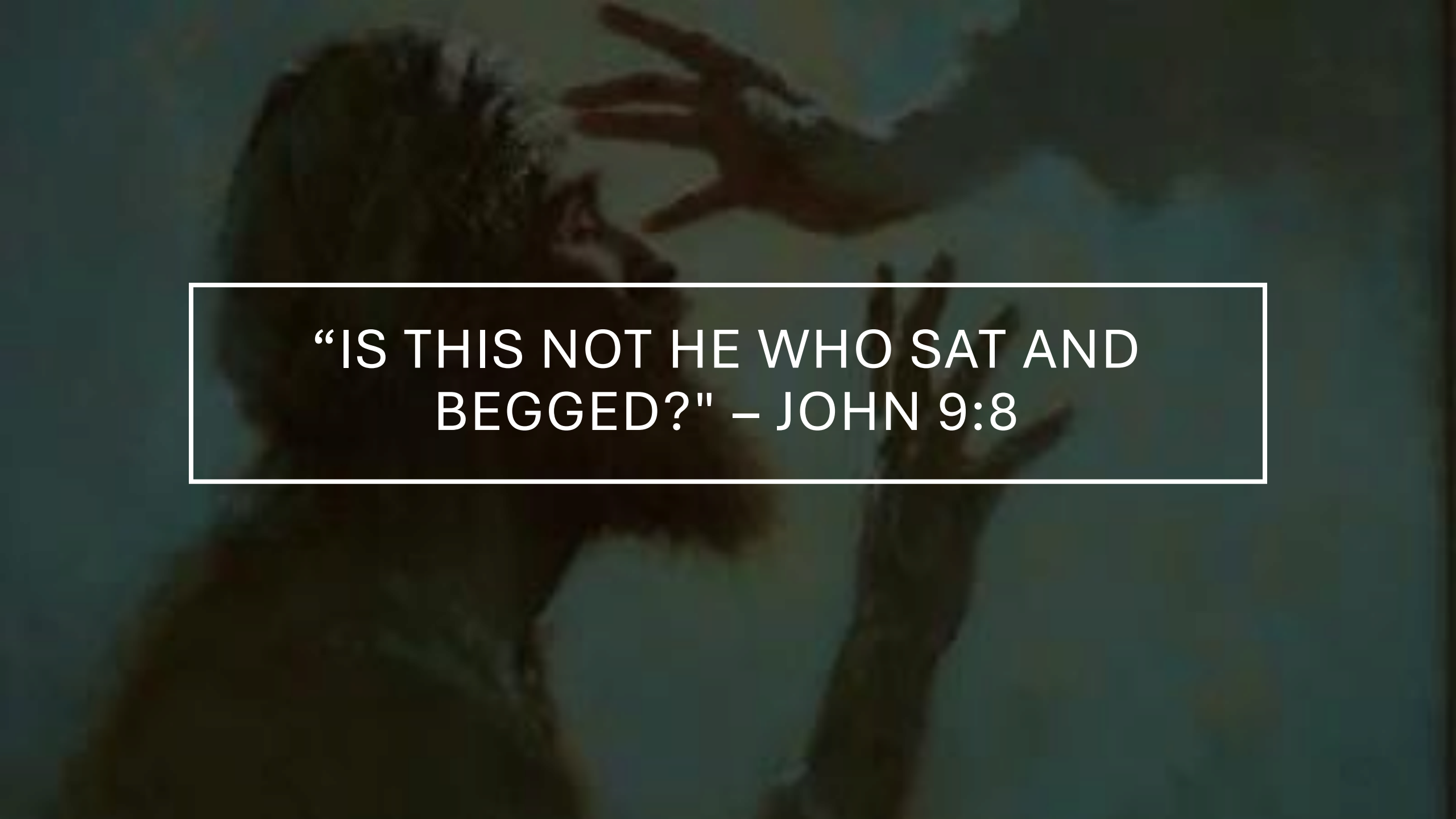
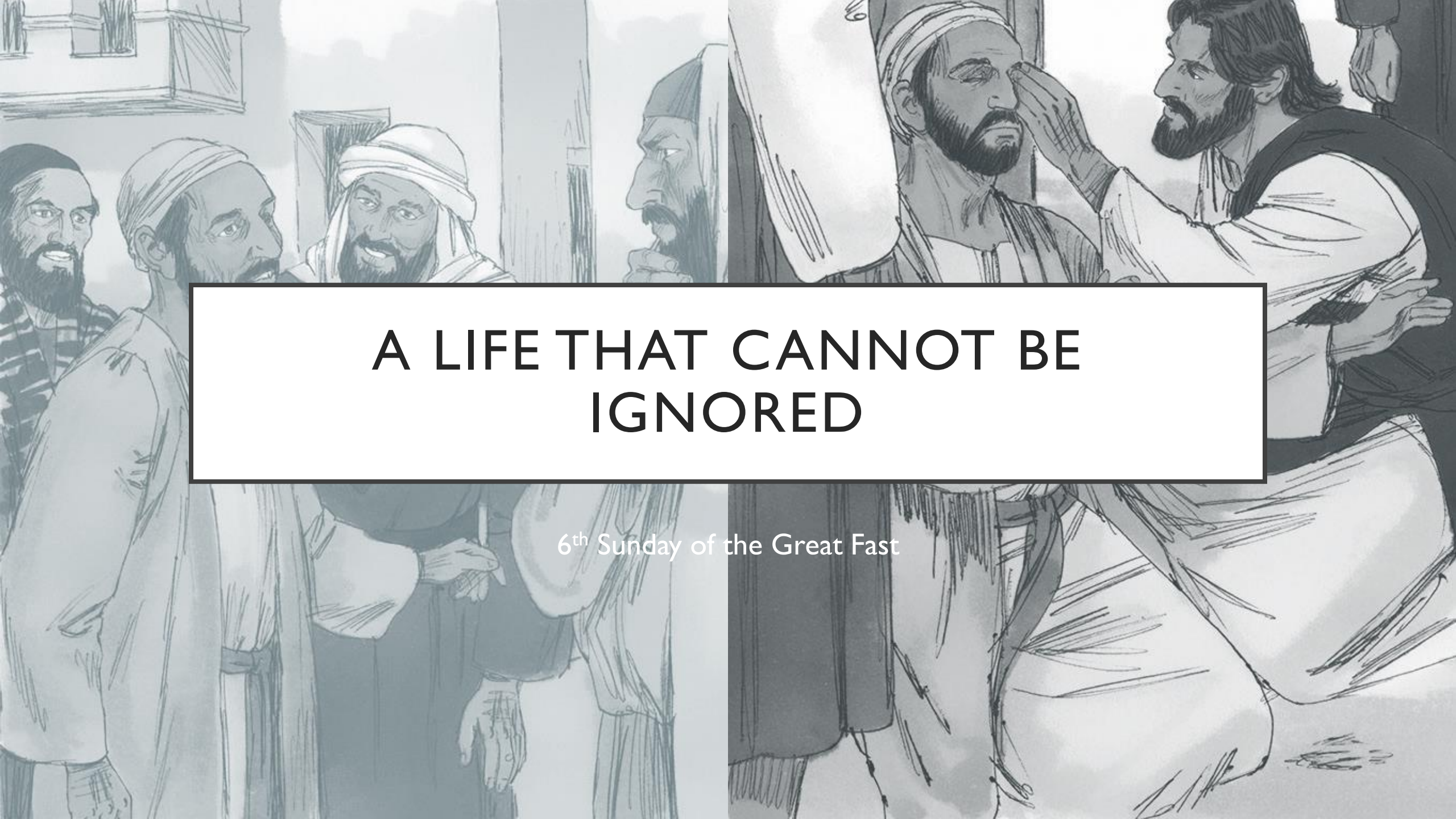


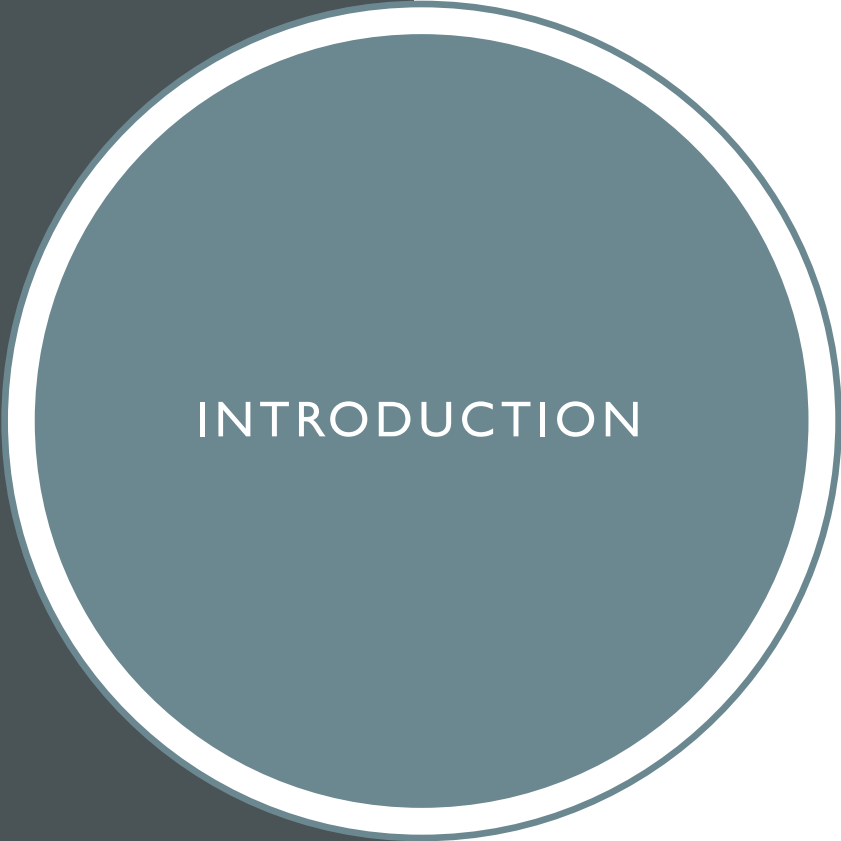
A person is shown from the chest up, with their arms raised and hands open in a gesture of prayer or praise. The background is a soft, out-of-focus sunset or sunrise sky with warm orange and yellow tones. The person's face is partially visible, looking upwards. The overall mood is one of devotion and hope.

“IS THIS NOT HE WHO SAT AND
BEGGED?” – JOHN 9:8



A LIFE THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED

6th Sunday of the Great Fast



INTRODUCTION

- “Is this not he...who sat and begged?” (Jn. 9:8)
- Can our lives be changed in manner where our neighbors might say, “Is this not he...”?
- What distinguishes the Christian life from the rest of the world?
- “...always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear...” (1 Pet. 3:15)



I. GRIEVING WITH HOPE

- The Christian view of grief is radically different from the rest of the world.
- It is framed in the hope of the Resurrection.
- EX: David
- And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? **I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.**" (2 Sam. 12:22-23)

I. GRIEVING WITH HOPE

"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, **lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

2. RESPONDING WITH LOVE RATHER THAN RETALIATION

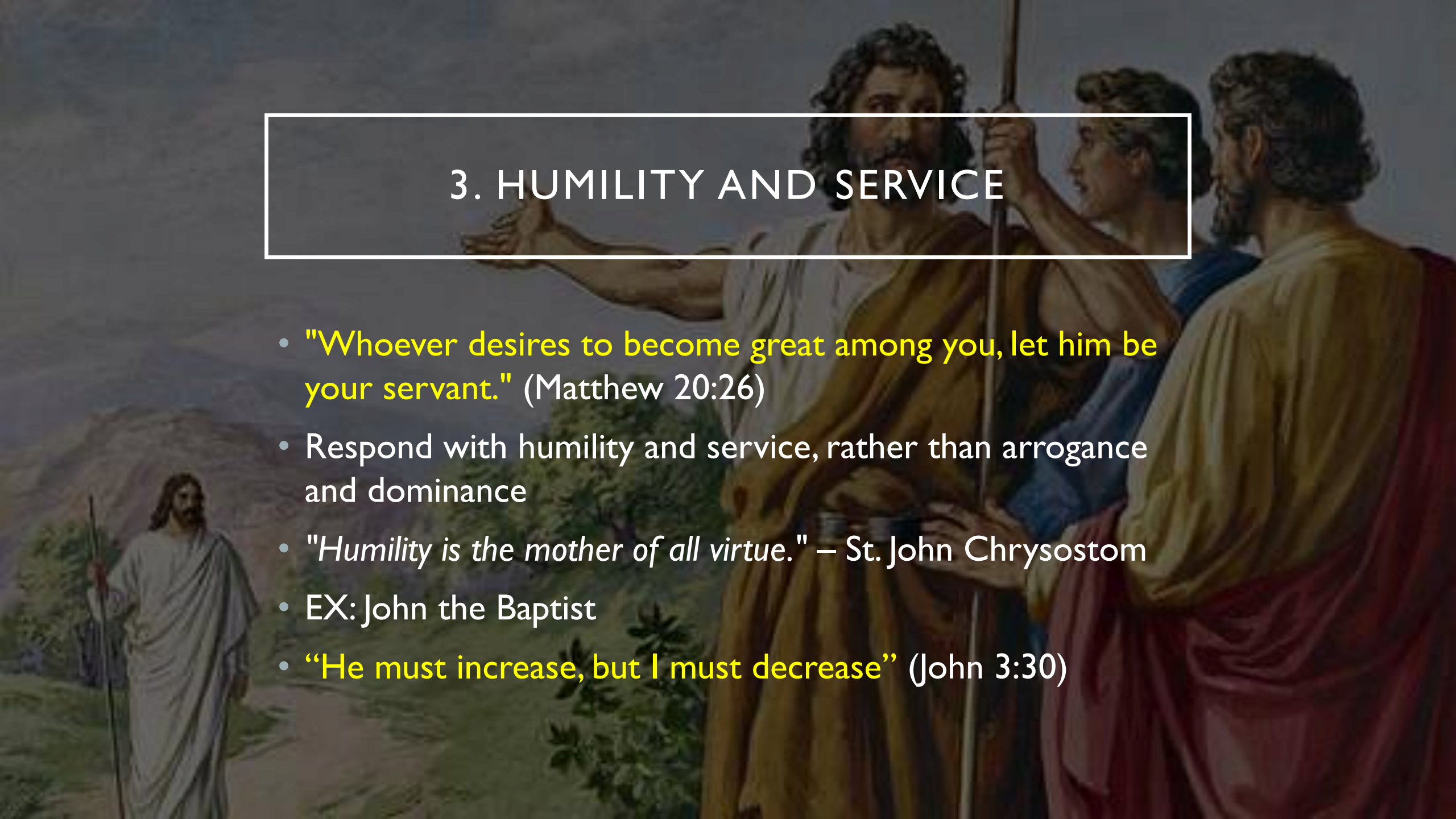
- Believers are called to respond differently when wronged, practicing love rather than retaliation.
- "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..." (Matt. 5:43-44)





2. RESPONDING WITH LOVE RATHER THAN RETALIATION

- “...ought we not to resist the evil one? Indeed we ought, but not in this way, but as He has commanded, by giving one's self up to suffer wrongfully; for thus shall you prevail over him. **For one fire is not quenched by another, but fire by water.**” (St. John Chrysostom)
- EX: Stephen
- “Lord, do not charge them with this sin” (Acts 7:60).



3. HUMILITY AND SERVICE

- "Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant." (Matthew 20:26)
- Respond with humility and service, rather than arrogance and dominance
- "*Humility is the mother of all virtue.*" – St. John Chrysostom
- EX: John the Baptist
- "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30)

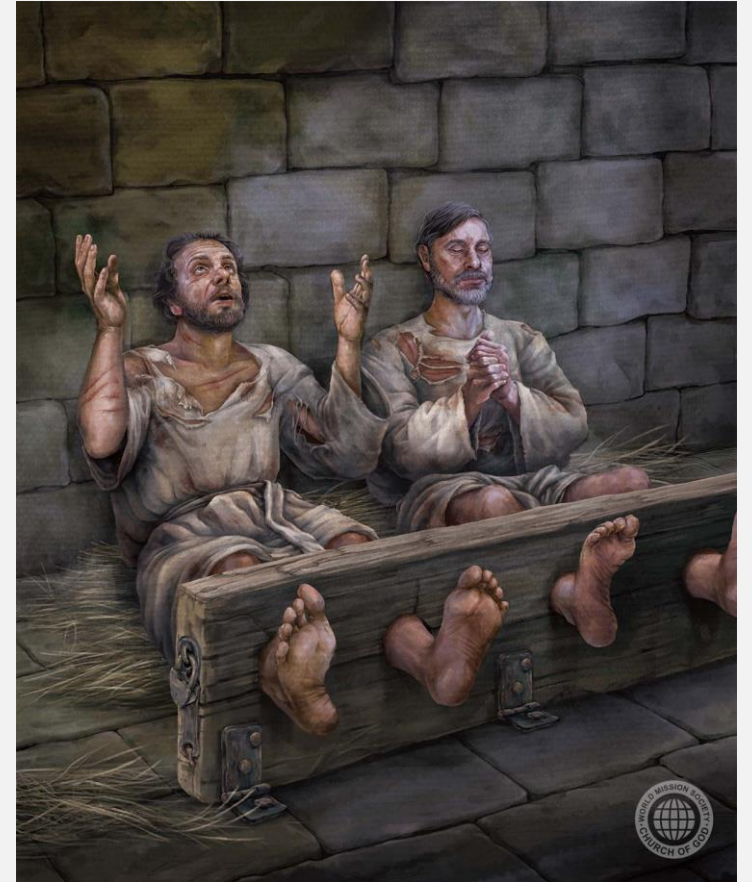


4. FACING TRIALS WITH FAITH AND HOPE

- We are called to respond to hardships with joy, recognizing that we may grow spiritually in trials.
- EX:Tobit
- “Where is your hope, on behalf of which you gave alms and buried the dead?” In truth, Tobit corrected them, saying: **“Do not speak in this way, for we are the sons of the holy ones, and we look forward to that life which God will give to those who never change in their faith before him.”** (Tob. 2:16-18)

4. FACING TRIALS WITH FAITH AND HOPE

- EX: Sarah
- “But all who worship you are certain of this: that one’s life, if it should be tested, shall be crowned, and if it should be in tribulation, shall be delivered, and if it should be corrected, shall be permitted to approach your mercy. For you are not delighted with our perdition. For, after a storm, you create tranquility, and after tears and weeping, you pour out exultation. May your name, O God of Israel, be blessed forever.” (Tob. 3:21-23)
- “Count it all joy when you fall into various trials.” (James 1:2)
- “Trials are like a furnace; they refine and purify the soul.” – St. Anthony the Great
- EX: Paul and Silas



PSALM 60 (AGPEYA)

From the ends of the earth I have cried to You, when my heart was in trouble. You elevated me up on a rock, You guided me; You became my hope, a tower of power from the face of an enemy. I shall dwell in Your dwelling place forever; I shall be sheltered under the shadow of Your wings.



5. PRIORITIZING HEAVENLY TREASURE

- Christians ought to prioritize eternal treasures over temporary earthly wealth.
- EX:Tobit
- “Do not be afraid, my son. We do indeed lead a poor life, but we will have many good things: if we fear God, and withdraw from all sin, and do what is good.” (Tob. 4:23)
- Prioritize heaven
- "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." (Matthew 6:19,20)
- *"The one who gathers treasures in heaven will never experience loss or sorrow."* – St. Basil the Great
- EX: Moses

6. DESPISING WHAT IS SINFUL

- Believers are distinctively marked by their rejection of sin and evil, choosing holiness.
- "In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord." (Psalm 15:4)
- How can we despise evil or sin?
 1. Refuse dishonesty and cheating
 2. Guard against harmful entertainment
 3. Distance yourself from bad influences



6. DESPISING WHAT IS SINFUL

- *"He who despises sin truly loves God, and to despise evil is to grow in virtue."* – St. Gregory of Nyssa
- EX: Joseph
- **"How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"** (Genesis 39:9)



CONCLUSION:

- We are called to live radically different lives that challenge our communities.
 1. Grieving with Hope
 2. Responding with Love rather than Retaliation
 3. Humility and Service
 4. Facing Trials with faith and hope
 5. Prioritizing Heavenly Treasure
 6. Despising What is Sinful
- “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16)