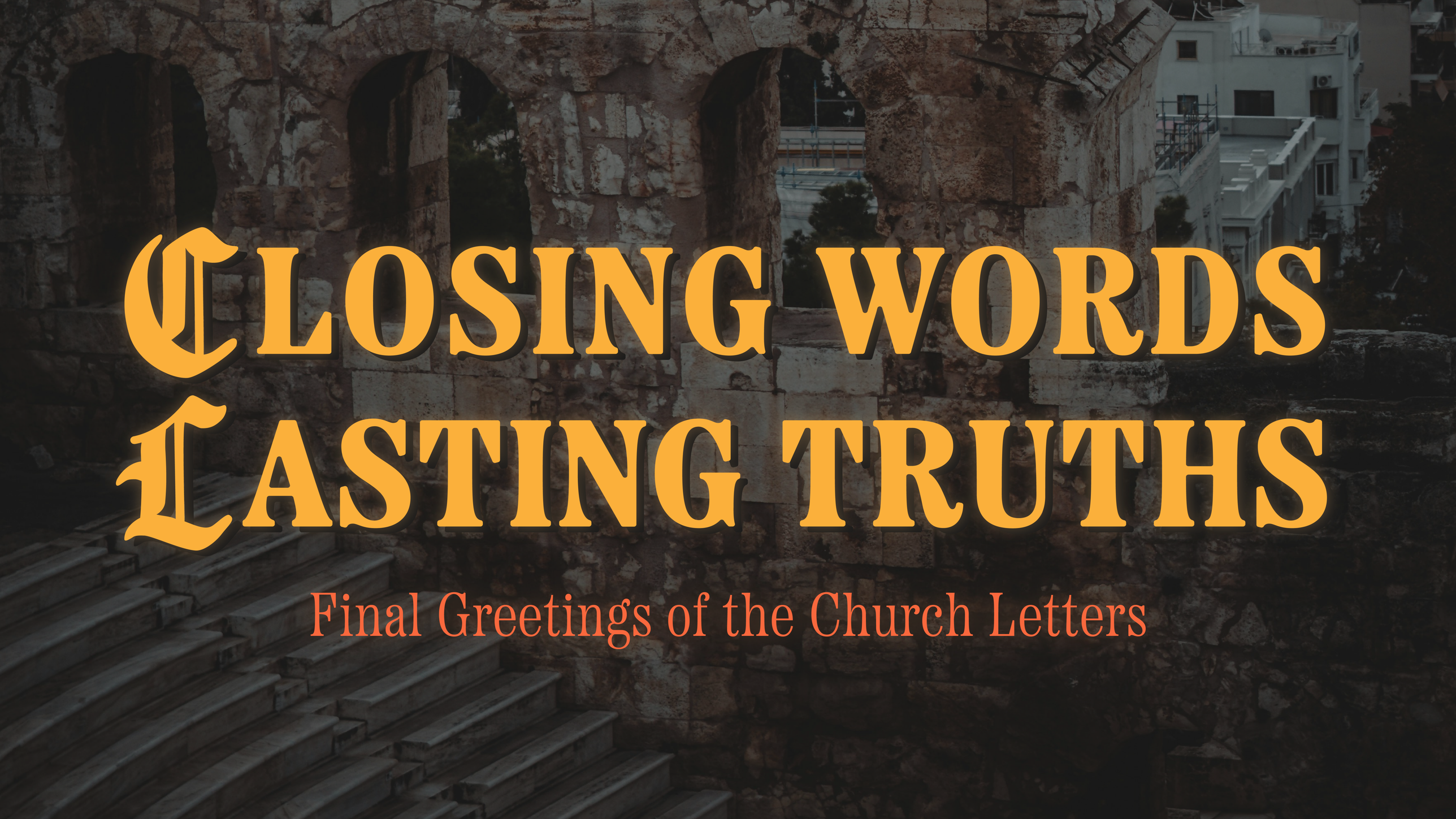
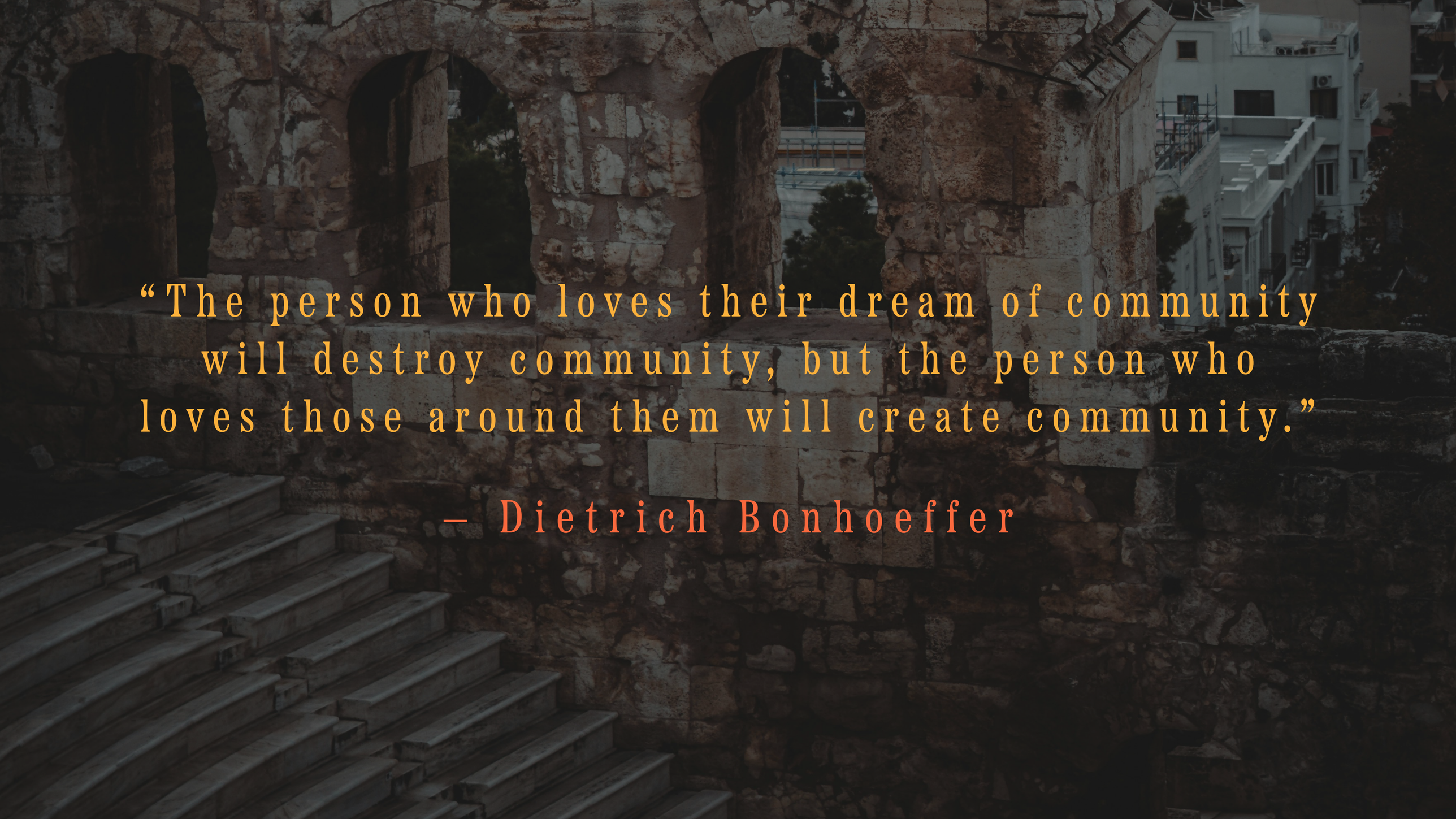
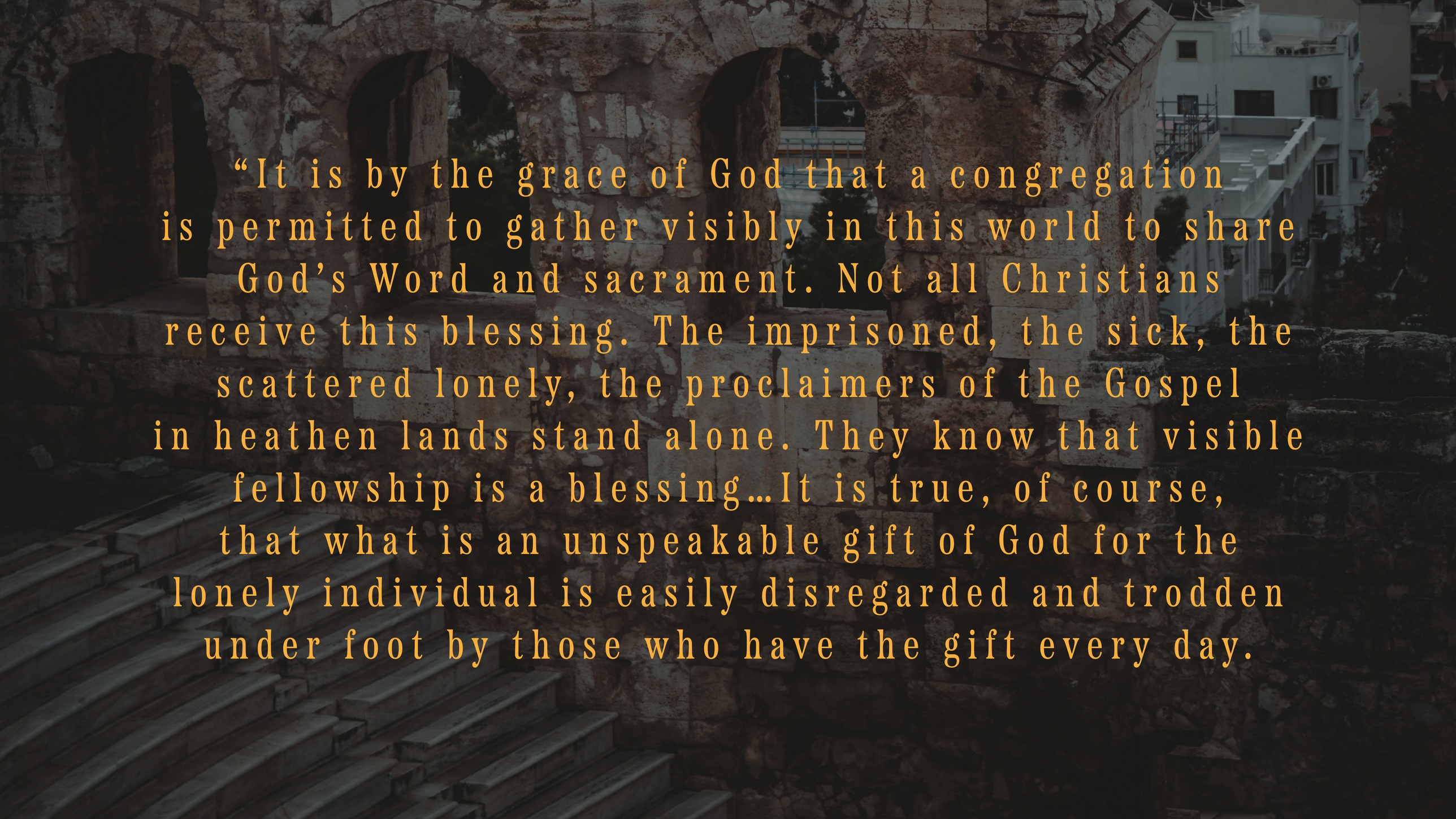


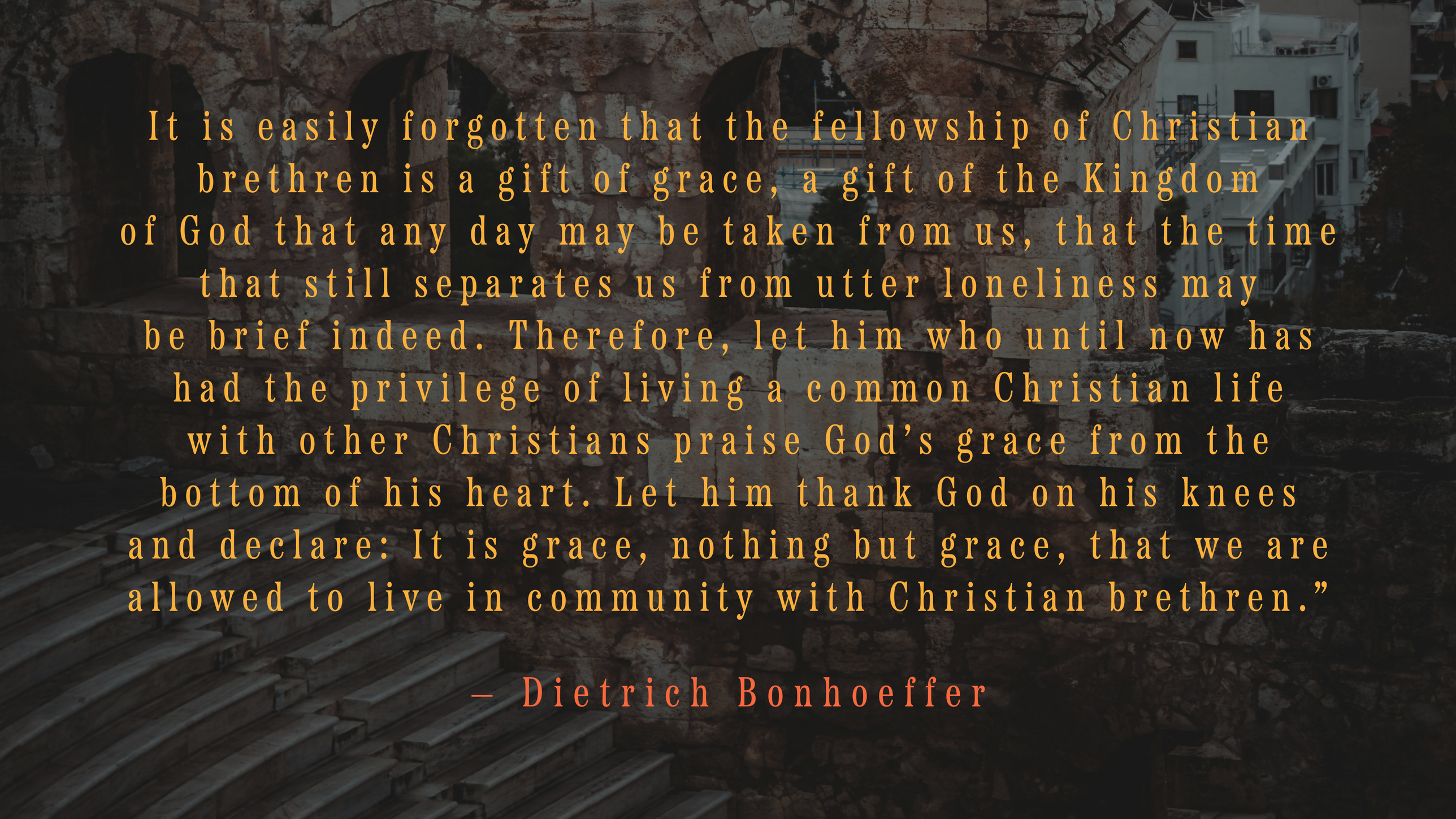
Closing Words Lasting Truths

Final Greetings of the Church Letters


“The person who loves their dream of community
will destroy community, but the person who
loves those around them will create community.”
– Dietrich Bonhoeffer



“It is by the grace of God that a congregation is permitted to gather visibly in this world to share God’s Word and sacrament. Not all Christians receive this blessing. The imprisoned, the sick, the scattered lonely, the proclaimers of the Gospel in heathen lands stand alone. They know that visible fellowship is a blessing…It is true, of course, that what is an unspeakable gift of God for the lonely individual is easily disregarded and trodden under foot by those who have the gift every day.



It is easily forgotten that the fellowship of Christian brethren is a gift of grace, a gift of the Kingdom of God that any day may be taken from us, that the time that still separates us from utter loneliness may be brief indeed. Therefore, let him who until now has had the privilege of living a common Christian life with other Christians praise God's grace from the bottom of his heart. Let him thank God on his knees and declare: It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren."

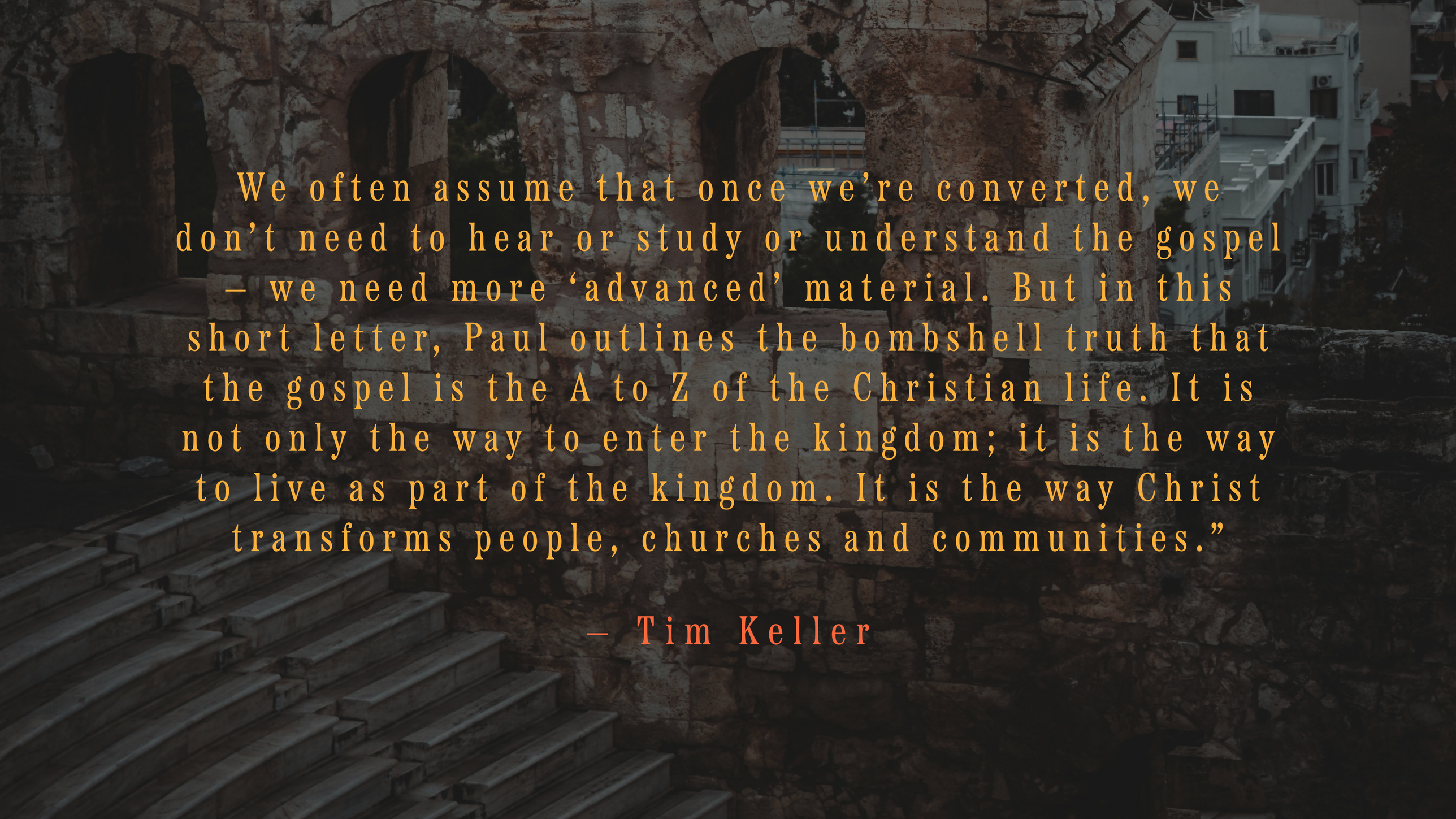
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer



BOASTING IN THE CROSS
MARKED BY CHRIST

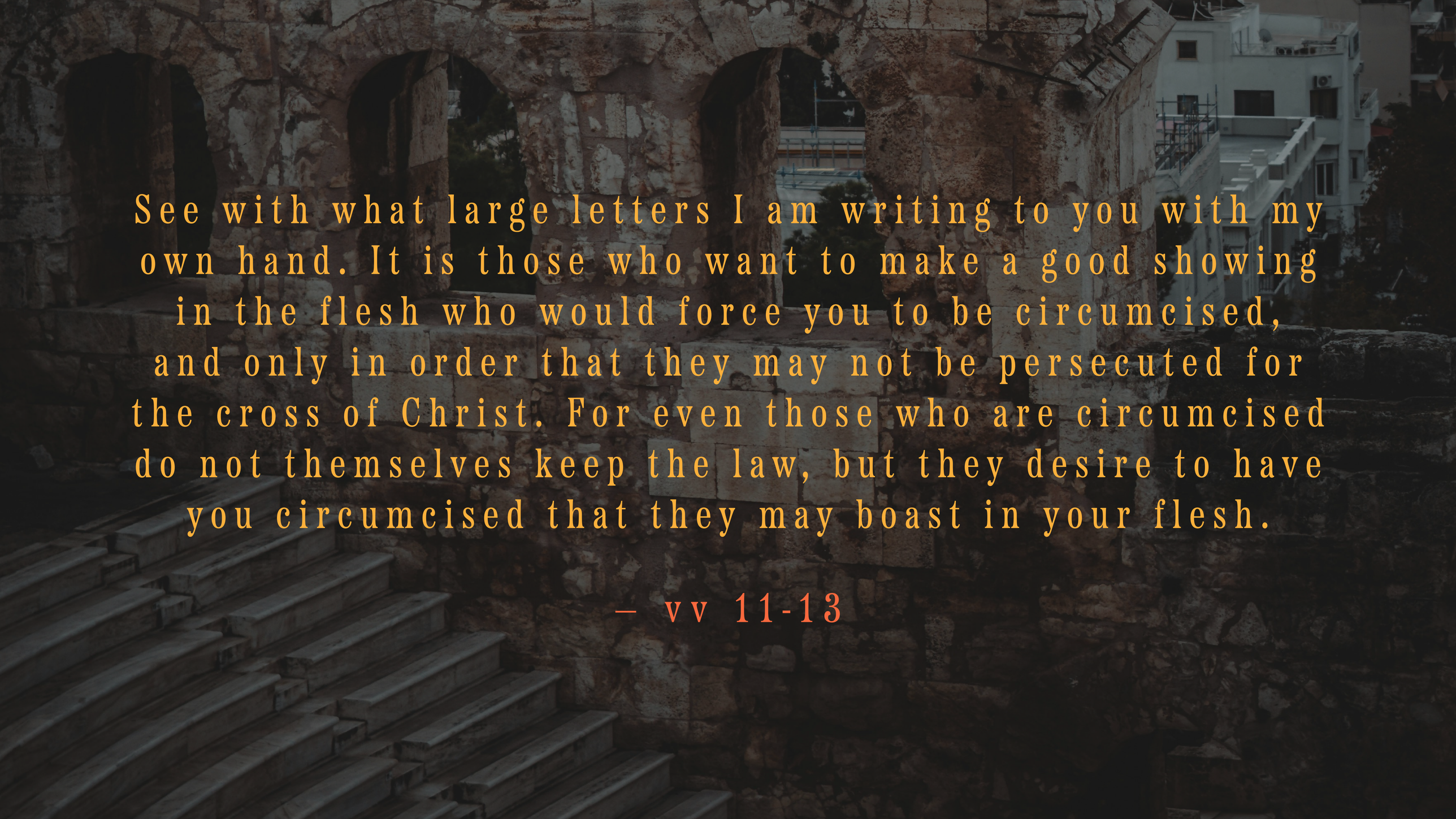
Galatians 6:11-18

"The book of Galatians is dynamite. It is an explosion of joy and freedom which leaves us enjoying a deep significance, security and satisfaction – the life of blessing God calls His people into. Why? Because it brings us face to face with the gospel. It's very common in Christian circles to assume that 'the gospel' is something mainly for non-Christians. We see it as a set of basic 'ABC' doctrines that are the way in which someone enters the kingdom of God.



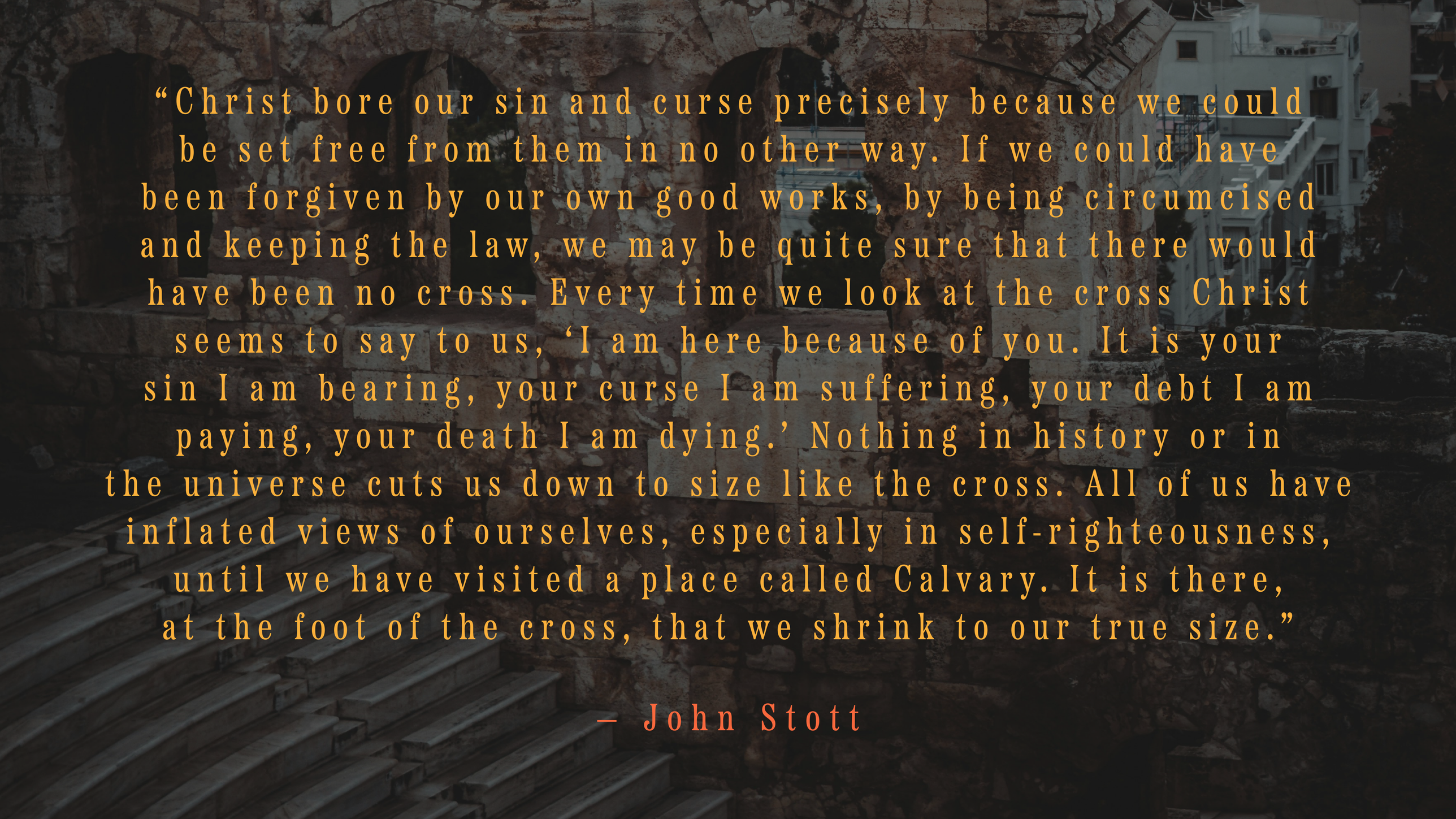
We often assume that once we're converted, we don't need to hear or study or understand the gospel – we need more 'advanced' material. But in this short letter, Paul outlines the bombshell truth that the gospel is the A to Z of the Christian life. It is not only the way to enter the kingdom; it is the way to live as part of the kingdom. It is the way Christ transforms people, churches and communities."

– Tim Keller



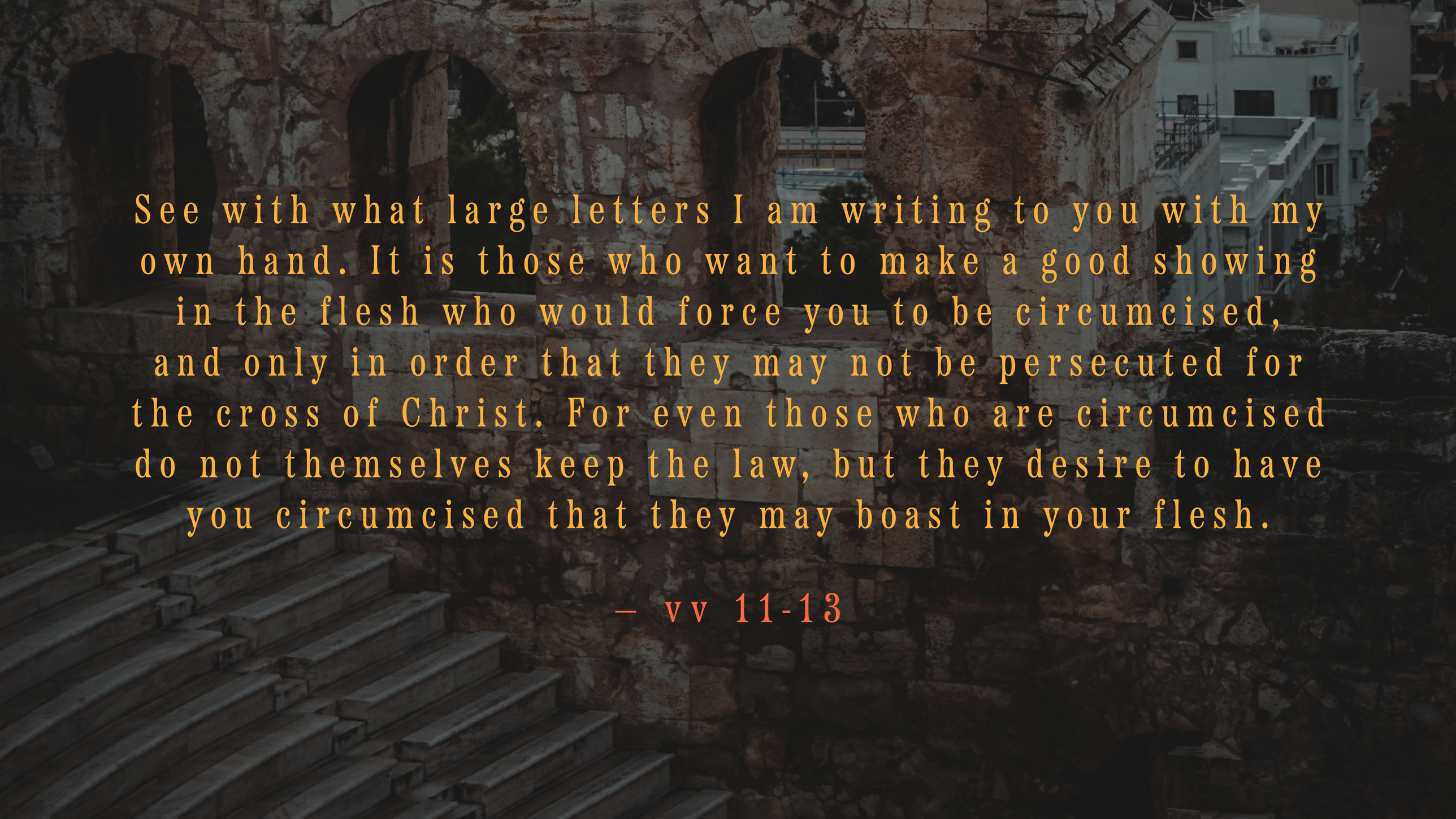
See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

– vv 11-13



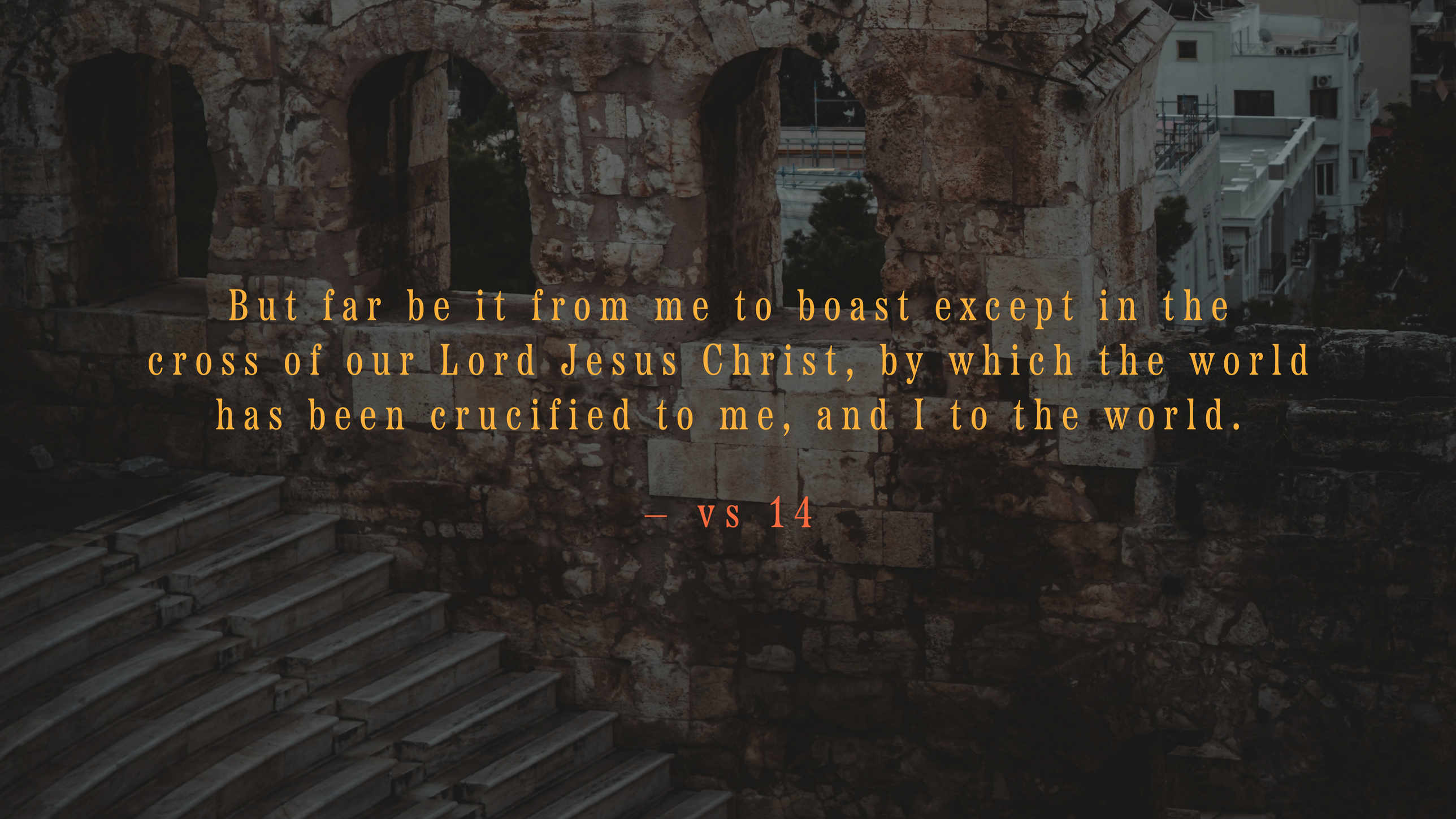
“Christ bore our sin and curse precisely because we could be set free from them in no other way. If we could have been forgiven by our own good works, by being circumcised and keeping the law, we may be quite sure that there would have been no cross. Every time we look at the cross Christ seems to say to us, ‘I am here because of you. It is your sin I am bearing, your curse I am suffering, your debt I am paying, your death I am dying.’ Nothing in history or in the universe cuts us down to size like the cross. All of us have inflated views of ourselves, especially in self-righteousness, until we have visited a place called Calvary. It is there, at the foot of the cross, that we shrink to our true size.”

– John Stott



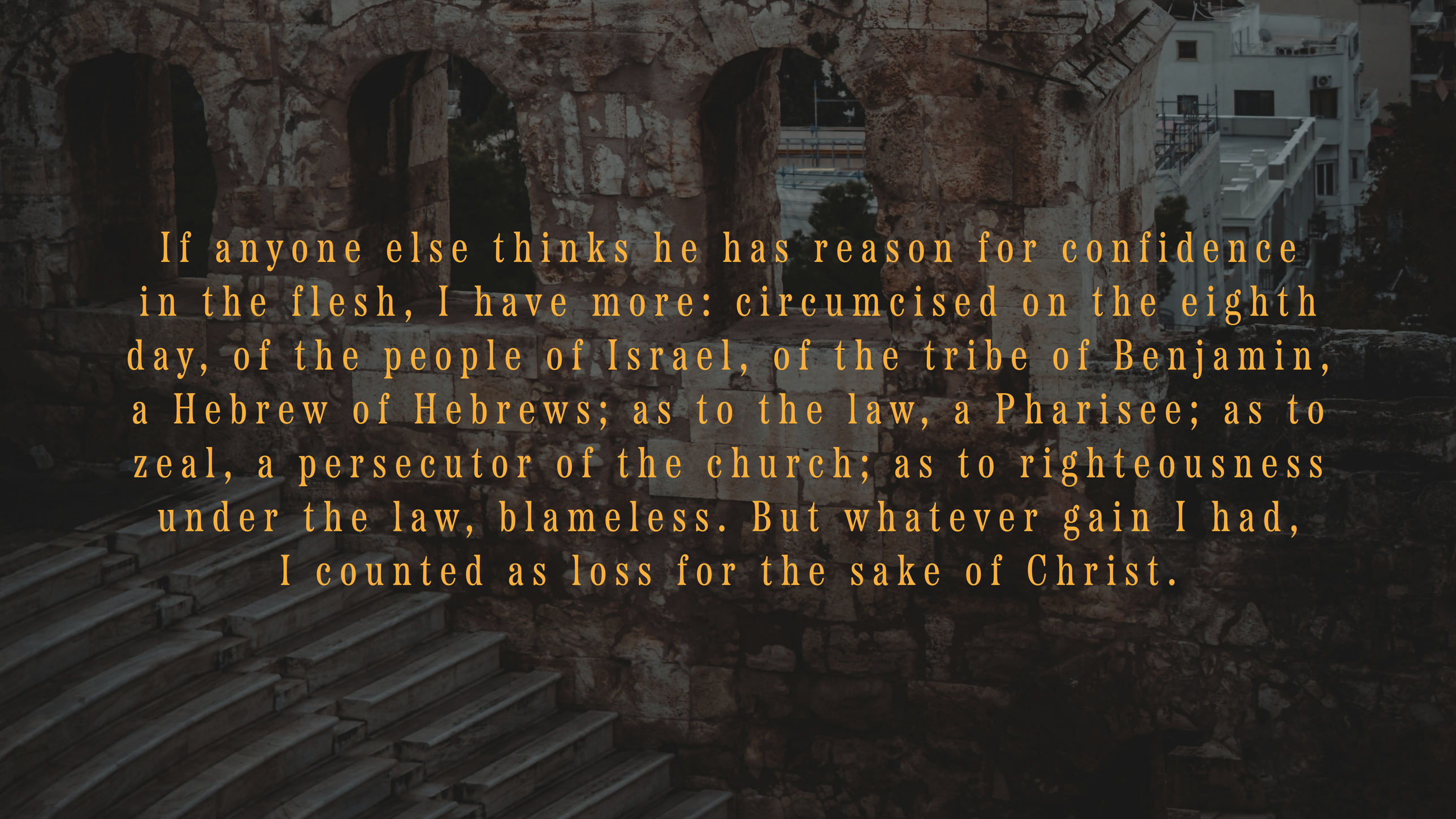
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– vv 11-13



But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

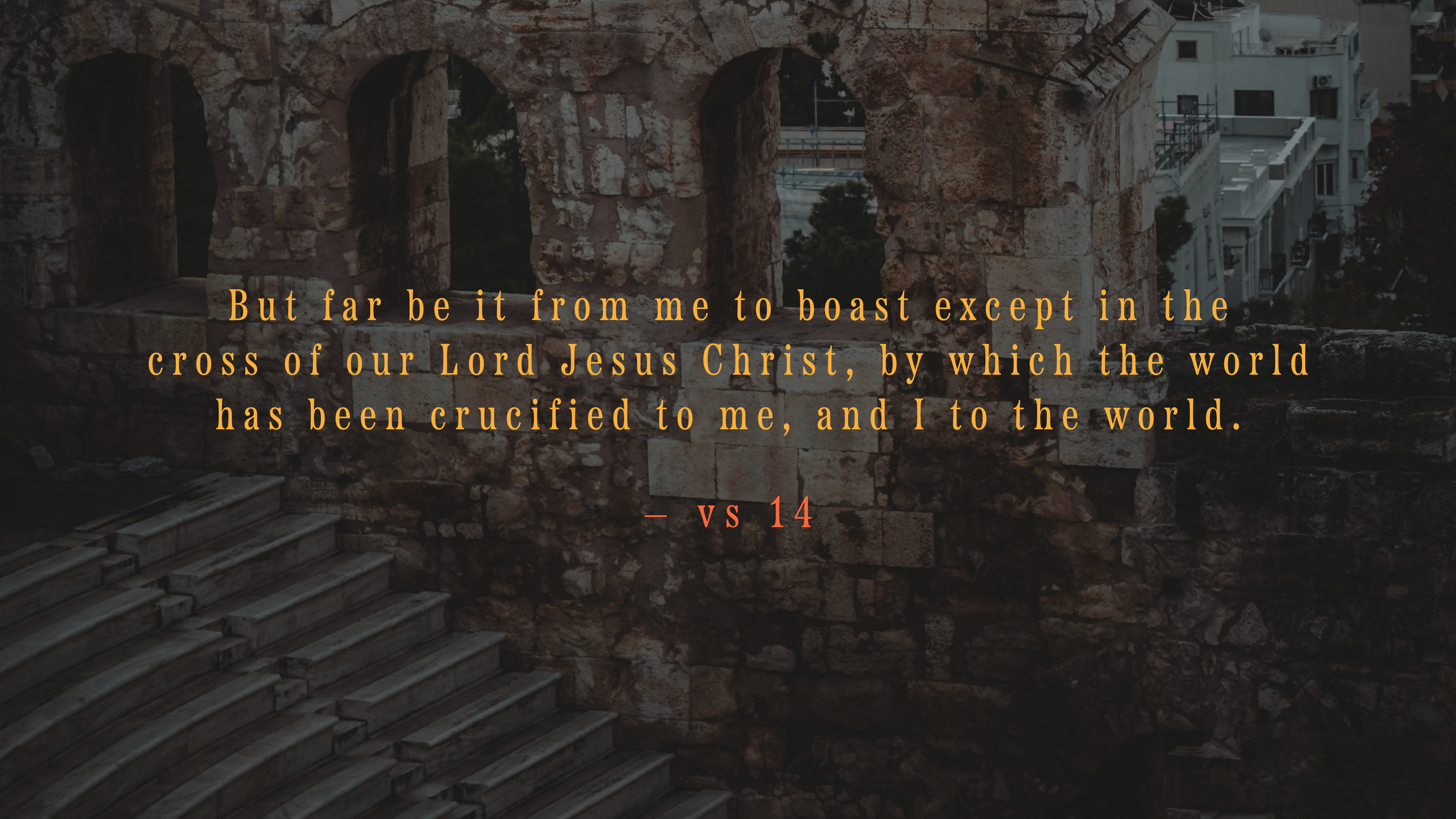
– vs 14



If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

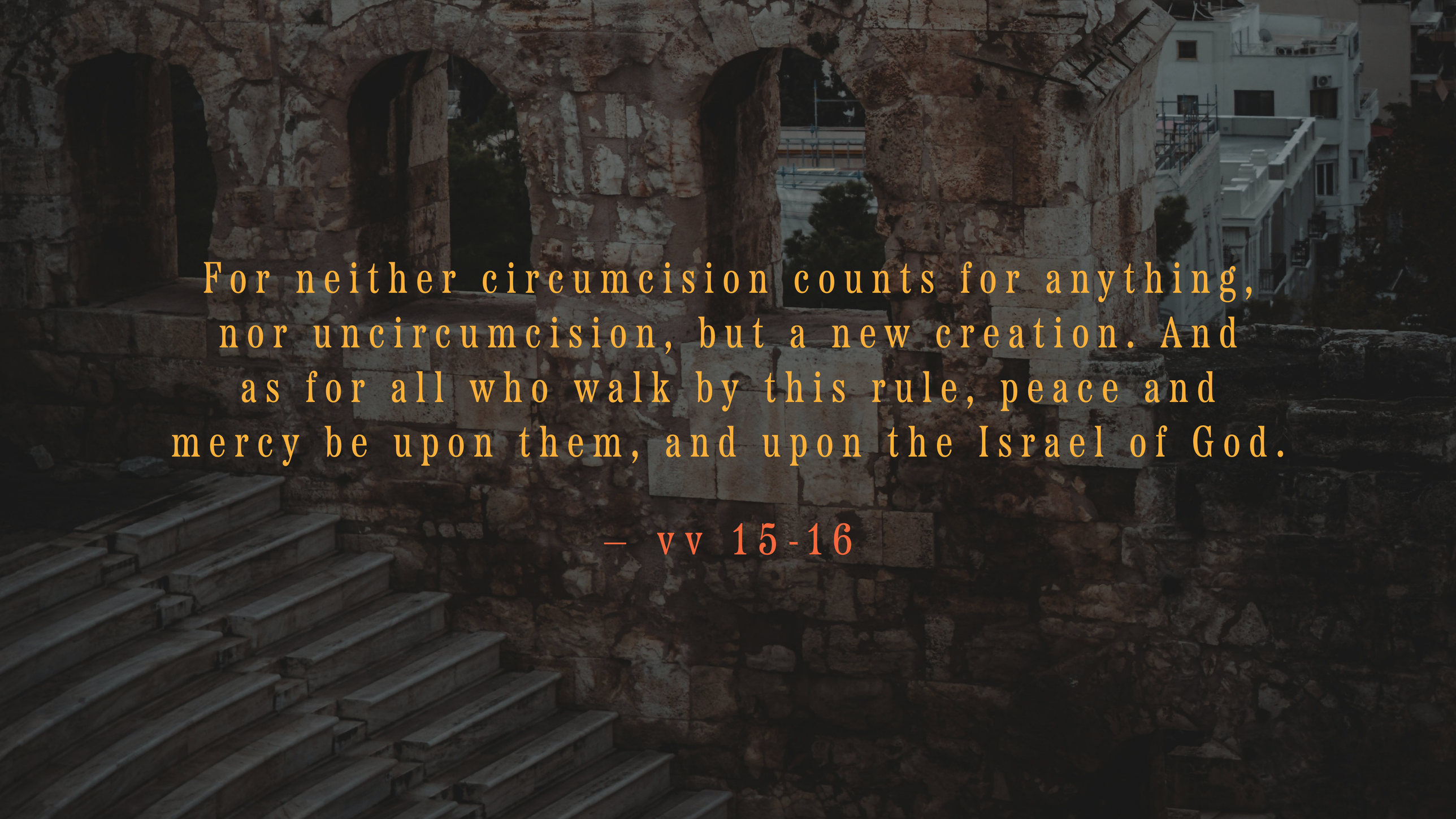
Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith

– Philippians 3:4-9



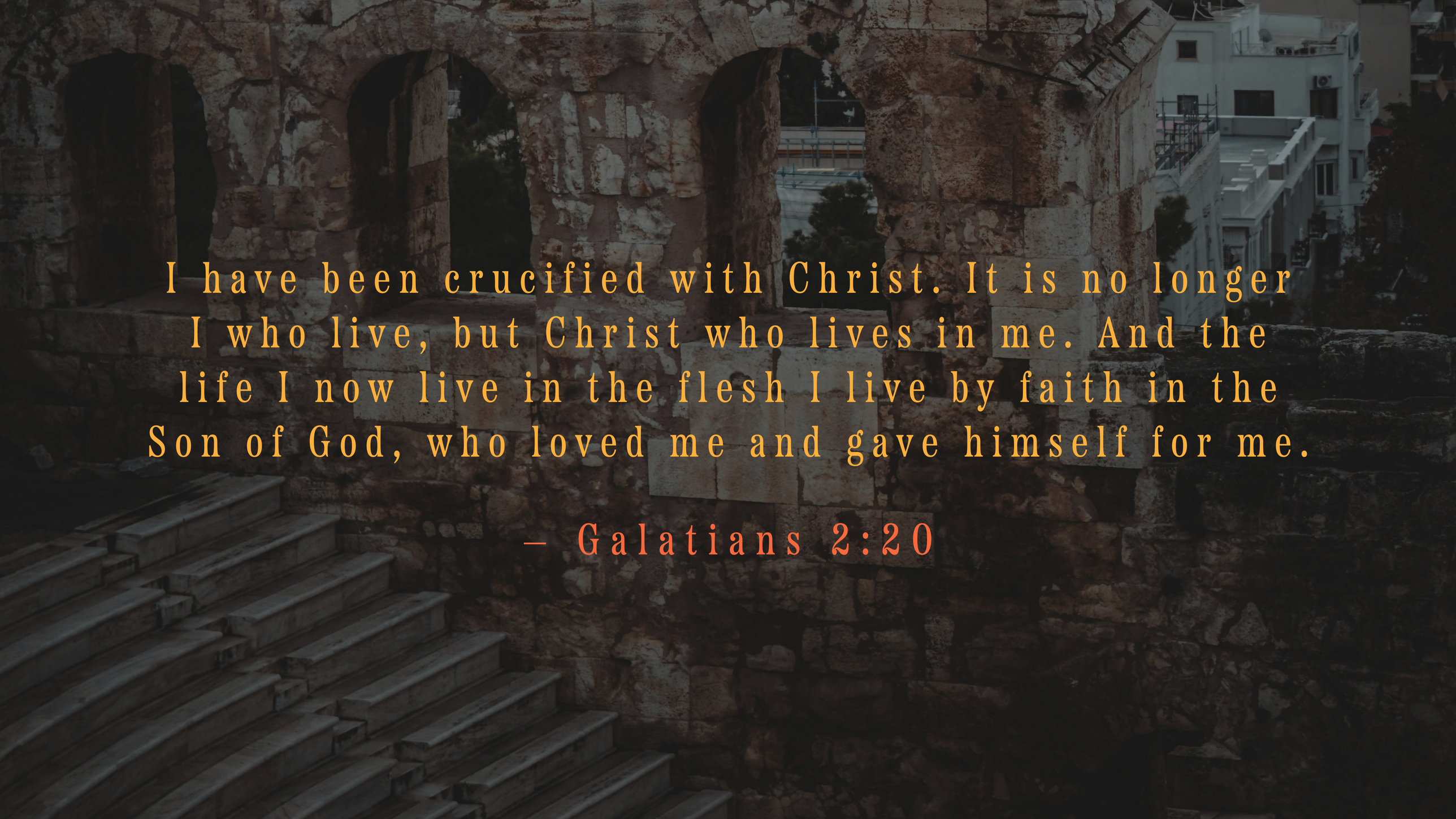
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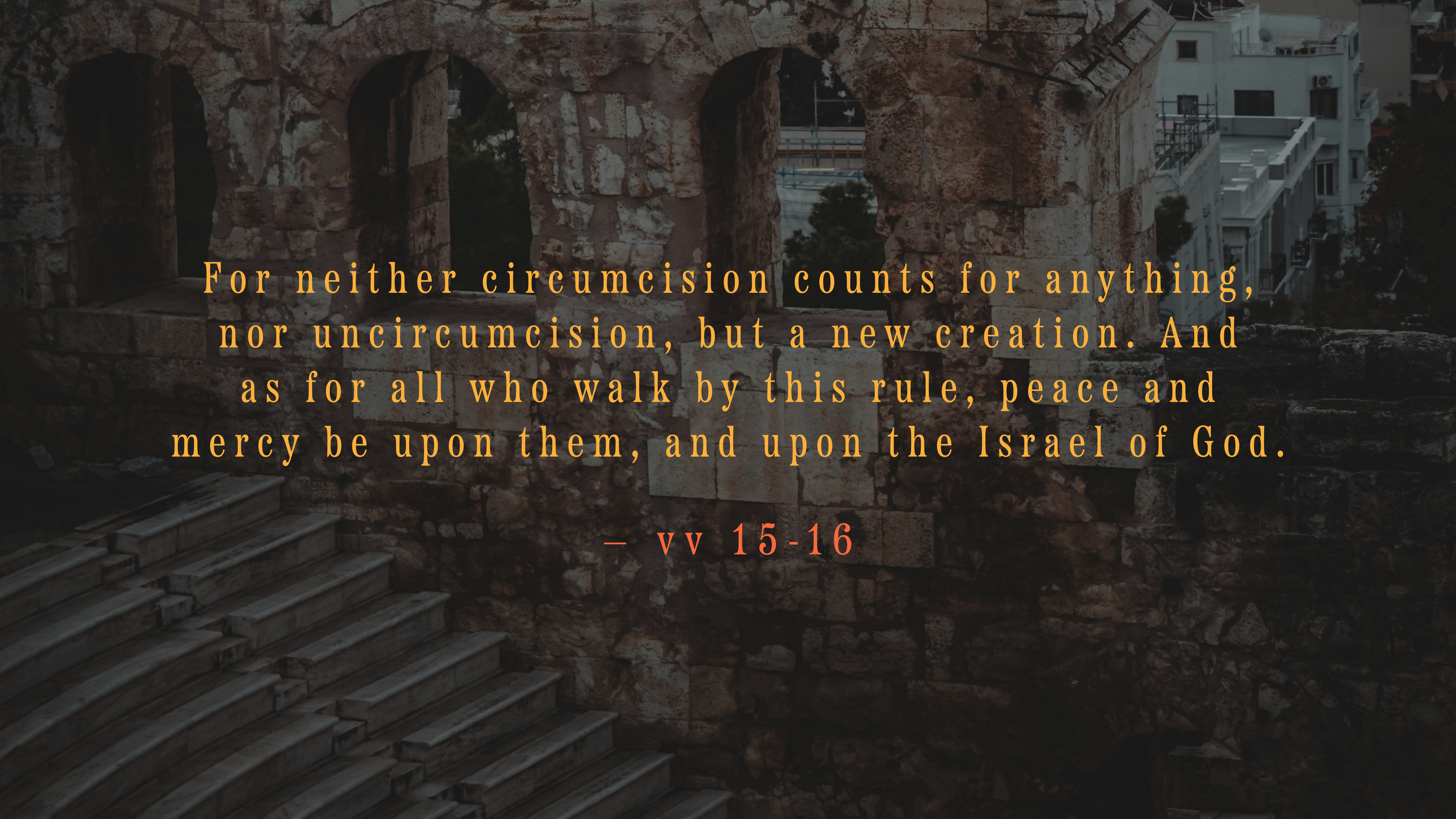
– vs 14



For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

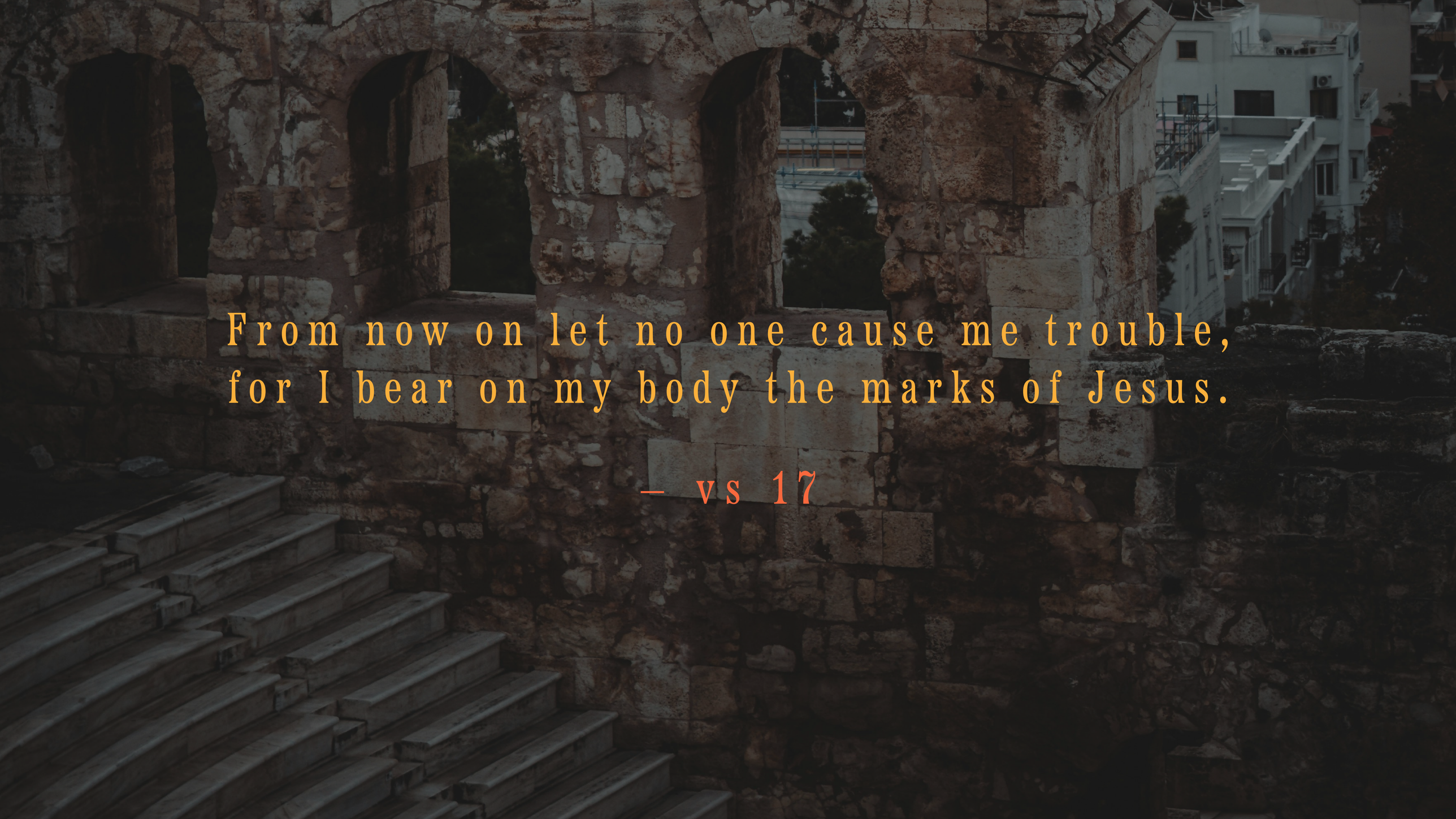
– vv 15-16


I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer
I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the
life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the
Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
– Galatians 2:20



For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

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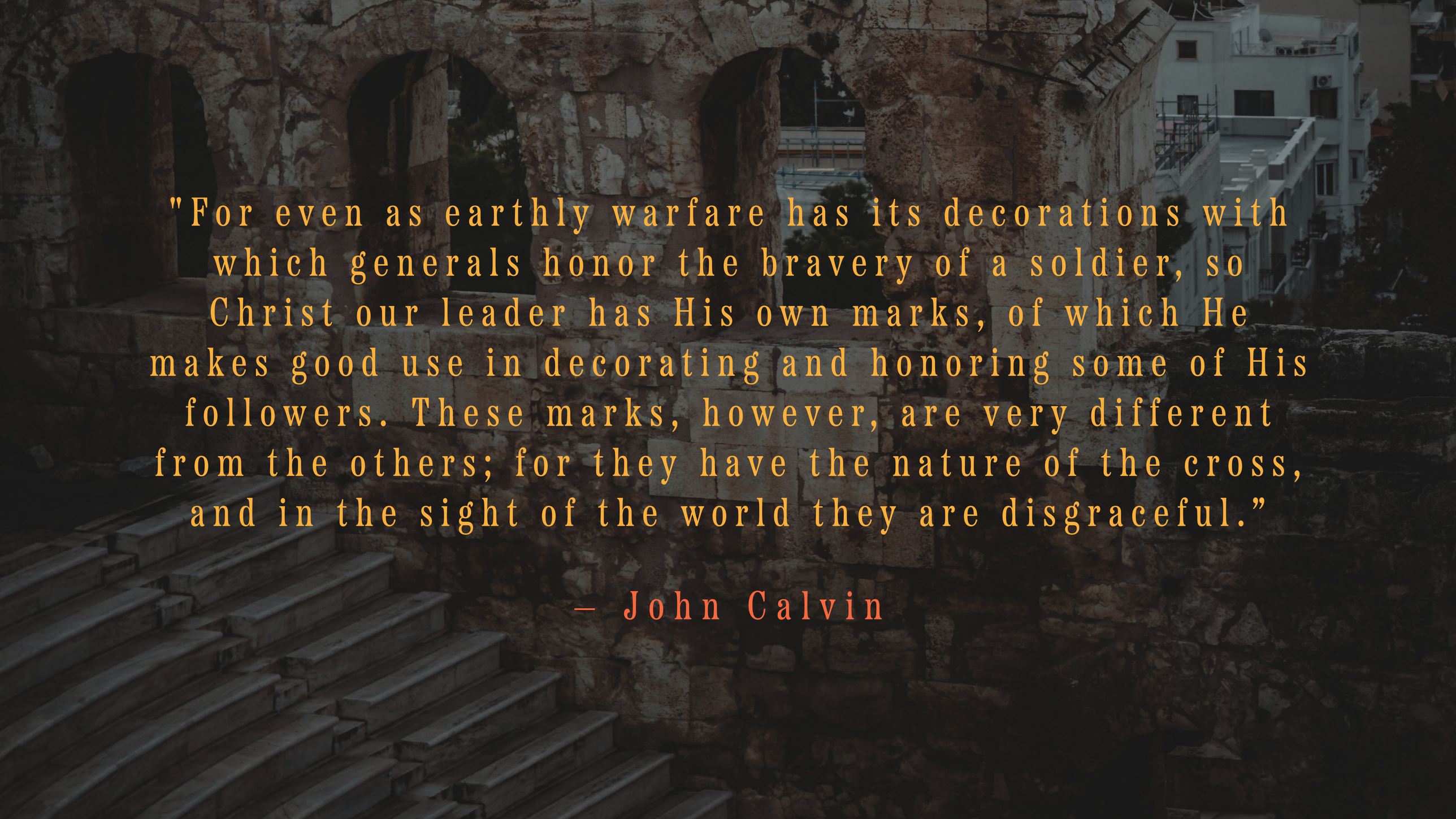


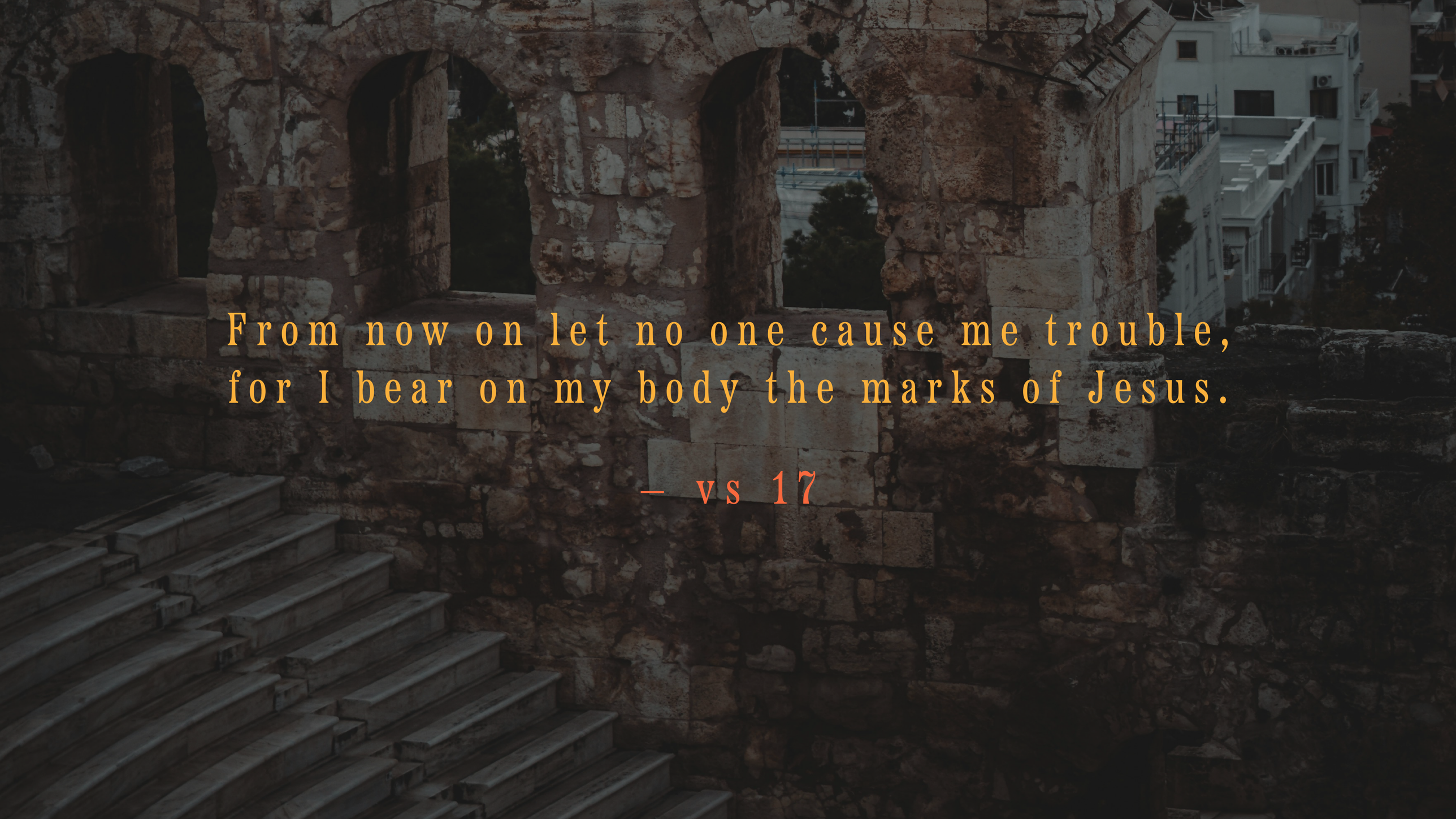
From now on let no one cause me trouble,
for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

– vs 17

Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one – I am talking like a madman – with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

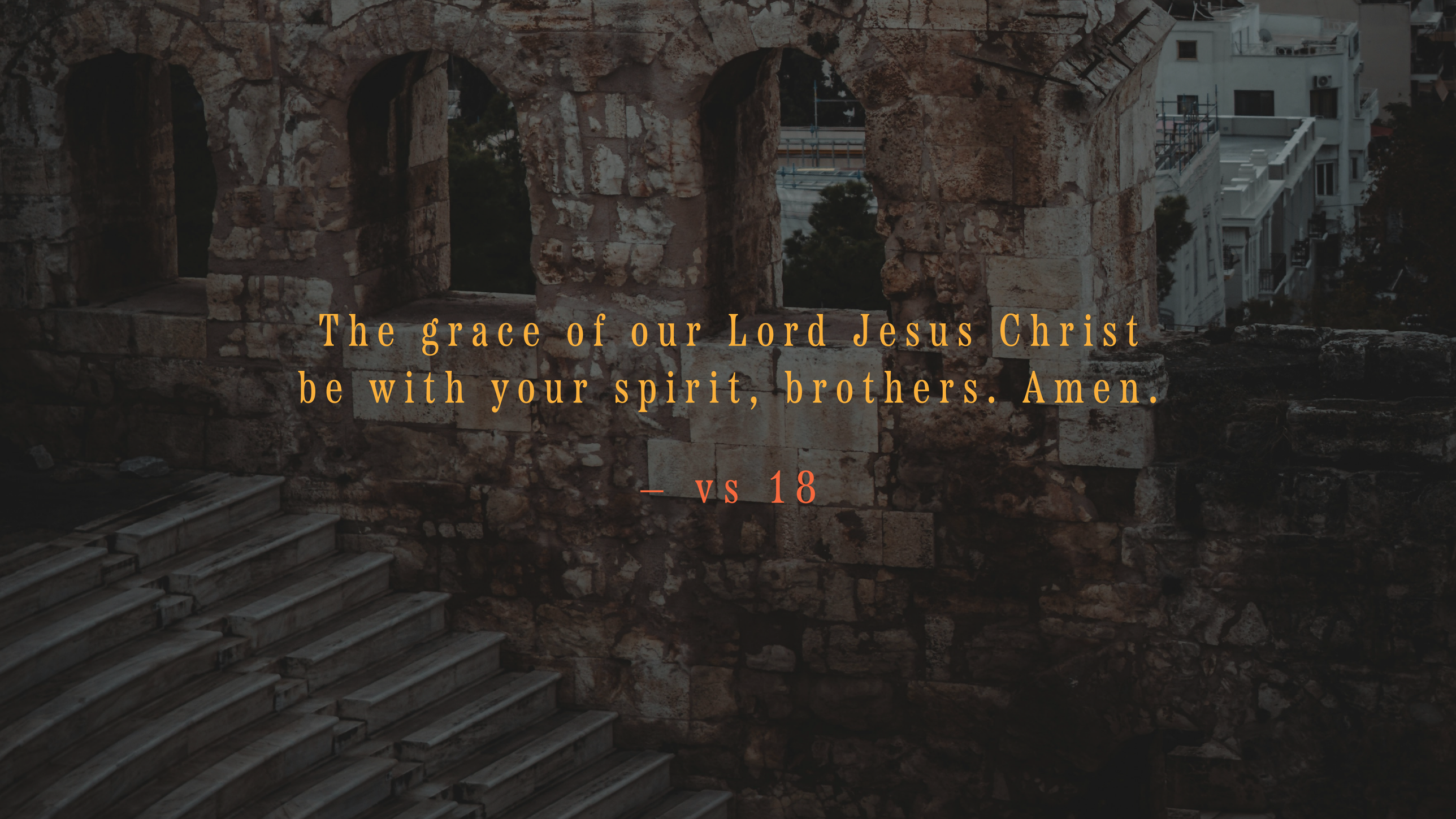
– 2 Corinthians 11:23-27

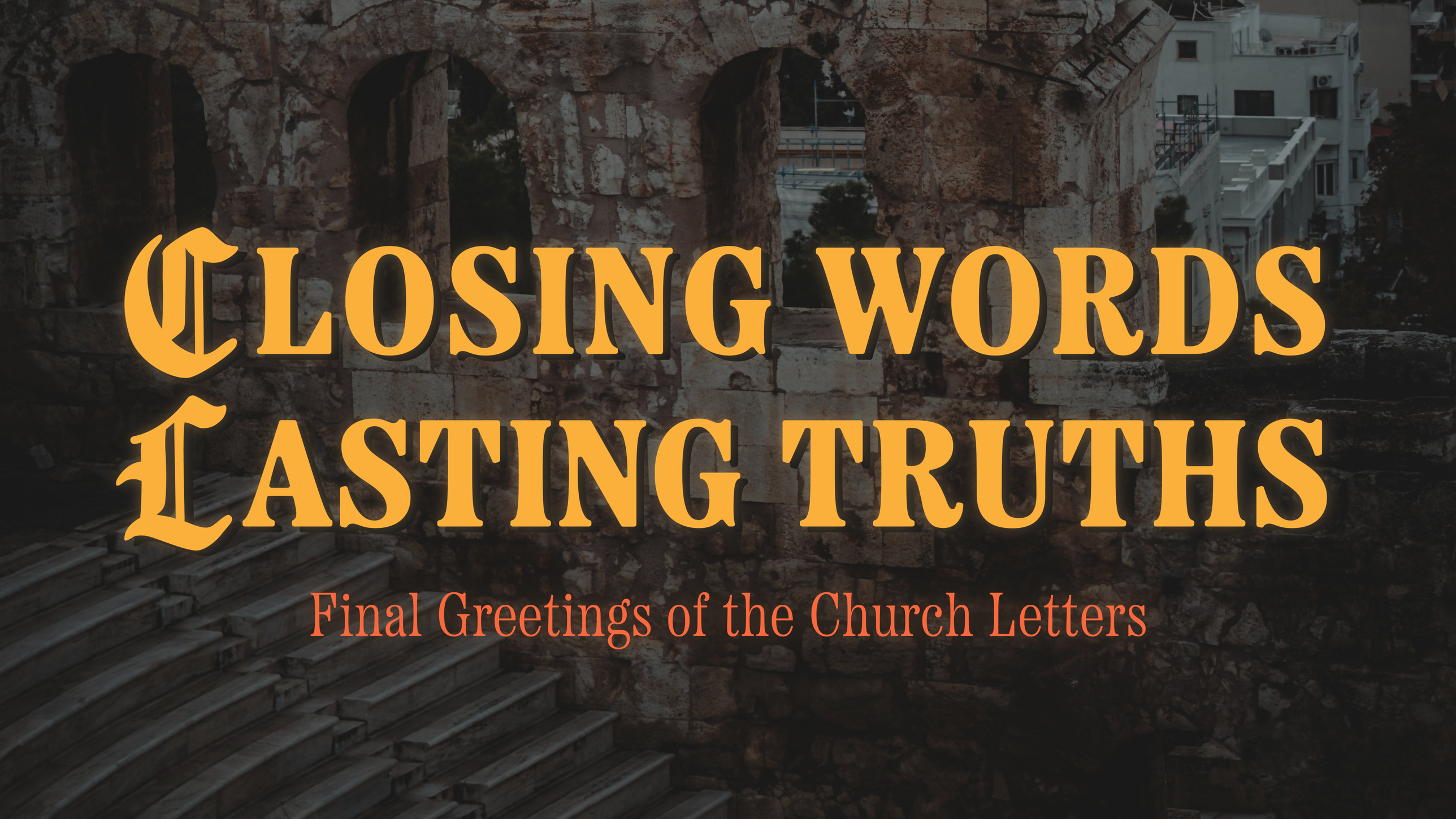

"For even as earthly warfare has its decorations with which generals honor the bravery of a soldier, so Christ our leader has His own marks, of which He makes good use in decorating and honoring some of His followers. These marks, however, are very different from the others; for they have the nature of the cross, and in the sight of the world they are disgraceful."
– John Calvin



From now on let no one cause me trouble,
for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

– vs 17


The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.
– vs 18



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