

Beacons of hope

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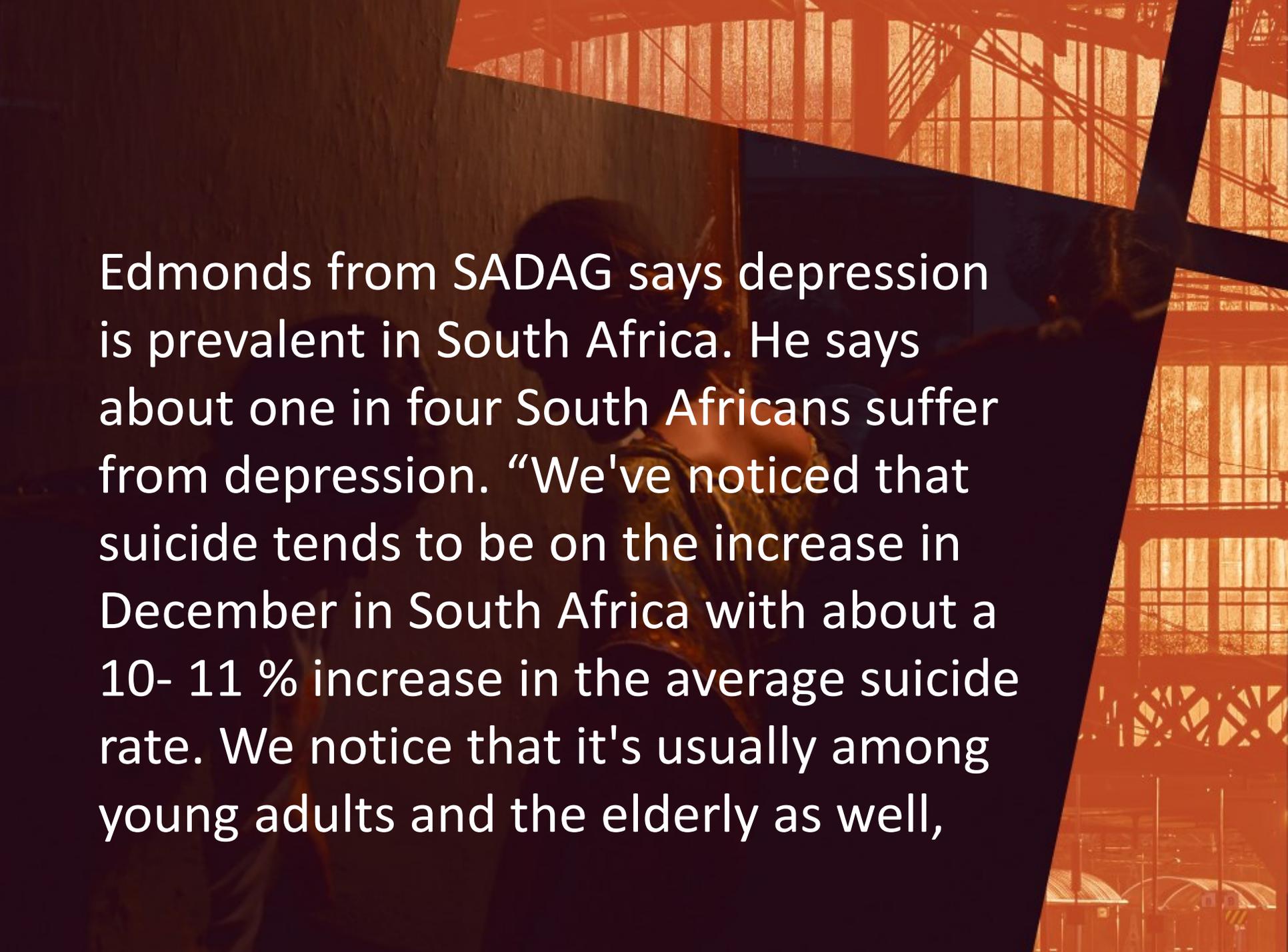


"Suicide incidents increase
during festive season"

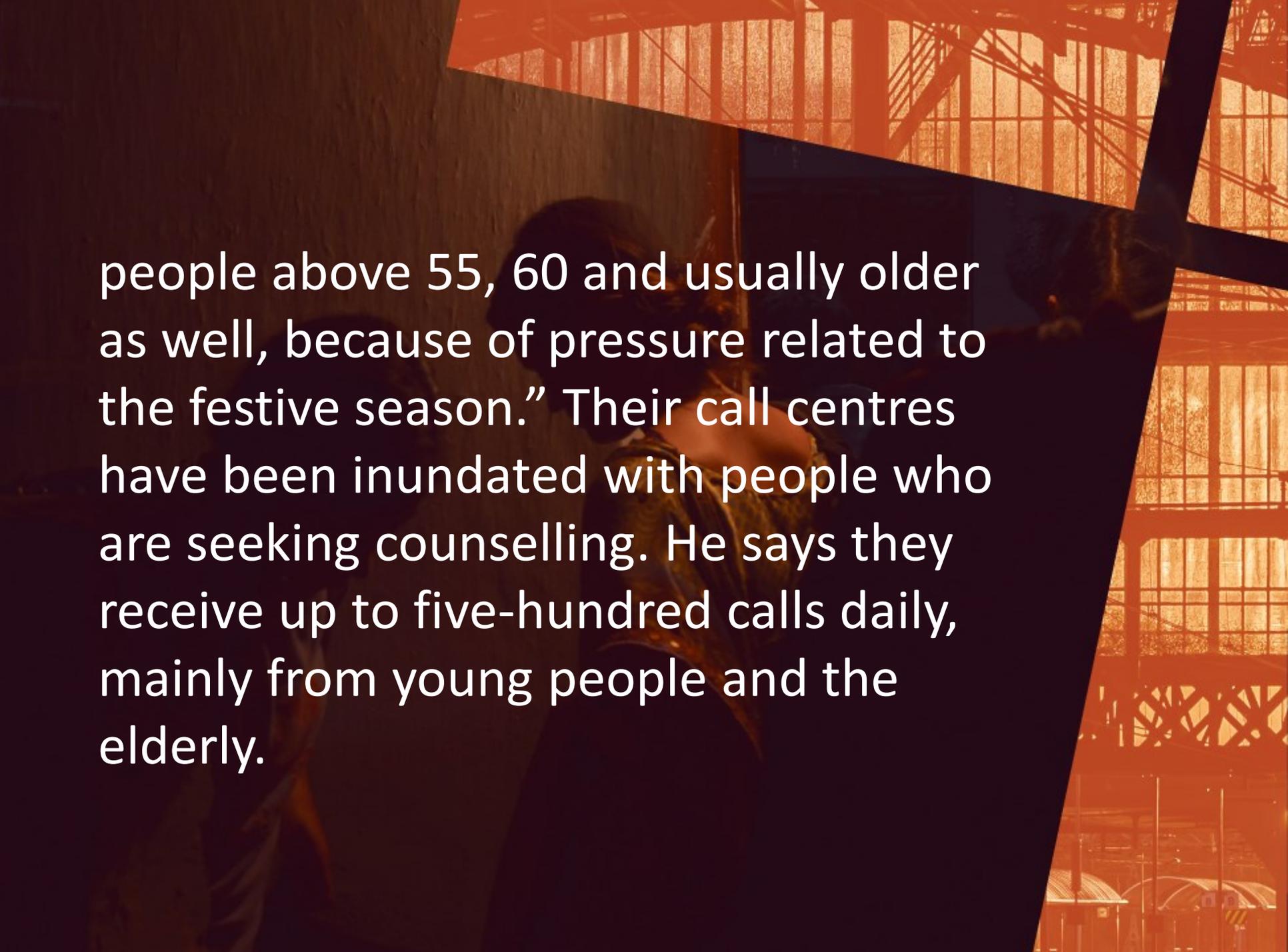
(Fri.19 Dec. 2014 20:17 SABC)

A person is shown in silhouette, playing an acoustic guitar. The background is a warm, orange-toned image of a window with a grid pattern, possibly a balcony or a large window in a building. The overall mood is contemplative and somewhat somber, despite the festive season mentioned in the text.

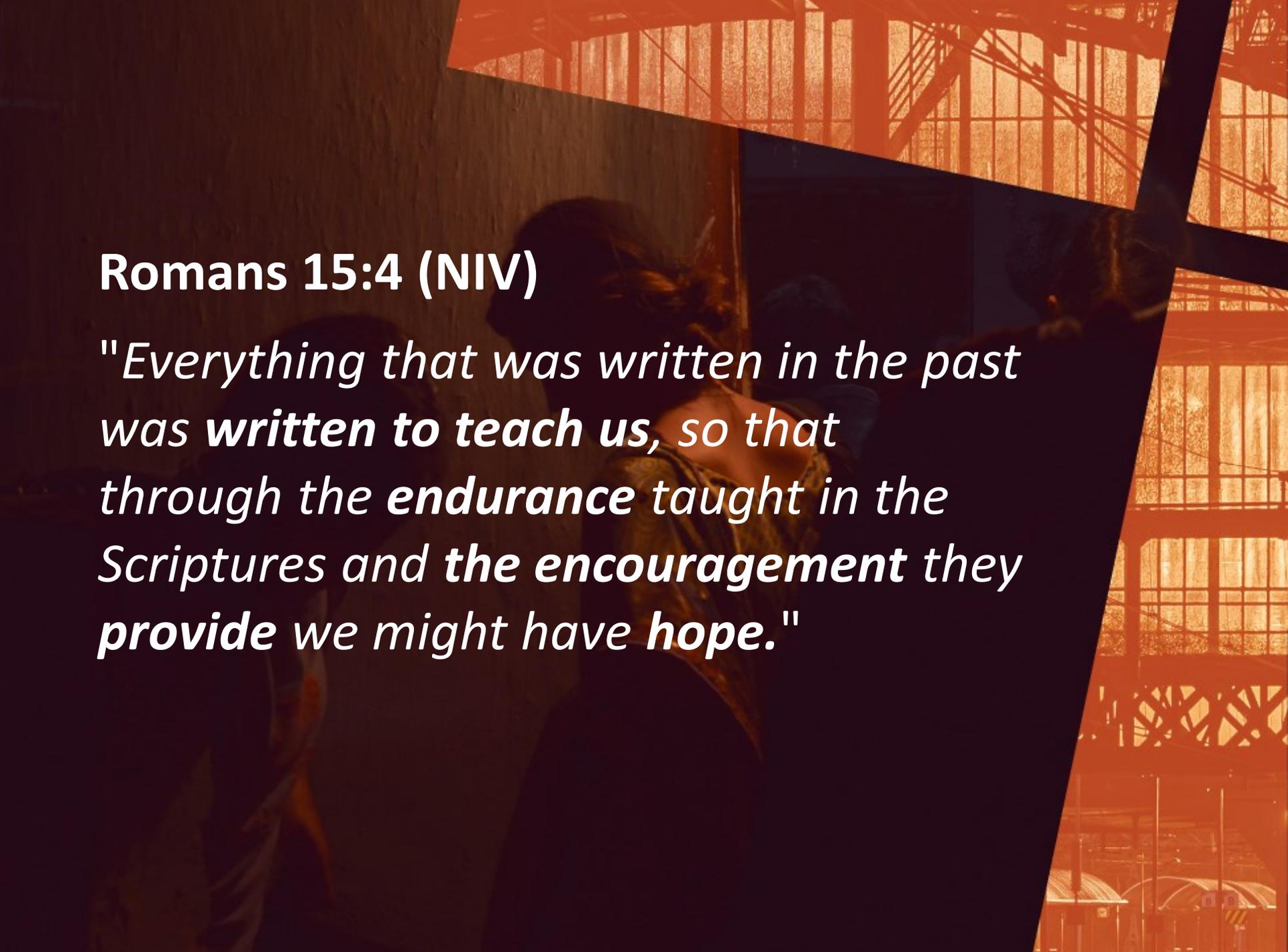
The festive season is a joyous time when many people take time off from their busy work schedules to spend time with their loved ones. However, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group , SADAG, says not everyone rejoices during this time. This is also a time when some find themselves engulfed in sadness.



Edmonds from SADAG says depression is prevalent in South Africa. He says about one in four South Africans suffer from depression. “We've noticed that suicide tends to be on the increase in December in South Africa with about a 10- 11 % increase in the average suicide rate. We notice that it's usually among young adults and the elderly as well,

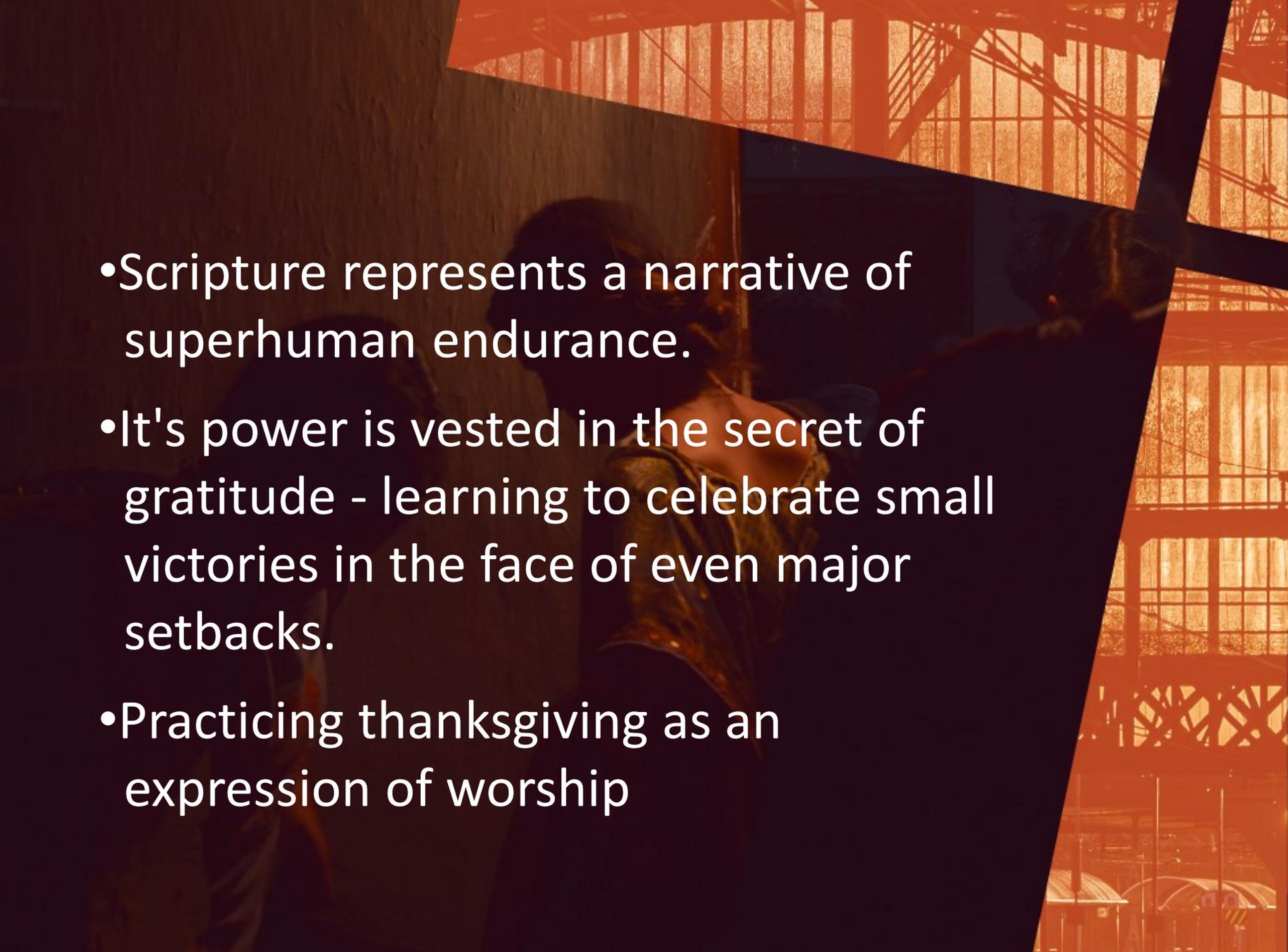
A dark, artistic photograph of a person's silhouette against a bright, orange-tinted background of a building's interior structure. The person is in the foreground, looking towards the right. The background shows a complex network of metal beams and windows, creating a grid-like pattern. The overall mood is contemplative and somewhat somber.

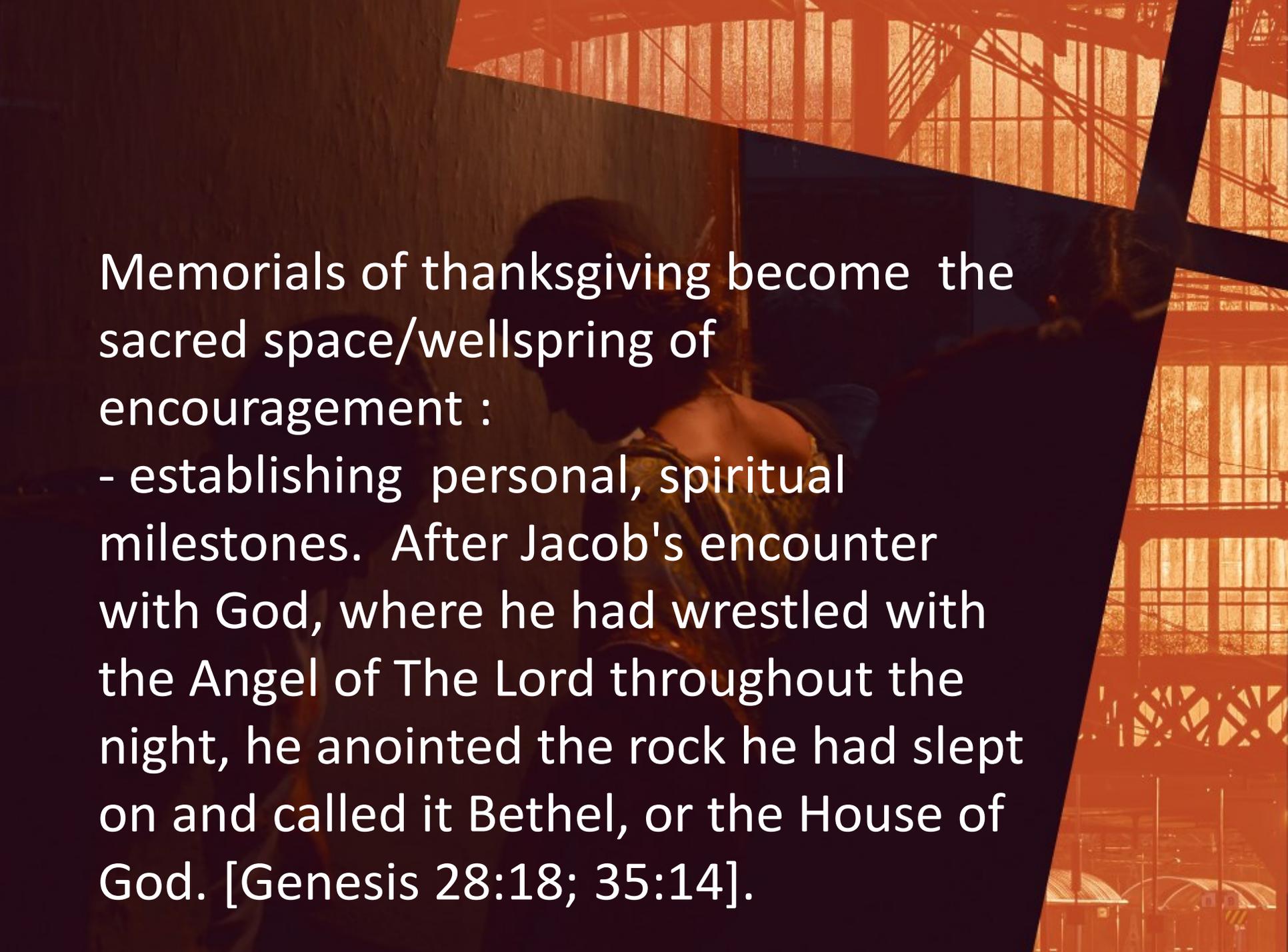
people above 55, 60 and usually older as well, because of pressure related to the festive season.” Their call centres have been inundated with people who are seeking counselling. He says they receive up to five-hundred calls daily, mainly from young people and the elderly.



Romans 15:4 (NIV)

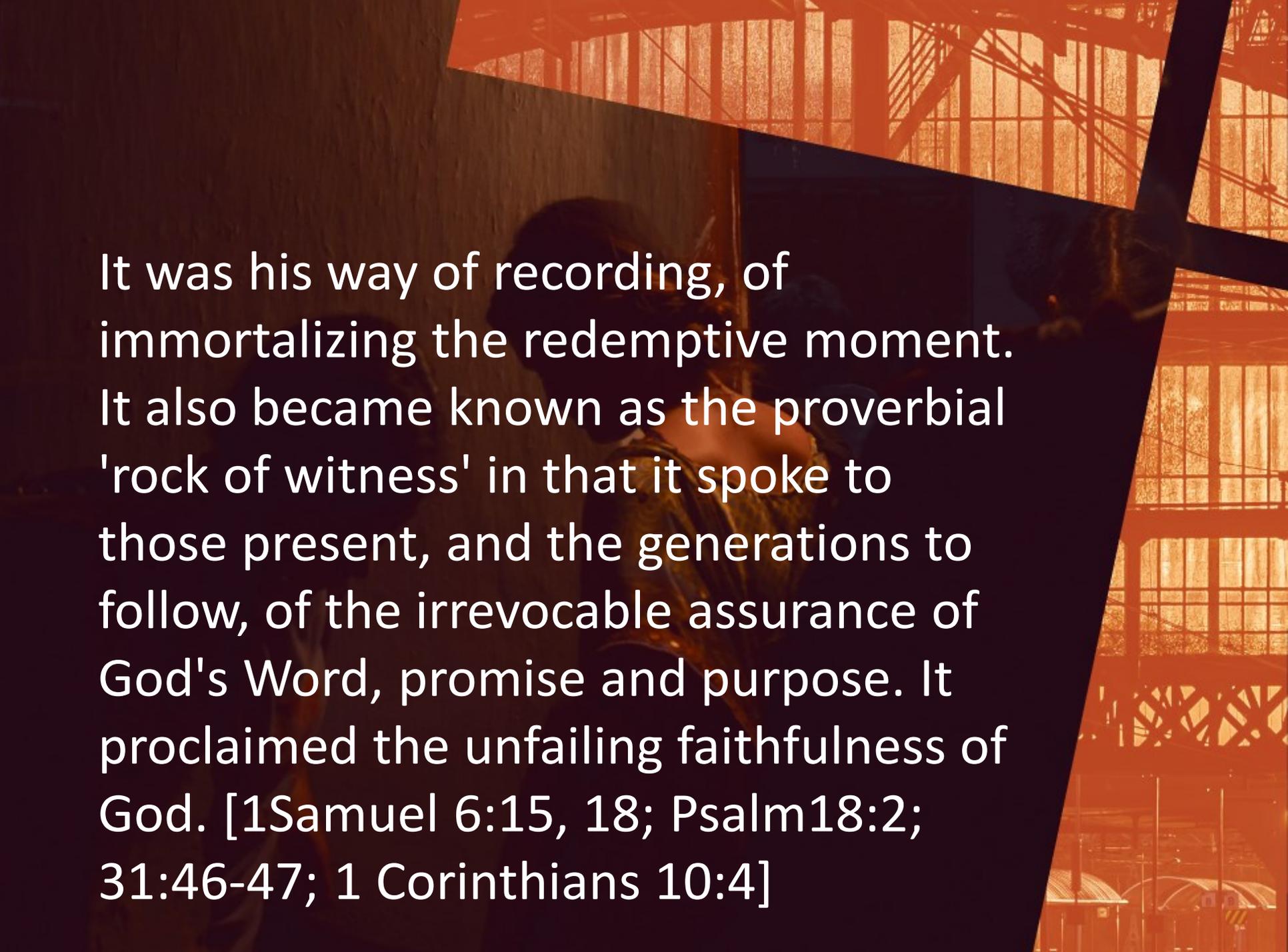
*"Everything that was written in the past was **written to teach us**, so that through the **endurance** taught in the Scriptures and **the encouragement** they **provide** we might have **hope**."*

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- A person is seen from behind, looking out a window in a dark, industrial setting. The scene is lit with a strong orange glow, likely from the sun or a light source outside. The person is wearing a dark jacket. The background shows the structural elements of a building, including beams and windows. The overall mood is contemplative and somewhat somber.
- Scripture represents a narrative of superhuman endurance.
 - It's power is vested in the secret of gratitude - learning to celebrate small victories in the face of even major setbacks.
 - Practicing thanksgiving as an expression of worship



Memorials of thanksgiving become the sacred space/wellspring of encouragement :

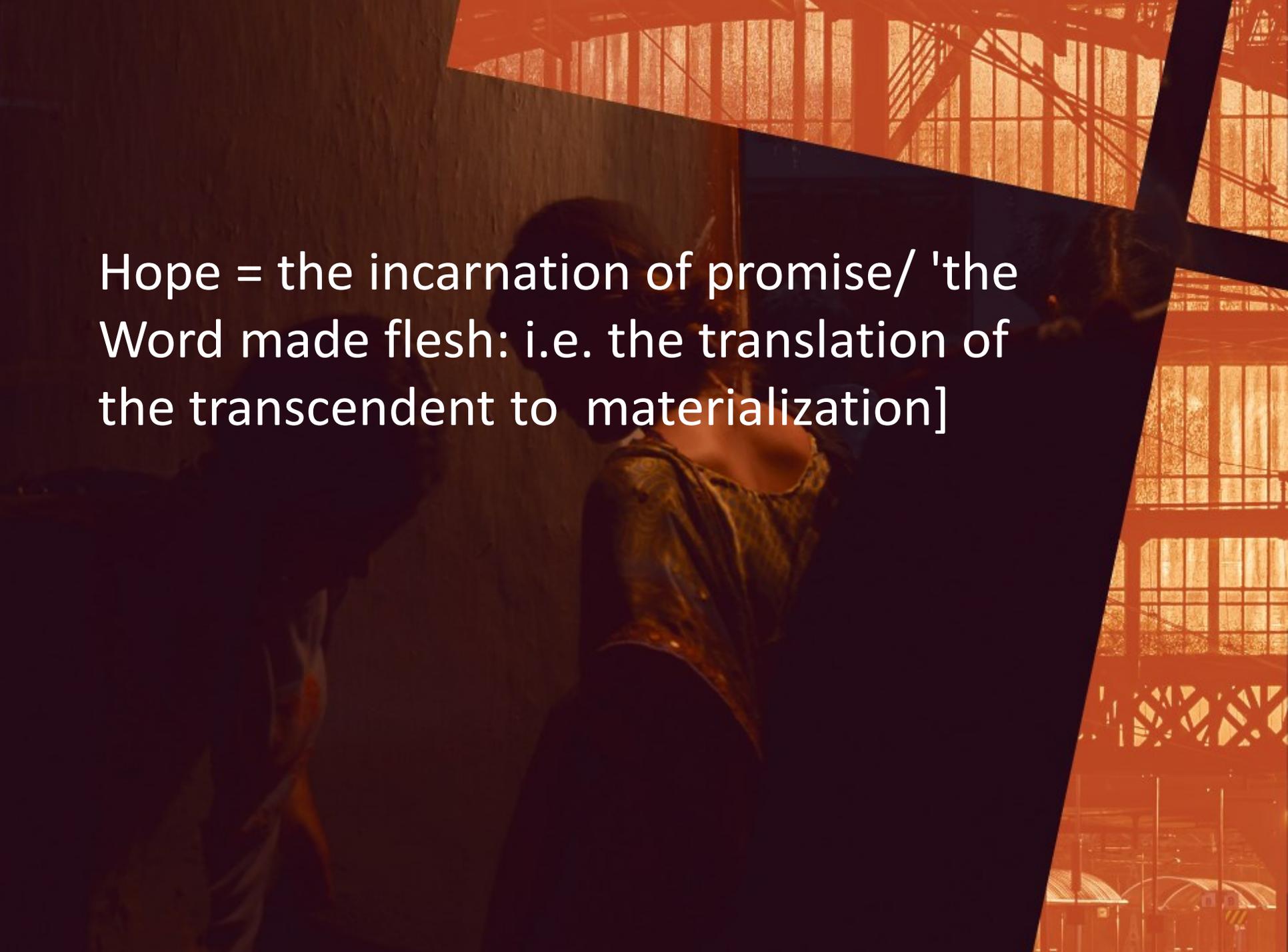
- establishing personal, spiritual milestones. After Jacob's encounter with God, where he had wrestled with the Angel of The Lord throughout the night, he anointed the rock he had slept on and called it Bethel, or the House of God. [Genesis 28:18; 35:14].



It was his way of recording, of immortalizing the redemptive moment. It also became known as the proverbial 'rock of witness' in that it spoke to those present, and the generations to follow, of the irrevocable assurance of God's Word, promise and purpose. It proclaimed the unfailing faithfulness of God. [1Samuel 6:15, 18; Psalm 18:2; 31:46-47; 1 Corinthians 10:4]



**It served to remind God's people of
their privileged status as God's
sovereign choice, the Elect.**



Hope = the incarnation of promise/ 'the Word made flesh: i.e. the translation of the transcendent to materialization]