

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a network of white lines and circles that resemble a circuit board or a tree structure. The lines are vertical and horizontal, with small circles at various points, creating a complex, branching pattern.

Week 5

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS
AN EMERGENCY DEVOTIONAL
HANNA REICHEL

There is a second contender for shortest verse in the Bible. In the English translation, it is “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). In the original Greek, it is “Rejoice always” (1 Thess. 5:16).




It is important, the Teacher knows, to make space and time for both “a time to weep and a time to laugh” (Eccles 3:4) Paul, too, exhorts believers to “rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15).

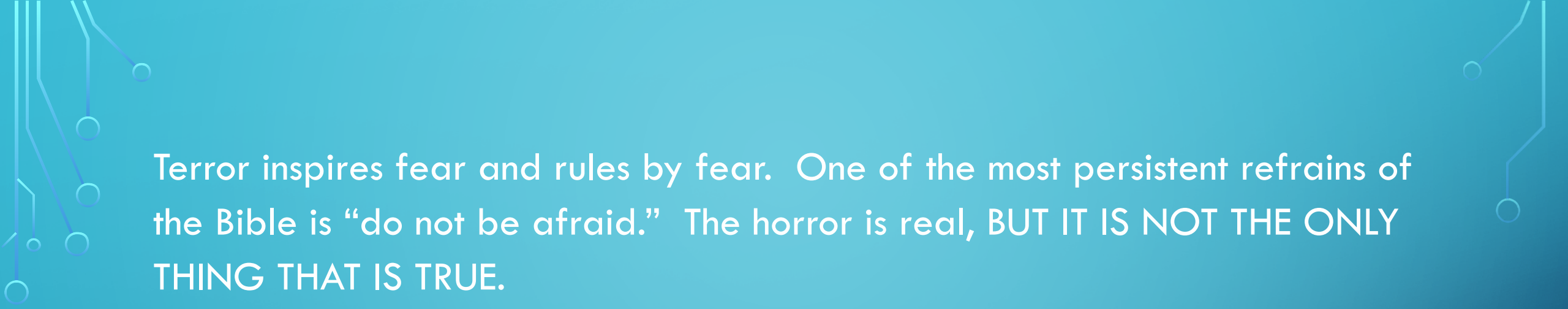
From delighting in creation to celebrating liberation, transformation, and new creation, joy is the first, the last, and the greatest response to God’s work.



From the diary of a Holocaust victim:

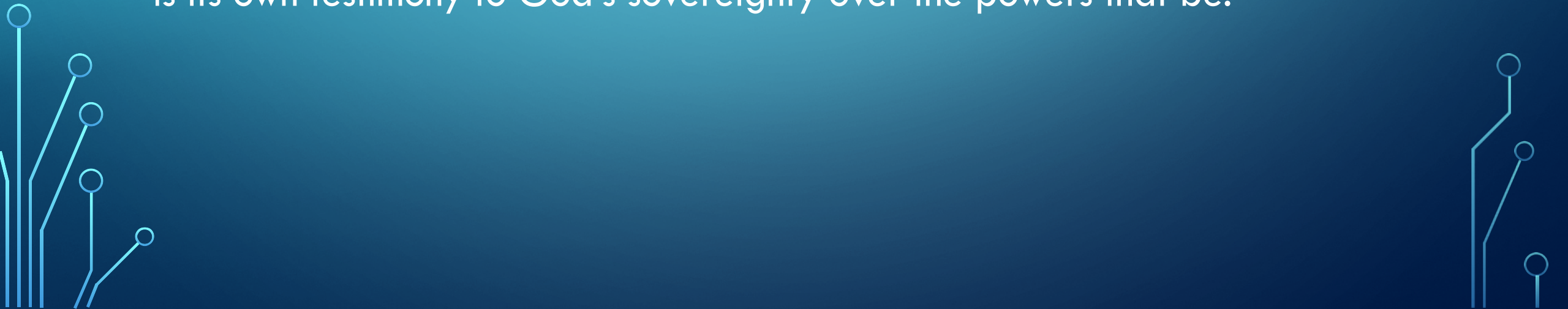
[T]urning inward became the most important work to quell hatred and destruction. Our main responsibility, was “to guard little pieces of God inside of [our]self,” and our “one moral duty... to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and to reflect it toward others. And the more peace there is in us, the more peace there will also be in our troubled world.”





Terror inspires fear and rules by fear. One of the most persistent refrains of the Bible is “do not be afraid.” The horror is real, **BUT IT IS NOT THE ONLY THING THAT IS TRUE.**

Joy comes before, endures throughout, and comes after terror. Joy is the radiance of the grace of every new morning's dawn. Joy despite and beyond despair is its own testimony that suffering cannot determine what your life is about, or what your life is for. Joy despite and beyond suffering is its own testimony to God's sovereignty over the powers that be.





Guard little pieces of God. Guard little pieces of joy. Look further around you, look deeper inside you, at all there is there that does not bear the name of suffering.

Behold the sparrows, behold the trees, all beings whose glory is much shorter – or longer – lived than what you think of as an historic moment. Pay attention to your body, your mind, your heart, your friends and chosen family, your miraculous encounters. Where do joy, glory, and gratitude break through gloom and suffering in your own life?

Make space for that joy and let it grow. Let it roar through your life and expand ever further. Laugh vibrantly, celebrate unabashedly, enjoy fully, and love without constraint.

