and low, typical of city streetlights at night.

The Great "I AM"

A man in a dark suit is seen from behind, talking on a mobile phone. He is standing on a city street at night, leaning against a utility pole. The background is blurred, showing other people and city lights. The text "Waiting and Responding" is overlaid on the right side of the image in a white, cursive font.

*Waiting and
Responding*

A photograph of a wet city street at night. The street is wet and reflects the yellow and green neon lights from the buildings. A person in a dark hooded jacket is walking away from the camera in the center of the frame. To the left, a white SUV is parked. On the right, there are closed metal shutters for storefronts. In the background, there are more buildings and a street sign with Chinese characters. The overall atmosphere is urban and nocturnal.

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