



SUNDAY, JANUARY 5TH, 2025
ST. CROIX CHURCH | JESS WILLIAMS

THE PATH OF LOVE: A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS





THE QUESTION

by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

All day, I replay these words:

is this the path of love?

I think of them as I rise, as

I wake my children, as I wash dishes, as I
drive too close behind the slow blue subaru,

is this the path of love?

Think of these words as I stand in line at the
grocery store,

think of them as I sit on the couch
with my daughter. Amazing how

quickly six words become compass, the new
lens through which to see myself
in the world.



I notice what the question is not.
Not, “is this right?”
Not, “is this wrong?”
It just longs to know
how the action of existence
links us to the path to love.

And is it this?

Is it this?

All day, I let myself be led by the question.
All day I let myself not be too certain
of the answer.

Is it this?

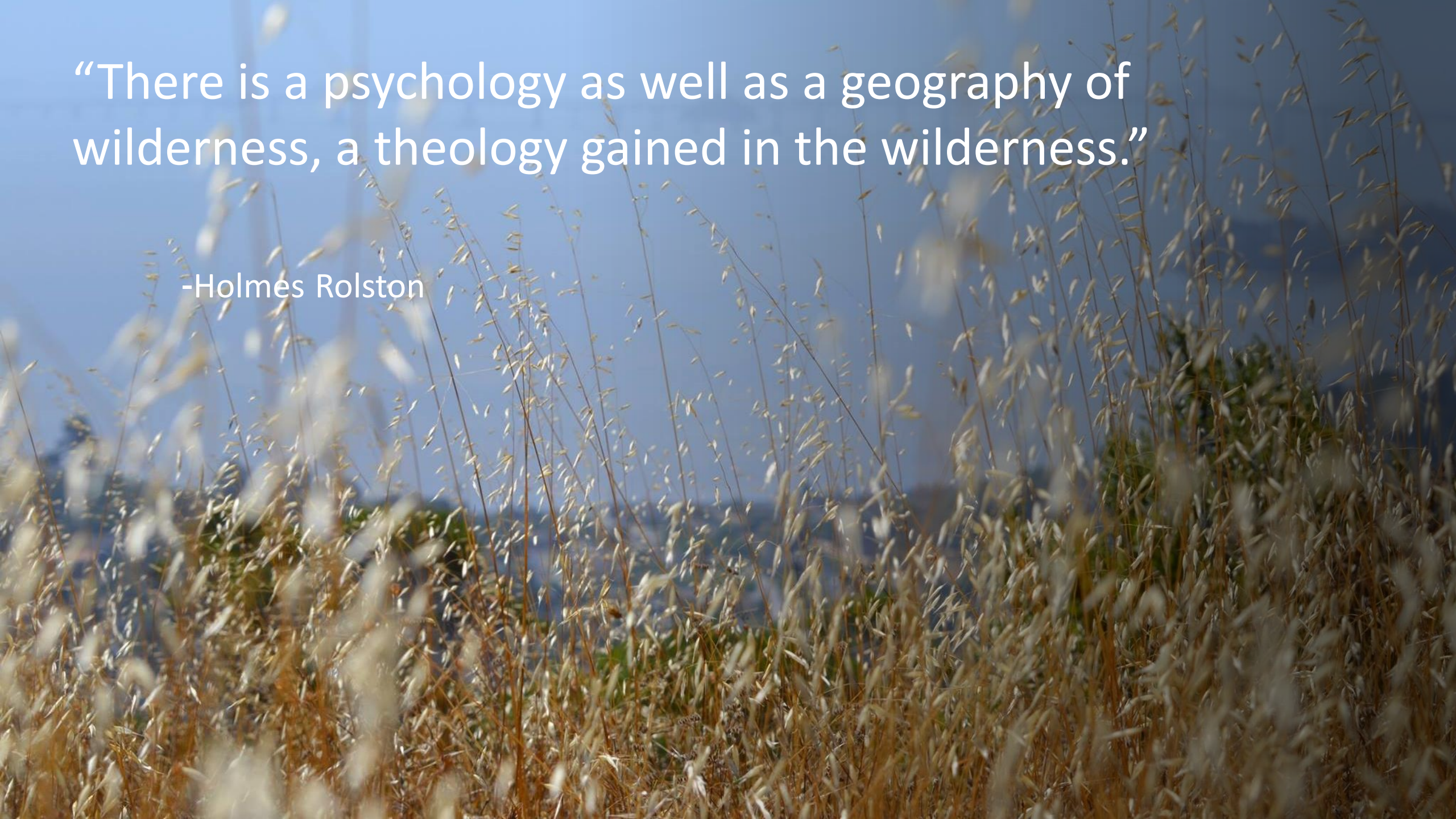
Is this the path of love?

I ask

as I wait for the next word to come.

THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE





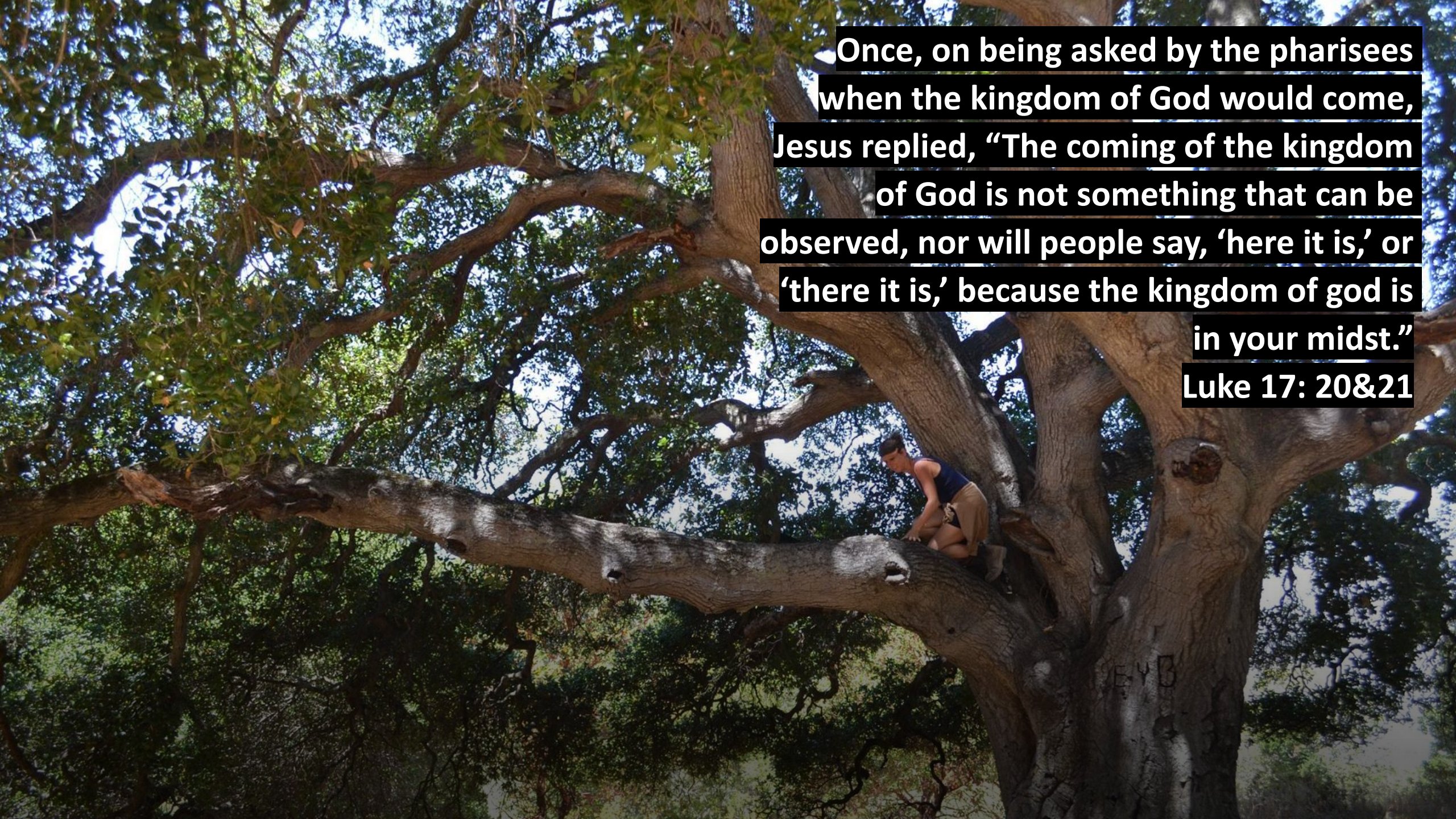
“There is a psychology as well as a geography of wilderness, a theology gained in the wilderness.”

-Holmes Rolston



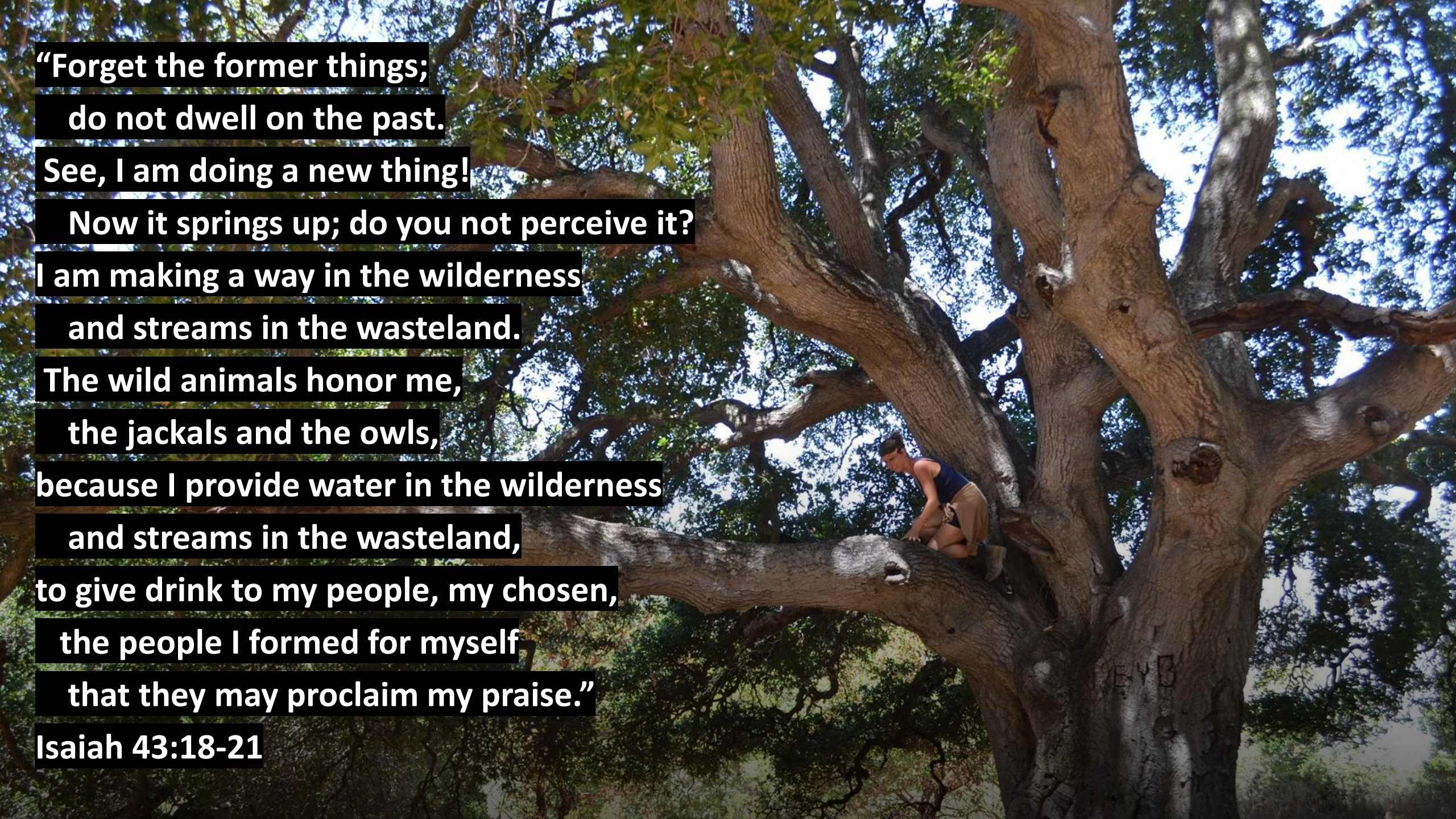
“NOT ALL WHO WANDER ARE LOST”

-JRR Tolkien

A large, ancient tree with a thick, gnarled trunk and dense green foliage. A person is sitting on a large branch of the tree, looking down. The tree is the central focus of the image, with its branches spreading out in all directions. The background is a bright, sunny sky with some clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.


Once, on being asked by the pharisees
when the kingdom of God would come,
Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom
of God is not something that can be
observed, nor will people say, 'here it is,' or
'there it is,' because the kingdom of god is
in your midst."

Luke 17: 20&21

A large, ancient tree with a thick, gnarled trunk and dense green foliage. A person is seen climbing a horizontal branch in the middle of the tree. The background is a bright sky with some clouds. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image in white font on black rectangular backgrounds.

**“Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.
The wild animals honor me,
the jackals and the owls,
because I provide water in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland,
to give drink to my people, my chosen,
the people I formed for myself
that they may proclaim my praise.”**

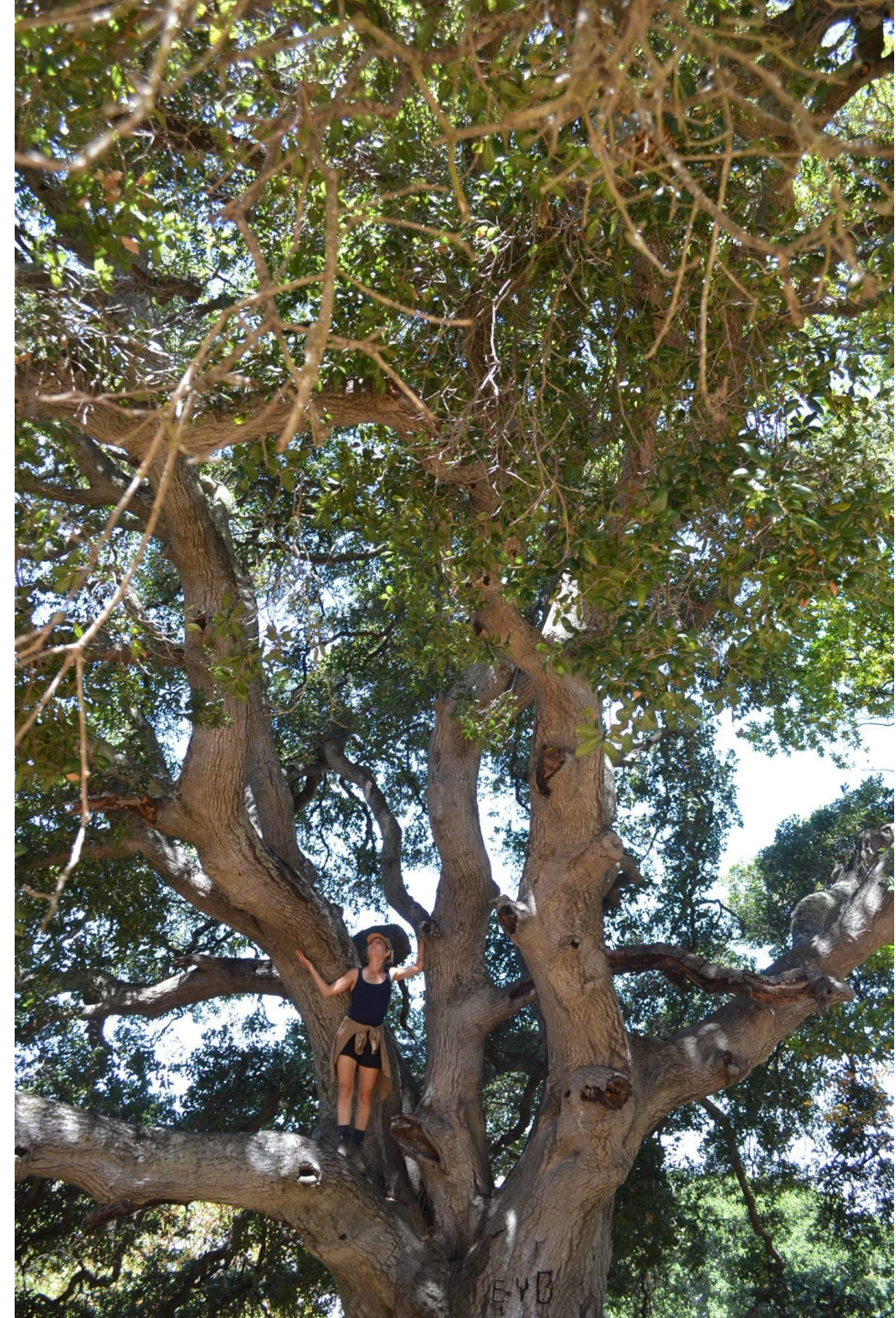
Isaiah 43:18-21

A large, full-canopied tree with dense green foliage, standing in a field of tall grass under a clear blue sky. The tree is the central focus, with its branches spreading out in all directions. The grass in the foreground is tall and dry, and the sky is a clear, bright blue.

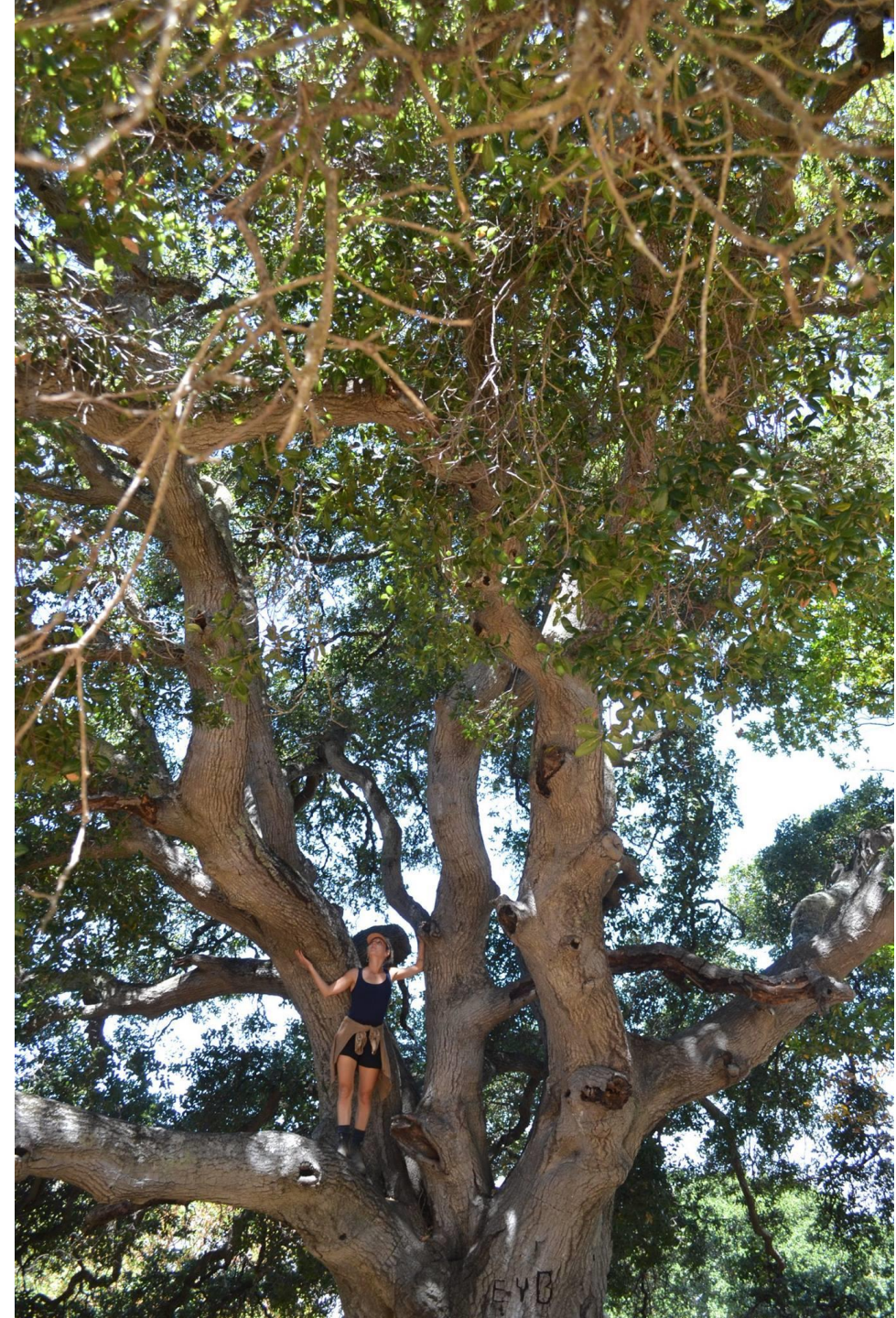
“The kingdom of God is within you.”
“The kingdom of God is near.”
“The kingdom of God is close at hand.”

“For I tell you this: one loving, blind desire for God alone is more valuable in itself, more pleasing to God and to the saints, more beneficial to your own growth, and more helpful to your friends, both living and dead, than anything else you could do.”

— *Anonymous, The Cloud of Unknowing*



“Even as we wander, we’re carrying with us, tucked right into the corner of our yearnings, the hope that the love of God is more healing, more lovely, more alive than anything we could rationalize or make up. That love is always kind, and patient. It’s kind and patient toward you, too. The circles of faith formation are really an invitation to deepening love and wholeness. Your whole life can proclaim an evolution of love. ‘Not all who wander are lost’, writes JRR Tolkien. You’re not lost. You’re right where you belong on this wandering path. It might be disorienting. There may be danger, but you’re not lost. You’re on the right journey. It’s just a different path than you were expecting when you were handed a brand of faith and told to cultivate and protect it at all costs. You’re becoming someone who is more loving, someone who is healing, who is more acquainted with the fragility, and belovedness of us all. The deliverance that’s waiting on the other side of the wilderness isn’t a tidier, nicer version of you, with new and better answers.



A scenic view of rolling hills under a clear blue sky. The foreground is filled with lush green trees and bushes. In the middle ground, a dirt path winds through a hillside covered in dry, golden-brown grass and scattered green shrubs. A small figure of a person is visible walking along the path. The background shows more rolling hills, some with patches of green trees, under a bright, clear sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

“The deliverance that’s waiting on the other side of the wilderness isn’t a tidier, nicer version of you, with new and better answers. Your deliverance was always going to be MORE LOVE.”

TikTok
@poetdavidwhyte



Santiago, By David Whyte

The road seen, then not seen, the hillside
hiding then revealing the way you should take,
the road dropping away from you as if leaving you
to walk on thin air, then catching you, holding you up,
when you thought you would fall,
and the way forward always in the end
the way that you followed, the way that carried you
into your future, that brought you to this place,
no matter that it sometimes took your promise from you,
no matter that it had to break your heart along the way:
the sense of having walked from far inside yourself
out into the revelation, to have risked yourself
for something that seemed to stand both inside you
and far beyond you, that called you back
to the only road in the end you could follow,
walking as you did, in your rags of love.