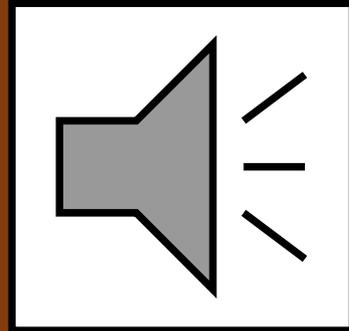




1

(Series Overview Slide and Message Title)

The sound of . . .



2

(Make sound and have people guess)

- It is the sound of complaining**
- Like a dripping faucet or a leaky roof**

TR: Social Media has given us a new way to complain to more people . . . but I believe God want us to . . .



Do not just complain anymore . . .

. . . not just complain anymore

TR: He doesn't want us to . . .

Do not avoid Him anymore . . .



4

. . . avoid Him anymore . . . always waiting for someone else to do something about that which we are complaining.

TR: The Lord wants us to not just . . .



Do not make excuses anymore . . .

. . . make excuses anymore.

-- These are ineffective life-strategies: complaining, avoiding, excusing

-- So, what does He want us to do?

-- What is He **CHALLENGING** us to do through the stories in Judges 3?

TR: The book of Judges covers roughly 350 years and the accounts of . . .



6

... major and minor judges.

-- These judges are also called deliverers.

-- They are leaders, sometimes militarily and other times as civil leaders, and sometimes both.

TR: After chapters 1-3:6 gave us the two-fold introduction of the **COMPROMISES** and their **CAUSES**, we read beginning in chapter 3:7 about . . .



7

READ SLIDE

- Coming from 3 different location within the land.
- 2 from different tribes; and 1 perhaps not from any tribe

TR: In addition to the **COMPROMISES** and **CAUSES** we saw in the previous studies, as we read the text, see if you can see the **CYCLE** we've also talked about previously

Judges 3:7-8

And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. ⁸Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.

ESV

8

-- READ SLIDE

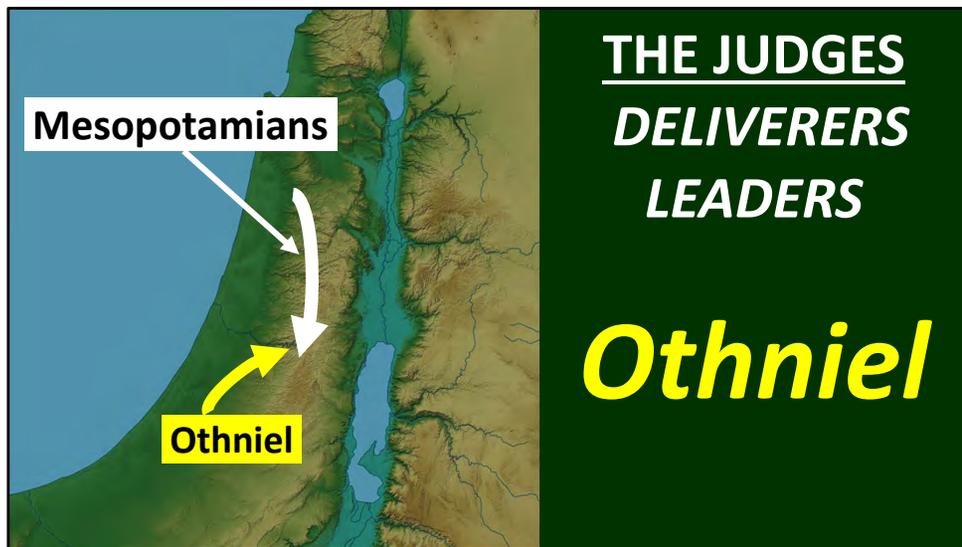
-- Cushan “Doubly Wicked” = nasty reputation

-- leader of Habiru force that lived by pillaging and raiding = tough enemy

-- But not the cause of the problem . . . the people forgot the LORD!

-- And note: it was the LORD Who “sold them into the enemy’s hand”

TR: After 8 years of oppression, serving “Doubly-Wicked” . . .



9

... the LORD raised up Othniel.

-- From his home near Debir, this seasoned warrior takes up the charge.

-- Certainly he had witnessed the deterioration of the people's faithfulness.

-- He had witnessed the oppression of the Mesopotamians.

-- He probably had even complained about it (if he was at all like us).

TR: But nothing really changed until . .

But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, **Othniel** the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Othniel from the south (Judah)
- already used of God to defeat Anakim in Debir
- probably the younger, perhaps half-brother of Caleb (maybe a nephew)
- at least 21 years younger than Caleb, therefore at least 75 years old, perhaps up to 94 years old.
- knew war, not volunteering blindly – more than a VIDEO GAME VETERAN
- humble? Achsah asked for the gift of the field with the springs in chapter 1
- would have witnessed victories over Sihon and Og, the Jordan crossing, the walls of Jericho, the long day of Gibeon, and the conquests of the land

TR: This old man could have been a grumbler, a complainer, but . . .

Judges 3:10-11

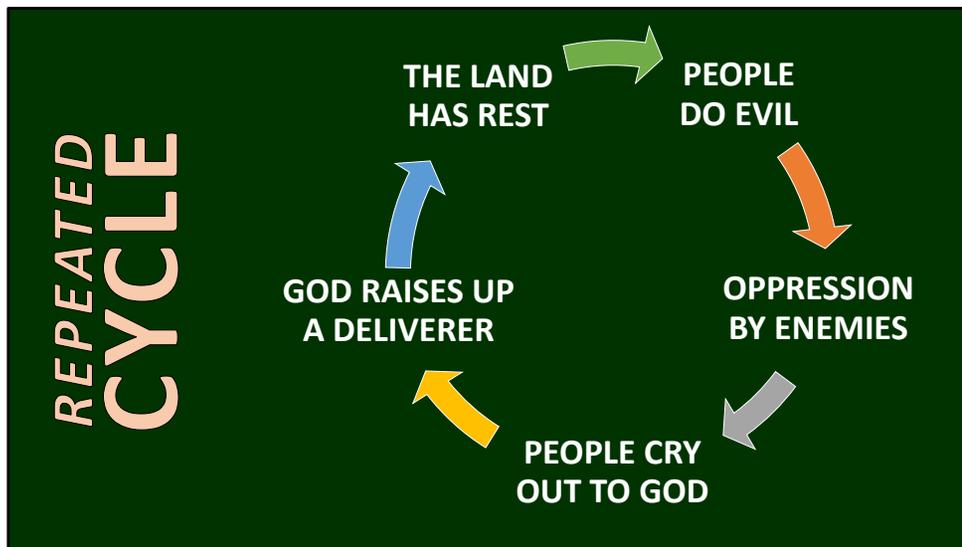
The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. ¹¹So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

ESV

11

READ SLIDE

TR: Othniel had witnessed the entire cycle, did you see it? . . .



12

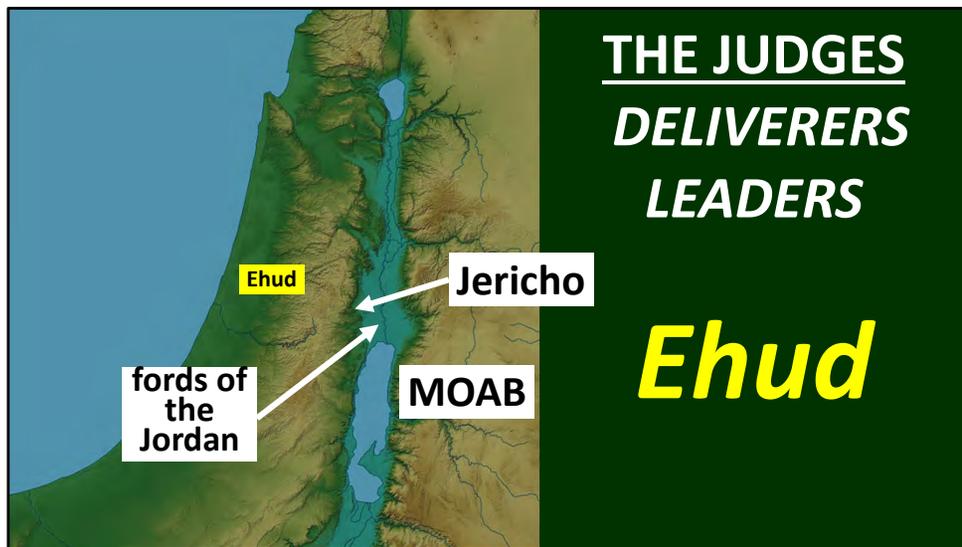
REVIEW SLIDE

-- The LORD SOLD THEM into Doubly-Wicked's hand

-- Othniel was "seasoned" and he had every reason to assume it was time for someone else to take charge, but he didn't just complain about it, did he?

-- EX: Bill Routley and building program, other charges

TR: Judges 3 has a graphic account of another judge . . .



13

REVIEW SLIDE

TR: The cycle begins again . . .

Judges 3:12

And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

ESV

14

READ SLIDE

-- Notice that it was the LORD who STRENGTHENED Eglon the King.
-- When all we do is complain, avoid God's call, and make excuses for not following God wholeheartedly . . . God may strengthen our enemies to discipline us too.

TR: Eglon . . .

Judges 3:13-14

He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and went and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city of palms. ¹⁴And the people of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

ESV

15

READ SLIDE

- There was a strong alliance
- City of Palms is Jericho.
- Never fully rebuilt but it seems that Eglon built a structure on the hill by the spring.

TR: Sin . . . oppression . . . and then, instead of just complaining for another 18 years . . .

Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, and the LORD raised up for them a deliverer, **Ehud**, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- the people cry out, God raises up a deliverer.
- A left-handed man (seems common among Benjaminites)
- Literally, a “right hand restricted man” (seems to have been seen as a defect)
- Probably man of importance since bringing the tribute
- Probably has done it many times since he was trusted to be alone with the Moab king.

- REVIEW STORY (vv. 16-25) Bring tribute, prepare weapon, with porters humbly bring tribute, come back along with a message from God (not YAHWEH), no one noticed weapon on “wrong” side, killed the obese king, lock the doors on the rooftop room, escape while servants think king is relieving himself.

TR: Verse 26 . . .

Judges 3:26-28a

Ehud escaped while they delayed, and he passed beyond the idols and escaped to Seirah. ²⁷When he arrived, he sounded the trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim. Then the people of Israel went down with him from the hill country, and he was their leader. ²⁸And he said to them, “Follow after me, for the LORD has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand.”

ESV

17

READ SLIDE

-- the “idols” are the stones, perhaps the stones of Joshua’s memorial or another well-known landmark

TR: Verse 28 continues . . .

Judges 3:28b-30

So they went down after him and seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites and did not allow anyone to pass over. ²⁹And they killed at that time about 10,000 of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; not a man escaped. ³⁰So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

ESV

18

READ SLIDE

-- Cutting off the way of escape back to their own land, Ehud and the men of Ephraim won their freedom.

-- The result was “rest” for 80 years . . . the longest period during all of the days of the judges.

-- Did you notice the cycle again?

TR: Othniel, Ehud, and then a third judge . . .



19

... a deliverer, a leader ... Shamgar.

TR: There's only one verse that describes him.

Judges 3:31 and 4:1

³¹After him was **Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed 600 of the Philistines with an oxgoad, and he also saved Israel.**

^{4:1}And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord after Ehud died.

ESV

20

READ SLIDE

- He seems to come along at the end of the 80 years of rest.
- Perhaps since chapter 4 begins referring back to Ehud, Shamgar's ministry was an overlap with the 80 years and more in the north and west of the land.
- His name is not Hebrew.
- Son of Anath = reference to Canaanite goddess of sex and war; some think a location.
- Clearly, he was not one of the "good ole boys" – not a "TOWNIE"
- Perhaps a farmer – ox goad = 8-10 feet long; sharpened with metal tip; perhaps a chisel end to scrap the plow.

TR: We dare not leave the history God's Spirit preserved for us to be . . .



21

... LEFT ON THE FLANNEL-GRAPH.

TR: We dare not allow this history to just be something ...



22

... dusty and not relevant to us.

TR: These 3 stories have at least 3 CHALLENGES for us today. The first is ...



23

READ SLIDE

- Othniel was raised up after 8 years; Ehud after 18 years
- I can't imagine that the people did not complain under the weight of the oppression of "Doubly-Wicked" and "Eglon the Big"
- But they were stuck in the cycle until they cried out to the LORD.
- [cried out] has to be more than just complaining
- we need to hear more than "drip, drip, drip" of complaining.
- CF. people who come and complain to me but never ask anything until I ask, "HOW WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO HELP YOU?"

TR: A second CHALLENGE is to . . .

Do not avoid Him anymore . . .
heed the LORD's call!



24

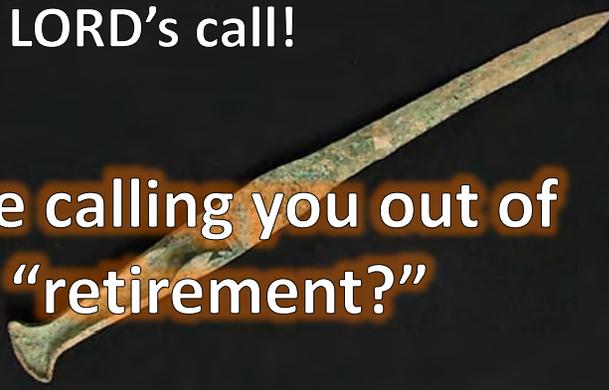
READ SLIDE

-- This ancient bronze dagger reminds me that someone needs to heed the LORD's call.

TR: As we look at the diversity of the people God called into a special role of leadership, we can learn a lot. From Othniel I hear this question . . .

Do not avoid Him anymore . . .
heed the LORD's call!

Is He calling you out of
"retirement?"



25

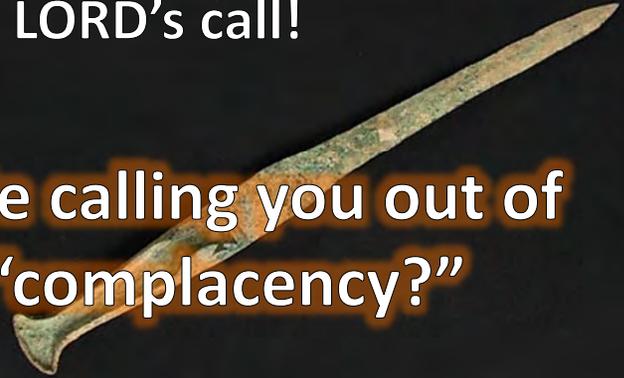
READ SLIDE

- Cf. my better understanding of the challenges of being "seasoned" with years . . .
- . . . BUT we must not let ourselves become those who complain but do nothing.

TR: From Ehud I hear the question . . .

Do not avoid Him anymore . . .
heed the LORD's call!

Is He calling you out of
"complacency?"



26

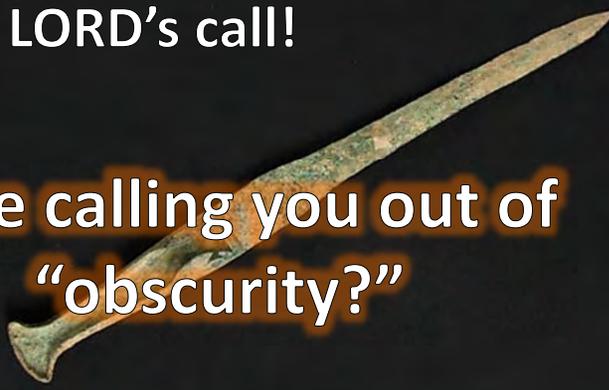
READ SLIDE

- This is a guess, but most likely he has an important man who had brought the tribute again and again.
- He was known well enough to trust or at least be considered a "non-threat"
- Something must have happened. The LORD snapped Ehud out of his complacency . . . and perhaps his under-the-breath grumbling.
- Have we grown complacent with the state of oppression?

TR: And from the one-verse wonder, Shamgar, I hear the question . . .

Do not avoid Him anymore . . .
heed the LORD's call!

Is He calling you out of
"obscurity?"



27

READ SLIDE

- Shamgar could have said, "I'm not an Othniel (with heritage) nor an Ehud (with position)!"
- Non-Hebrew name, perhaps even tied so tightly to the false gods that he was named for them.
- He was perhaps born of compromise with the surrounding people's.
- But his heritage hold-him-backs were cast off.
- Was he merely the tractor driver of the day (with his ox goad)?
- God can use whom He will . . . even those with strikes against them when it comes to resumes and pedigrees

TR: Two CHALLENGES . . . not just complain but cry out; not just avoid but hear His call. A third CHALLENGE from the ancient text . . .

.



**Do not make excuses anymore . . .
use what the LORD has given you!**

READ SLIDE

- Complainers often will do nothing themselves.**
- We can slip into complacency and then excuse that half-heartedness because we “haven’t got what it takes to win the day.”**

TR: Instead of excuses why you can’t do what God is calling you to do . . . use what He has given to you . . .

His Spirit

29

**Do not make excuses anymore . . .
use what the LORD has given you!**

**In verse 10 we read that “the Spirit of the LORD was upon”
Othniel.**

**-- We now live in the era of the New Covenant, the era of the
Spirit.**

**-- If He has us, we have His power to do whatever challenging thing
He is calling us to.**

**TR: As we think further about Othniel, we realize that the LORD
had given him . . .**



His Spirit
Your experience

30

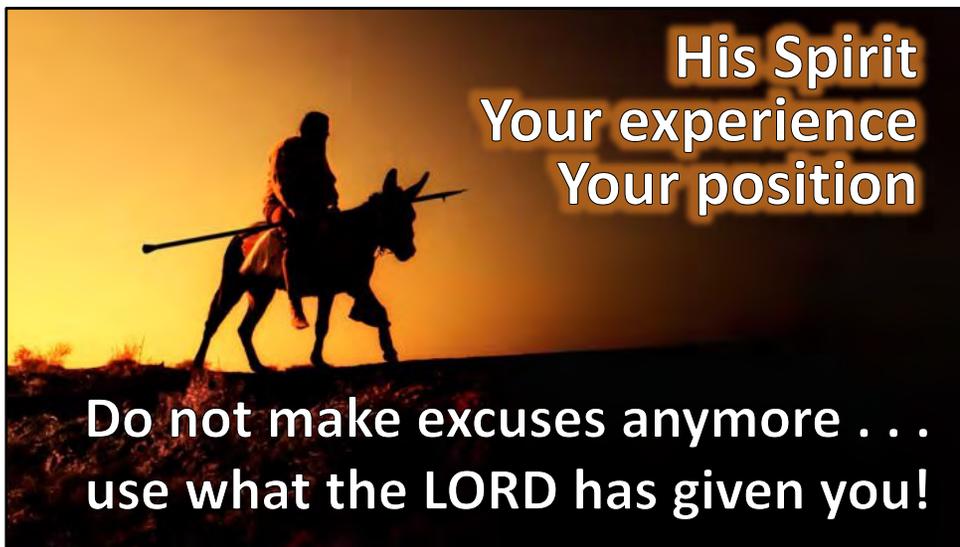
**Do not make excuses anymore . . .
use what the LORD has given you!**

. . . experience.

-- He was battle-tested. He had fought the giants.

-- Perhaps he had been battle-fatigued for a while . . . but instead of complaining, instead of avoiding the call of God . . . he allowed the LORD to use his experience to win a great victory against a brutally difficult enemy.

TR: From Ehud I reflect that when he got done complaining and perhaps being complacent, he allowed God to use . . .



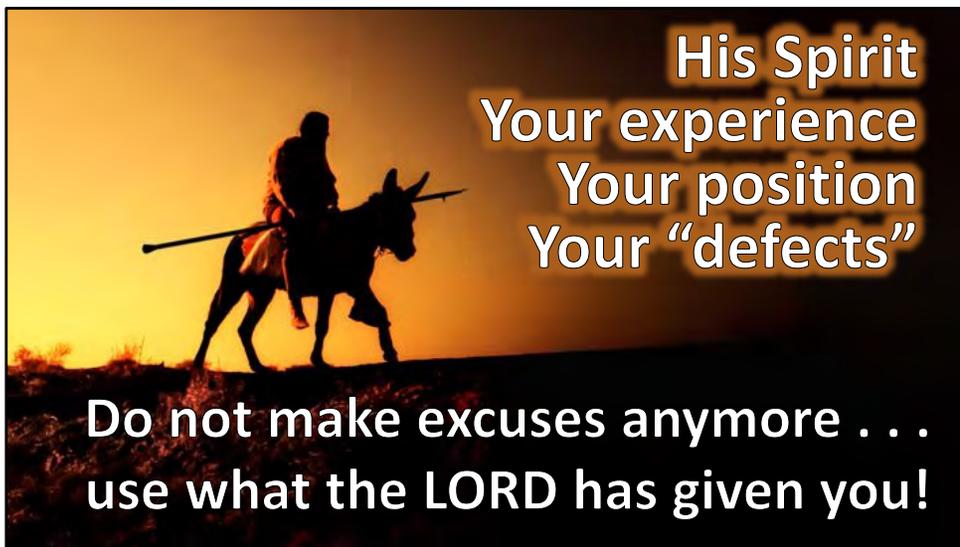
**His Spirit
Your experience
Your position**

**Do not make excuses anymore . . .
use what the LORD has given you!**

31

- . . . his position of bringing the tribute to Eglon the Big.**
- Even as Esther's uncle would say to her in her role as queen of Persia many centuries later . . .**
- . . . "Who knows whether you have to come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)**
- Is the LORD calling you to use your position, the one He has sovereignly given to you for His kingdom's sake?**

TR: When I think further about Ehud I think of his left-handedness.



His Spirit
Your experience
Your position
Your “defects”

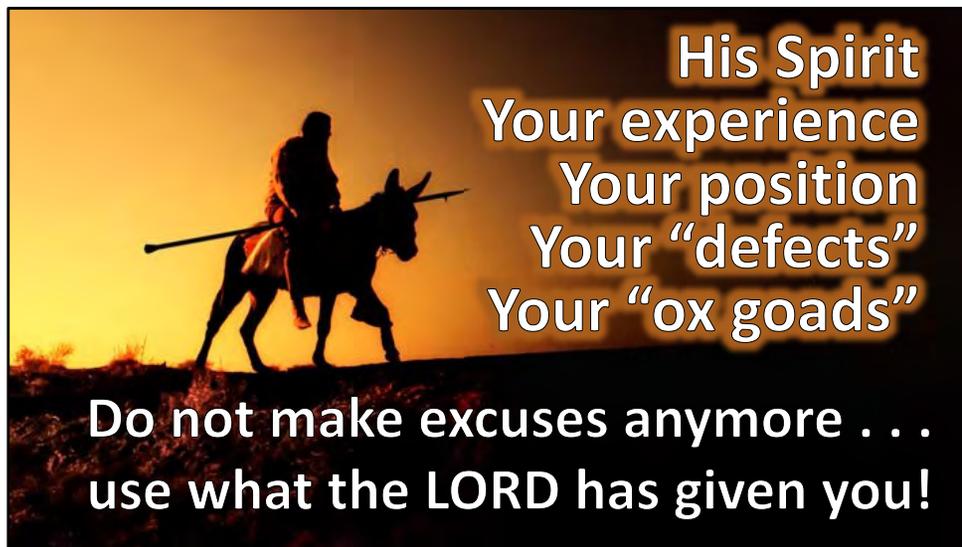
Do not make excuses anymore . . .
use what the LORD has given you!

32

If it is true that this would have been seen as a defect, then perhaps it is an encouragement for us to give the LORD even our defects.

--

TR: And finally, I hear the LORD challenging me to us the . . .



33

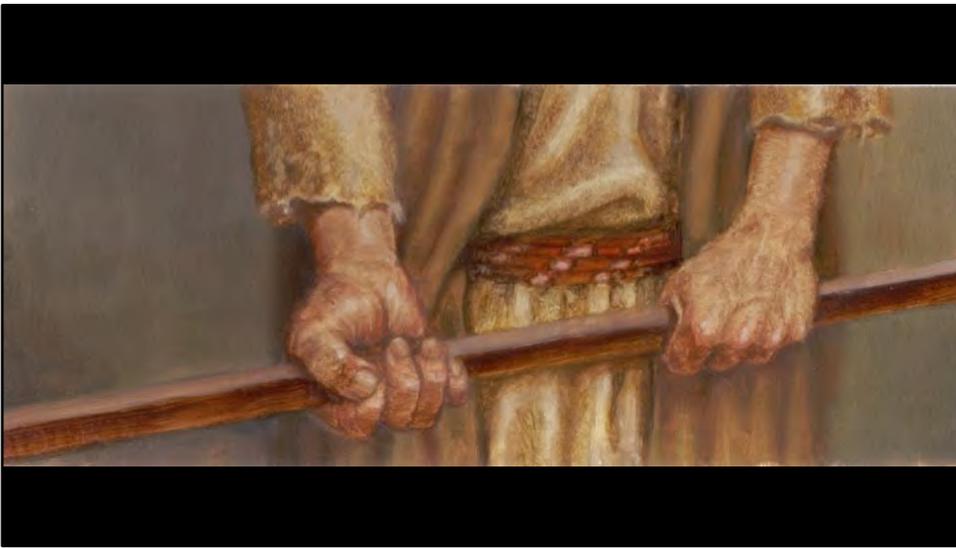
. . . ox goads He has given me.

-- These tools of the trade can be transformed into weapons.

-- Remember, we don't fight against flesh and blood . . . but we are in a battle still.

-- Cf. Stew Thompson and Bobbie Evoy using their tech and video skills for the kingdom.

TR: All of us have at least one spiritual gift. We may not all be great leaders, but we must use what . . .



. . . God has put in our hands.

-- WE must stop just complaining and cry out to God

-- We must stop avoiding God and hear His call to service, whether He calls us out of retirement, complacency or obscurity.

-- We must stop making excuses of why we aren't in the fight for the souls of men and women, boys and girls. We must use what God has put into our hands . . . in the power of His Spirit let Him use our experience, our position, even our so-called defects and our re-purposed ox goads!

Isn't it time to stop the "drip, drip, drip" and cry out to the LORD, "Thy Kingdom Come!"



35

(Series Overview Slide and Message Title)