

Is FBC a safe space?

Part 2 – Lessons from Abraham talking back to God

Genesis 18: 16-33

Families in Genesis sermon series

¹⁶ When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

²⁰ Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."

²² The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are **fifty righteous people** in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

²⁶ The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is **five less than fifty**? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?"

"If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it."

²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, "What if only **forty** are found there?"

He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it."

³⁰ Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only **thirty** can be found there?"

He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."



<https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/weak-ringgit-makes-king-fruits-bargain>

³¹ Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?"

He said, "For the sake of **twenty**, I will not destroy it."

³² Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?"

He answered, "For the sake of **ten**, I will not destroy it."

³³ When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

5 “Go up and down the streets of
Jerusalem,
 look around and consider,
 search through her squares.
If you can find but **one person**
 who deals honestly and seeks the
truth,
 I will forgive this city.
Jeremiah 5:1

⁷ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because *your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt*, have become corrupt. ⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.' ~~the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people.~~ ¹⁰ Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

¹¹ But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. "LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against *your people, whom you brought out of Egypt* with great power and a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people."

¹³ Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'" ¹⁴ Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened. Exodus 32:13-14

33 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' ² I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ³ Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way." Exodus 33:1-3

¹² Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' ¹³ If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

¹⁴ The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

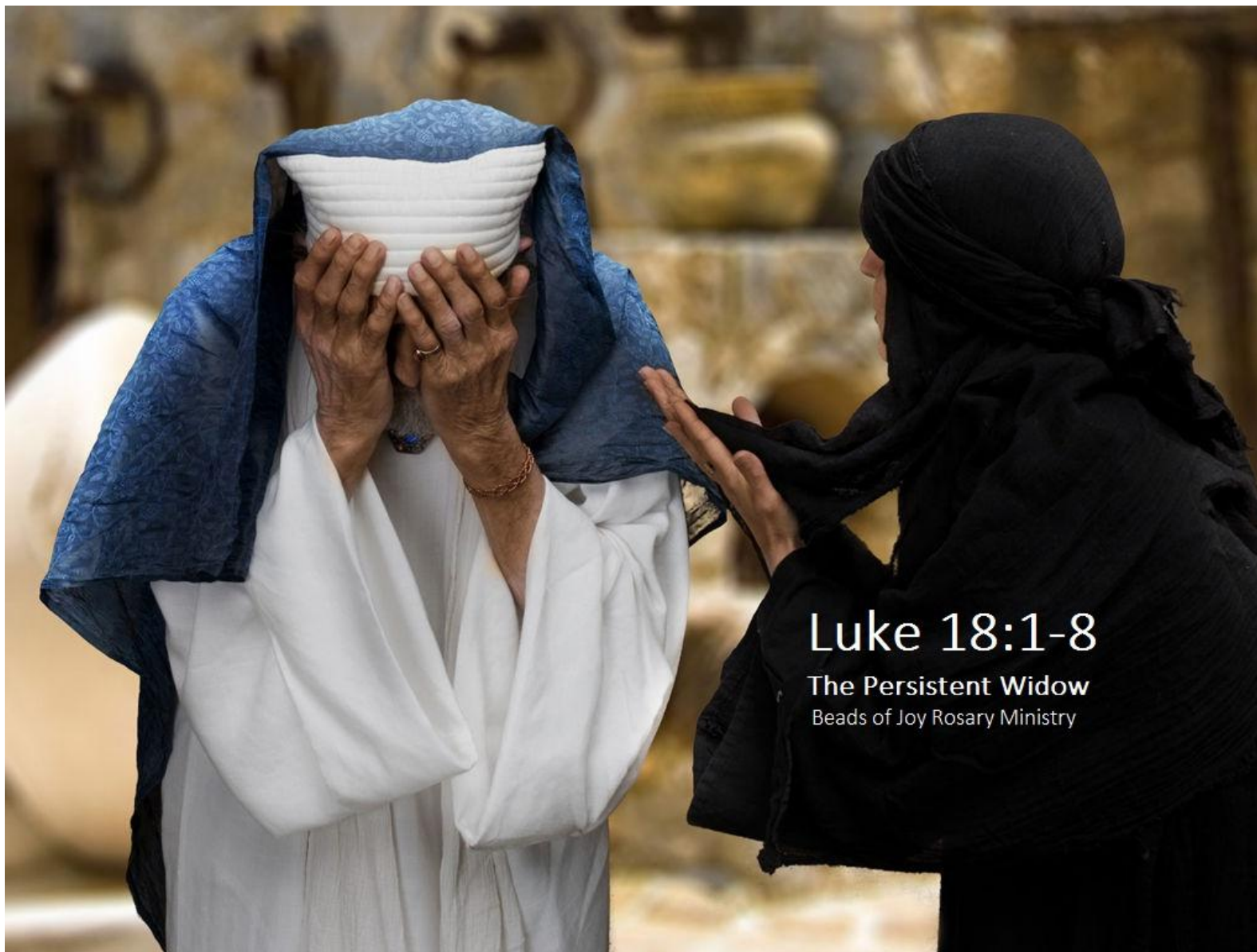
¹⁵ Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶ How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by

WAS GOD SLOW TO ANGER ONLY AFTER MOSES'S INTERCESSION?

⁹ “I have seen these people,” the LORD said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰ Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.” Exodus 32:9

⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, *slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.* Exodus 34:6



Luke 18:1-8

The Persistent Widow

Beads of Joy Rosary Ministry


Source: <https://allpoetry.com/contest/2710060-The-Persistent-Widow>

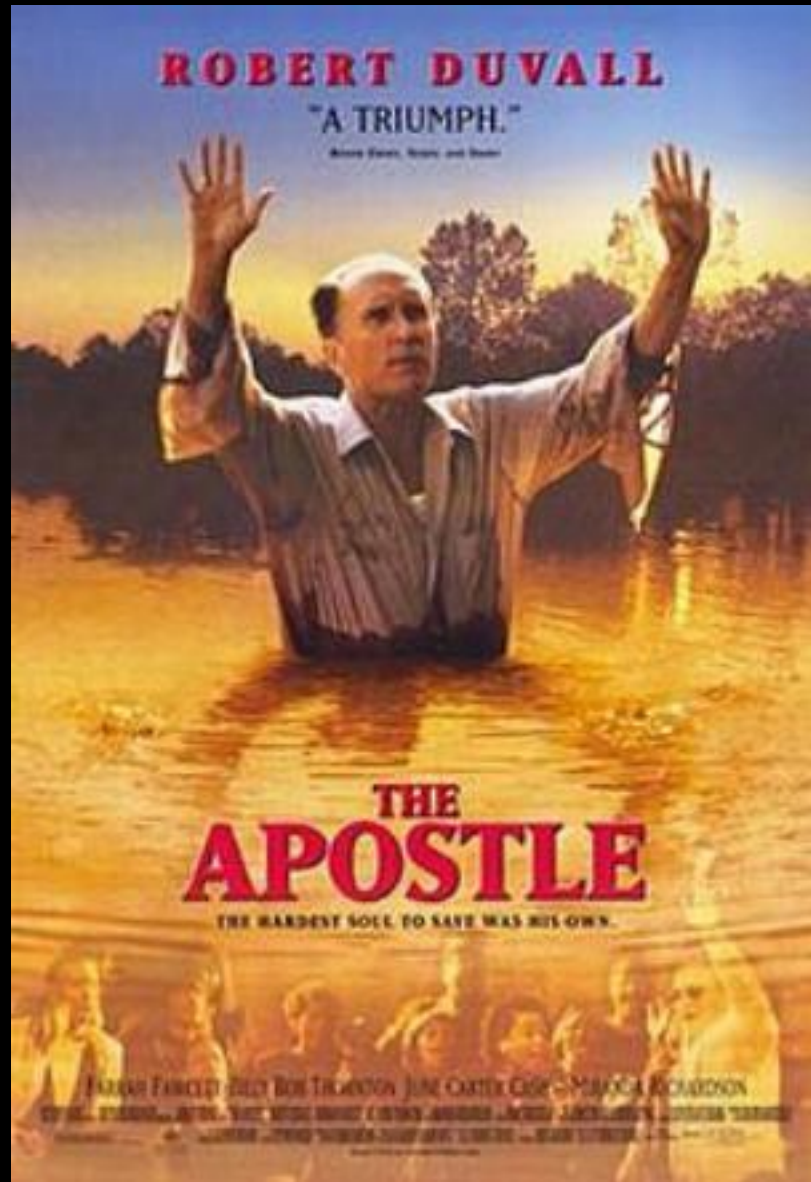
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1. God delights in vigorous dialogue with us.



<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/going-hospital-tips-dementia-caregivers>

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1. God delights in vigorous dialogue with us.
 2. Conversations with God should be incremental in boldness



²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes

³⁰ Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?”

³¹ Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?”

³² Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?”

Incremental boldness in conversations with God reveals more of God's character and ours.

Abraham overestimates the righteousness of Sodom and underestimates the grace of God.

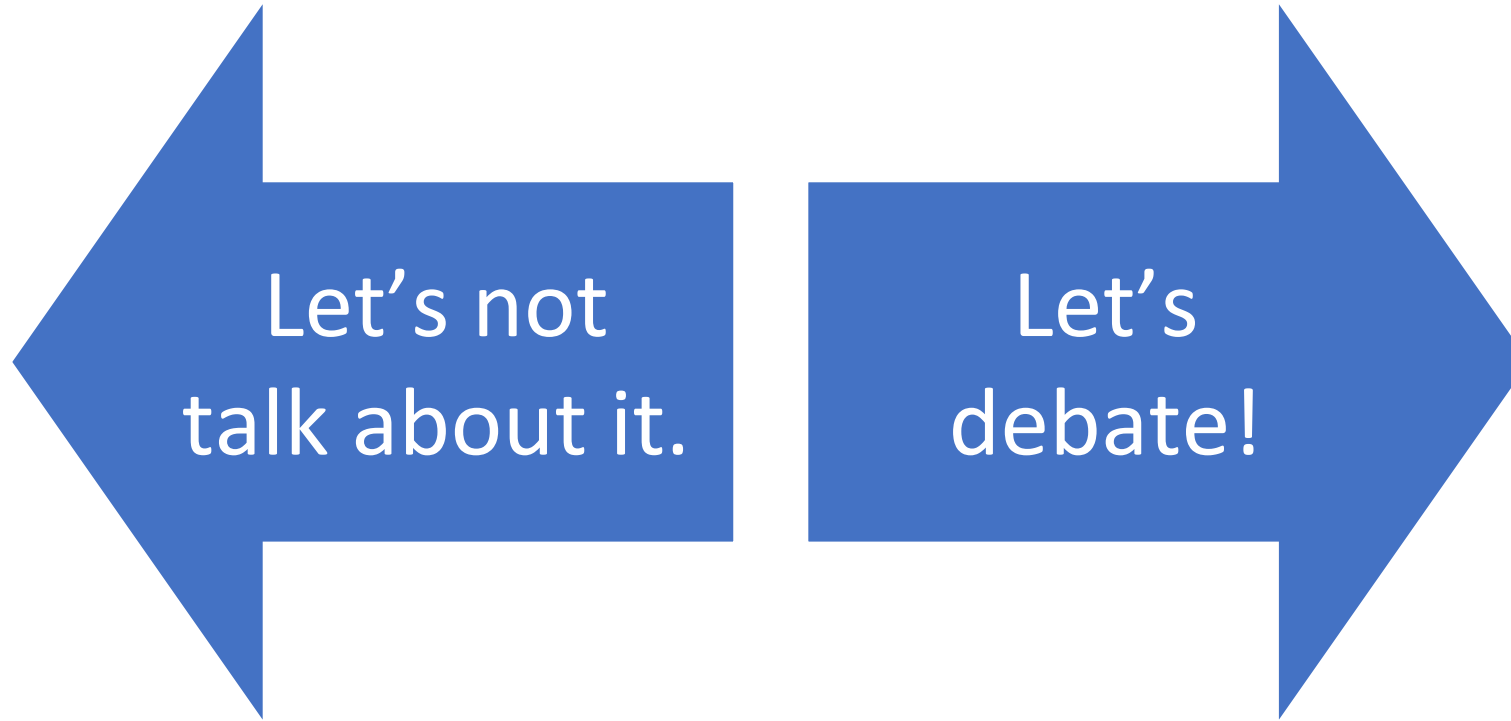
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1. God delights in vigorous dialogue with us.

2. Conversations with God should be incremental in boldness.

3. Incremental boldness in conversations with God teaches us to do the same with others.

Fight or flight mindset when confronted with people who disagree with us



We want to see this as the driving narrative



<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/roe-v-wade-us-supreme-court-abortion-judgment-explained-7899208/>

We don't want to see this



<https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2022-06-24/roe-v-wade-is-gone-heres-what-that-means>

“Curse each other and die”



<https://www.forbes.com/sites/avivahwittenbergcox/2022/06/24/roe-dies-america-divides--and-it-aint-all-about-women/?sh=7d6da1514da6>

**Any meaningful difficult dialogue
begins with incremental small steps
that increases in boldness**

27 Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes

30 Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?”

32 Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?”

Ministry Quote

The Church may have a building, but that is not its place. The building may be the church's location, but its space is in the shared humanity of its persons.

—Andrew Root

SHARING IN CHRIST




<https://www.risenmagazine.com/author-rosaria-butterfield/>




DR. ROSARIA BUTTERFIELD

Former Professor, Syracuse Univ., Geneva College
Wheaton College 1/31/14

Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality
in Our Post-Christian World



The Gospel Comes with a House Key



Rosaria Butterfield

50.....45.....40.....30.....20.....10.....



50.....45....40.....30.....20.....10.....

"I was too quick to label people as false teachers, warning believers to keep their distance from them. While there is a time to warn others about false teachers, there is also a time to do your homework. By being too quick to judge, I have made costly mistakes," Chan reveals. "I jumped on bandwagons that were popular in my theological circle, attacking men and women whom I now know to be God's beloved children. Proverbs paints this as more than a 'mistake.' All of that was an 'abomination' to Him." Francis Chan



<https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/cwn/2022/january/i-have-made-costly-mistakes-francis-chan-encourages-christians-to-reflect-on-their-relationship-with-god>

Question: What is the boldest form of dialogue with God?

/lə'ment/ - la-ment

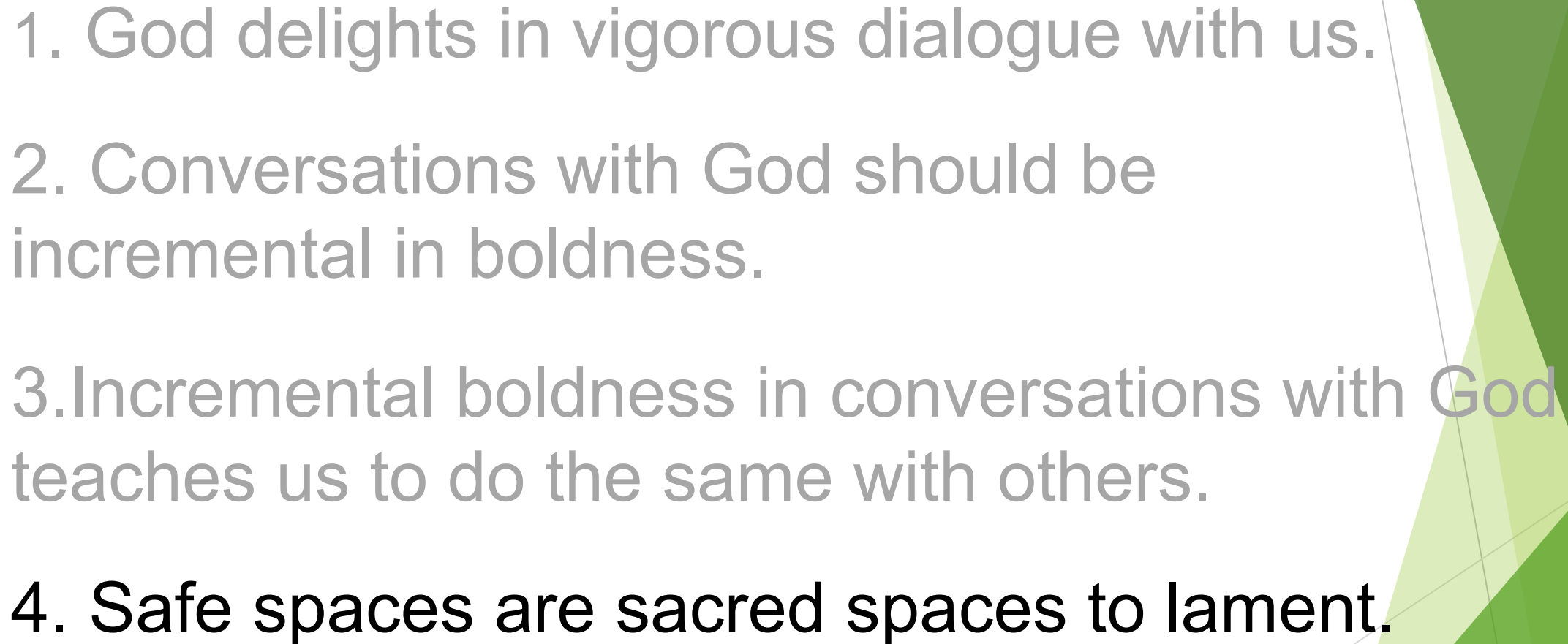
Lament

(1) (verb) express grief verbally; (2) (verb) regret strongly; (3) (noun) a mournful poem; a lament for the dead; (4) (noun) a cry of sorrow and grief; (5) (noun) a song or hymn of mourning composed or performed as a memori-

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- The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect on the right side.
1. God delights in vigorous dialogue with us.
 2. Conversations with God should be incremental in boldness.
 3. Incremental boldness in conversations with God teaches us to do the same with others.
 4. **Safe spaces are sacred spaces to lament.**



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HumanNewborn.JPG>



<https://greatbooksguy.com/2015/08/09/theodicy-in-the-book-of-job/>

1. Spiritualize your struggles

“Naked I came from my mother’s
womb,

and naked I will depart.

The LORD gave and the LORD has
taken away;

may the name of the LORD be
praised.” Job 1: 20

2. Give up your faith and do something stupid

⁹ His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!” Job 2:⁹

3. Bottle it inside until you explode.

¹³ Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was. Job 2:13

After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. Job 3:1

4. Slip slowly into depression by trying to rationalize why it happened to you. (discourse by Job's friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu Chapters 4-32)

⁴ When your children sinned against him,
he gave them over to the penalty of their
sin.

⁵ But if you will seek God earnestly
and plead with the Almighty,

⁶ if you are pure and upright,
even now he will rouse himself on your
behalf

and restore you to your prosperous state.
Bildad's discourse Job 8:4-6



<https://greatbooksguy.com/2015/08/09/theodicy-in-the-book-of-job/>

5. LAMENT

“Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will ***complain in the bitterness of my soul***” Job 7:11

⁶ You have put me in the lowest pit,
in the darkest depths.

⁷ Your wrath lies heavily on me;
you have overwhelmed me with all your
waves.

⁸ You have taken from me my closest friends
and have made me repulsive to them.

I am confined and cannot escape;

⁹ my eyes are dim with grief.

Psalm 88:6-9

¹⁵ From my youth I have suffered and
been close to death;

I have borne your terrors and
am in despair.

¹⁶ Your wrath has swept over me;
your terrors have destroyed me.

¹⁷ All day long they surround me like
a flood;

they have completely engulfed
me.

¹⁸ You have taken from me
friend and neighbor—

darkness is my closest friend.

THE END

¹ LORD, you are the God who saves
me;
 day and night I cry out to you.
² May my prayer come before you;
 turn your ear to my cry.
Psalm 88:1-2

42 Epilogue

⁷ After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.

- 3 I am the man who has seen affliction
by the rod of the LORD's wrath.
- 2 He has driven me away and made me walk
in darkness rather than light;
- 3 indeed, he has turned his hand against me
again and again, all day long.
- 4 He has made my skin and my flesh grow old
and has broken my bones.
- 5 He has besieged me and surrounded me
with bitterness and hardship.
- 6 He has made me dwell in darkness
like those long dead.
- 7 He has walled me in so I cannot escape;
he has weighed me down with chains.
- 8 Even when I call out or cry for help,
he shuts out my prayer.
- 9 He has barred my way with blocks of stone;
he has made my paths crooked.

Lamentations 3:1-9

The man who has seen afflictions

MY GOD, MY GOD,
WHY HAST THOU
FORSAKEN ME?

MATTHEW 27:46



<https://www.neverthirsty.org/bible-qa/qa-archives/question/when-jesus-was-on-the-cross-he-said-father-why-have-you-forsaken-me/>