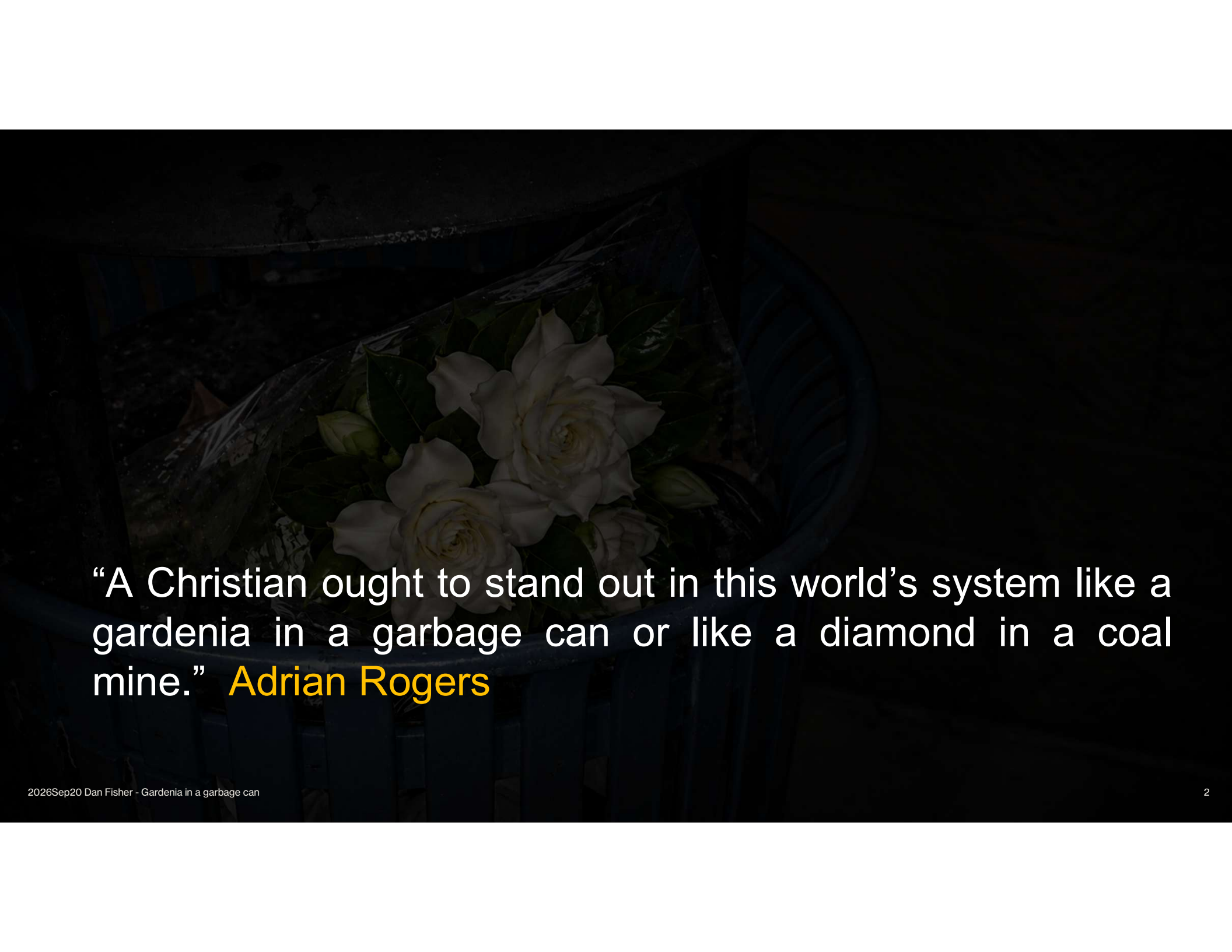


A photograph of a bouquet of white gardenia flowers with green leaves, wrapped in clear plastic, sitting inside a blue metal trash can. The trash can is outdoors, and a dark, textured surface is visible in the background. The text "like a gardenia in a garbage can" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

like a
gardenia
in a
garbage can

A photograph of a bouquet of white gardenia flowers with green leaves, placed inside a blue plastic trash can. The scene is dimly lit, with the flowers being the primary light source, creating a stark contrast with the dark background of the trash can.

“A Christian ought to stand out in this world’s system like a gardenia in a garbage can or like a diamond in a coal mine.” **Adrian Rogers**



“that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life,”

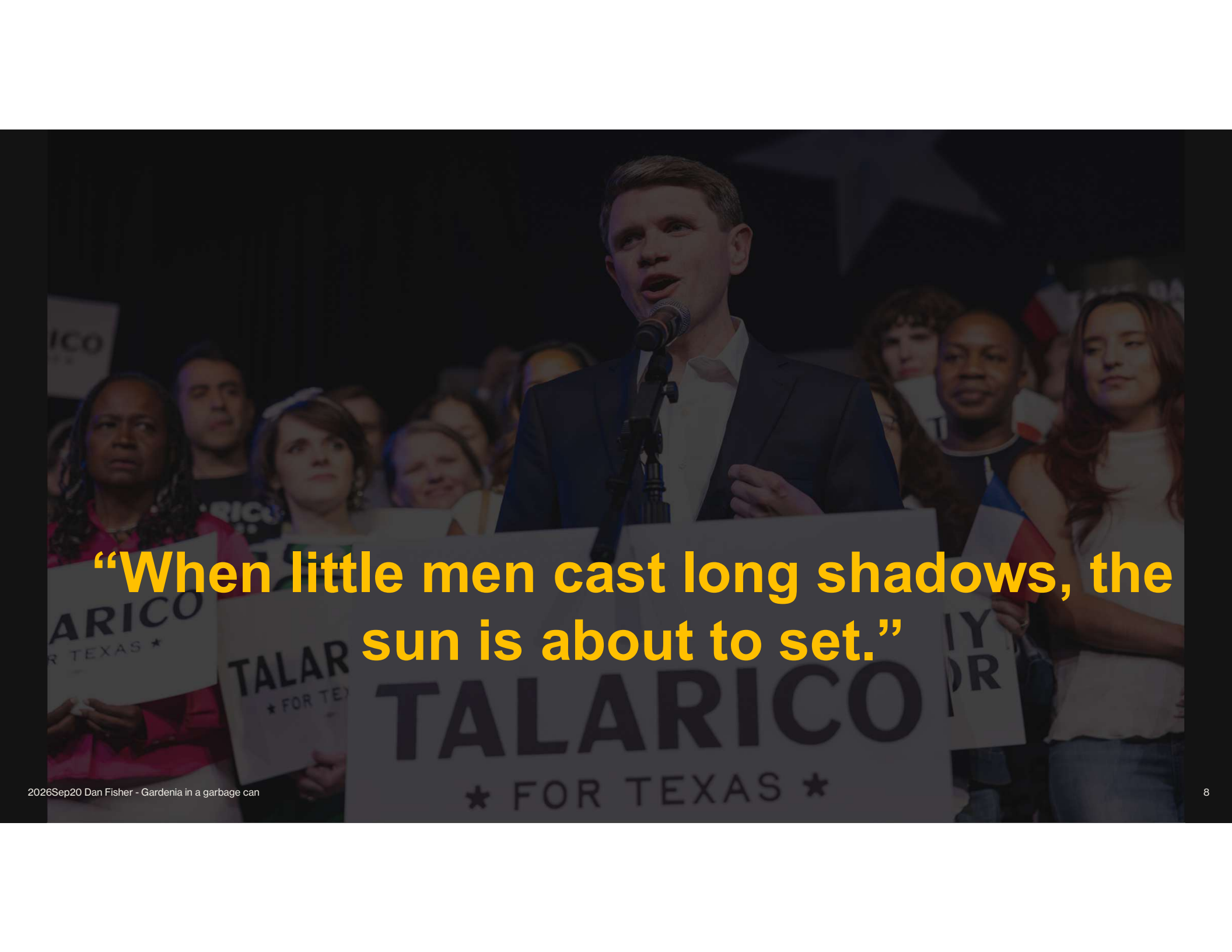
Phil 2:15-16









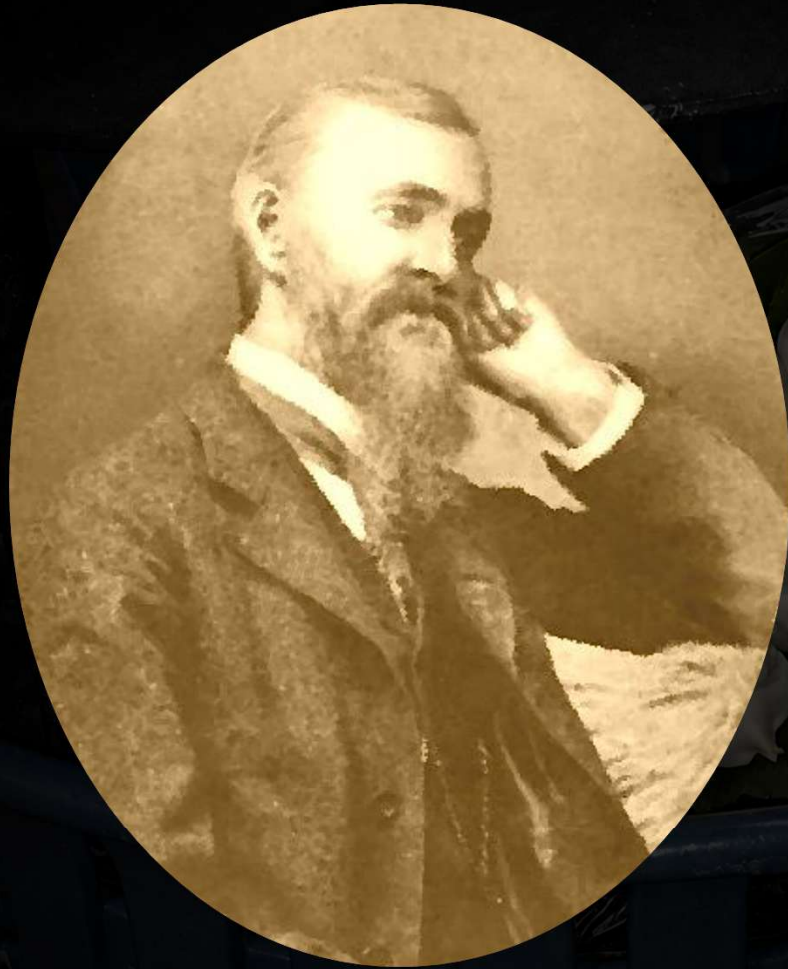
A man in a dark suit and white shirt is speaking into a microphone at a podium. Behind him, a diverse crowd of people is visible, many holding signs that say "TALARICO FOR TEXAS". The scene appears to be a political rally or campaign event. The text "When little men cast long shadows, the sun is about to set." is overlaid in large yellow font across the middle of the image.

“When little men cast long shadows, the sun is about to set.”

“while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed” **2 Tim 3:13**

“that no one should be shaken by these afflictions” **1 Thess 3:3**

“At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ ²⁷ This phrase, ‘Yet once more,’ indicates the removal of things that are shaken – that is, things that have been made – in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,” **Heb 12:28**



There's a land that is fairer than day
and by faith we can see it afar
for the Father waits over the way
to prepare us a dwelling place there
In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore
In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore

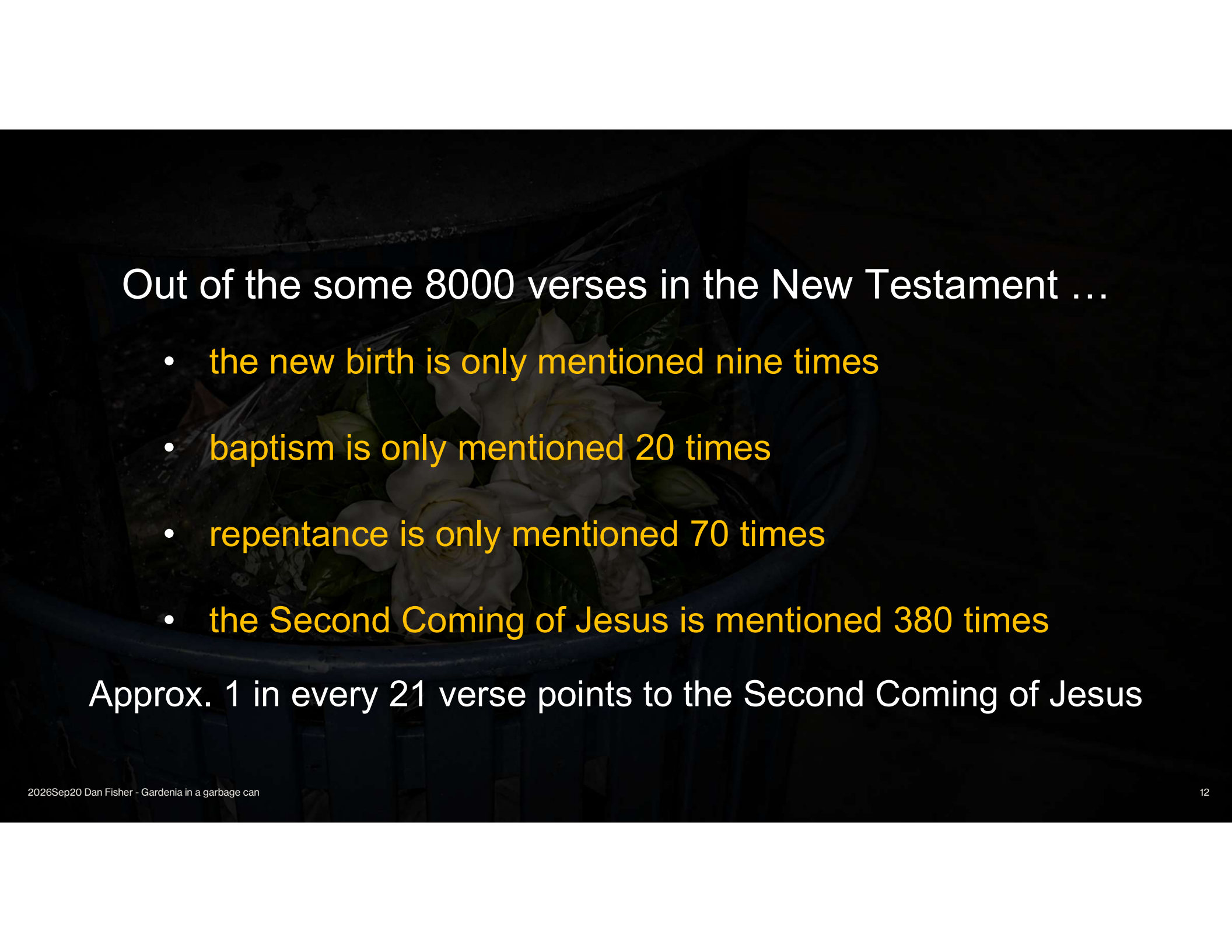
Sanford Fillmore Bennett, 1868



Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)

Scottish Baptist preacher

“The Early Church did not think primarily about death or about Heaven, but about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. They were not looking for a cleft in the ground called a grave, they were looking for a cleft in the sky called glory. They were not looking for the undertaker, they were looking for the ‘uppertaker.’”

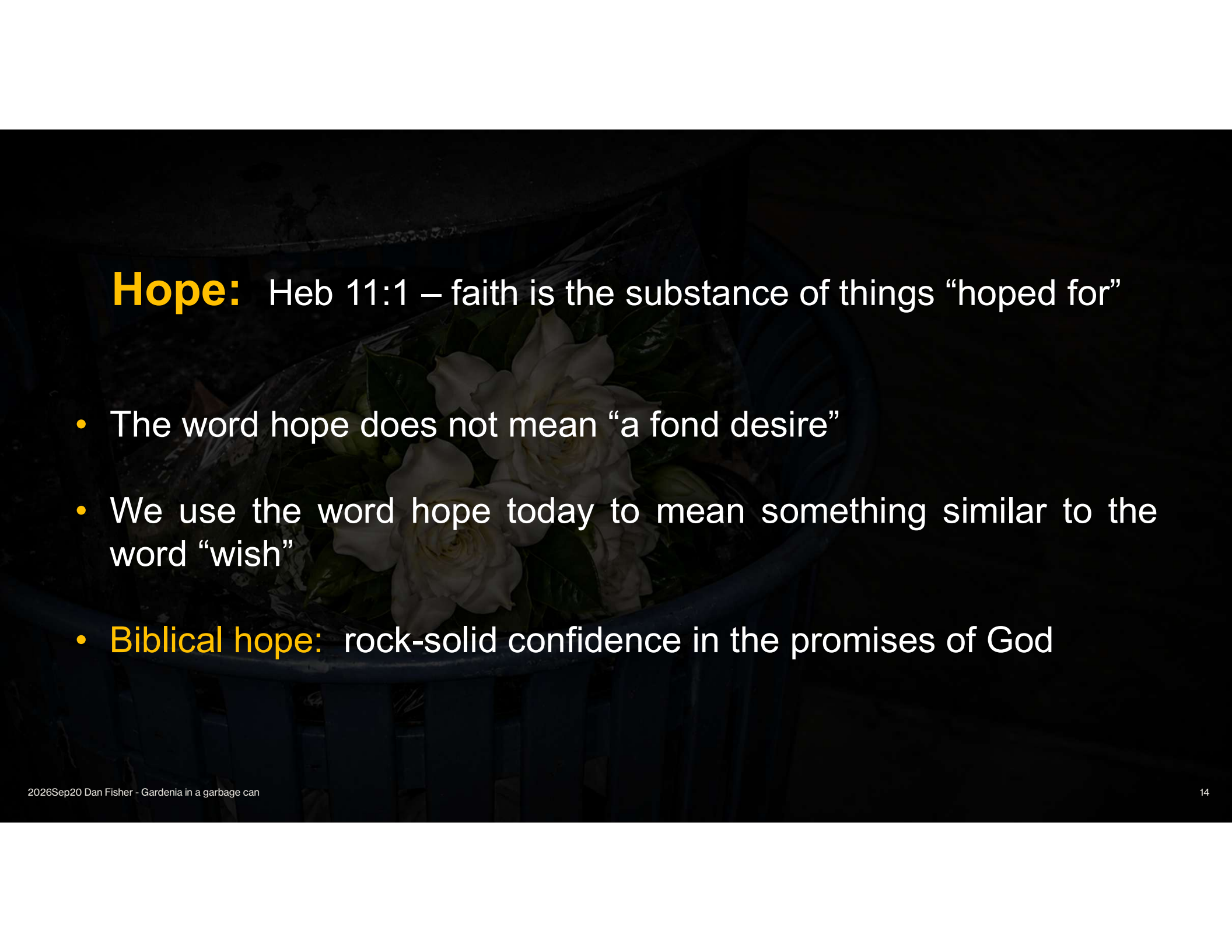


Out of the some 8000 verses in the New Testament ...

- the new birth is only mentioned nine times
- baptism is only mentioned 20 times
- repentance is only mentioned 70 times
- the Second Coming of Jesus is mentioned 380 times

Approx. 1 in every 21 verse points to the Second Coming of Jesus

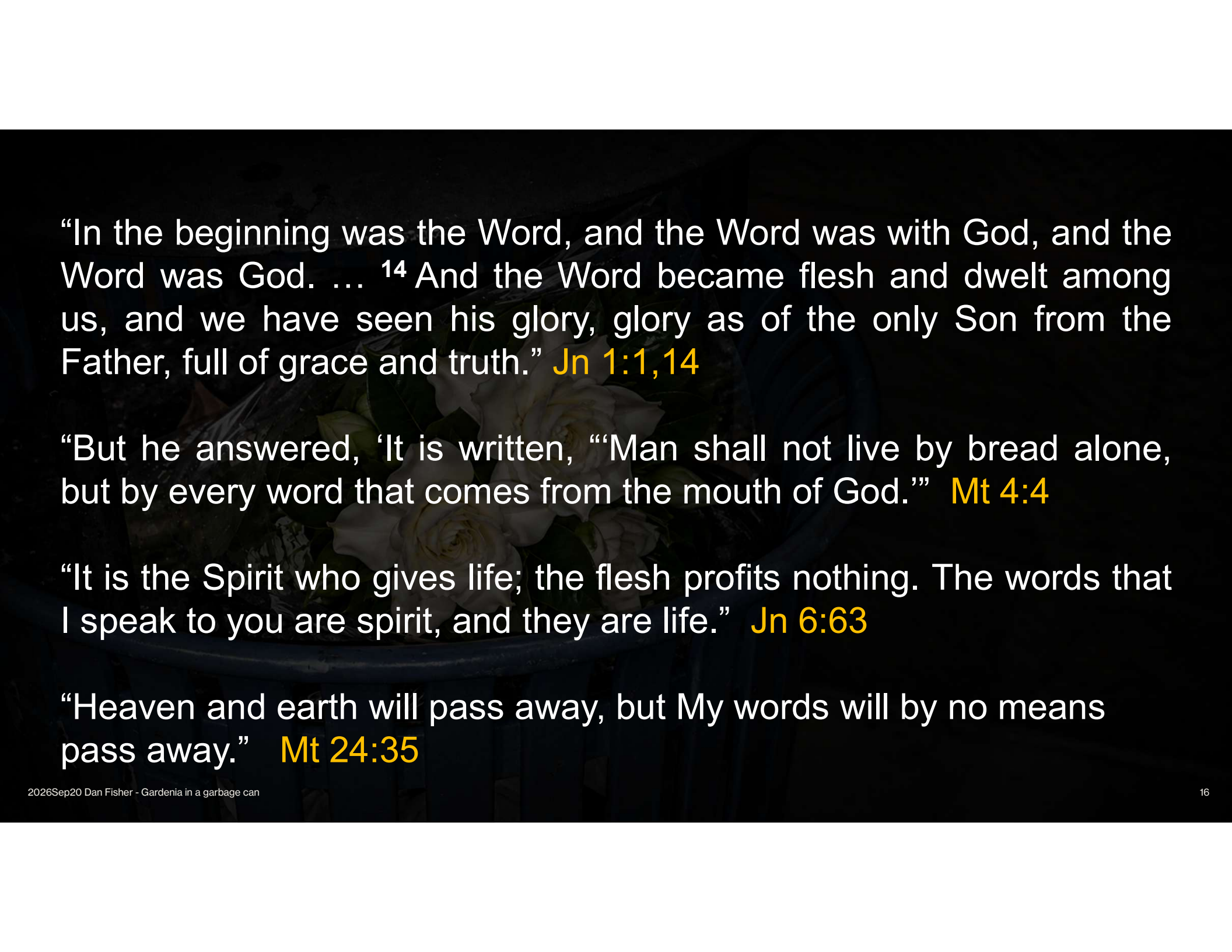
3 hopes/guarantees that will allow you to
flourish as a gardenia in a garbage can

A bouquet of white gardenia flowers is placed inside a blue plastic trash can. The flowers are wrapped in clear plastic and are the central focus of the image. The background is dark and out of focus.

Hope: Heb 11:1 – faith is the substance of things “hoped for”

- The word hope does not mean “a fond desire”
- We use the word hope today to mean something similar to the word “wish”
- **Biblical hope:** rock-solid confidence in the promises of God

Guarantee #1: **The good book**

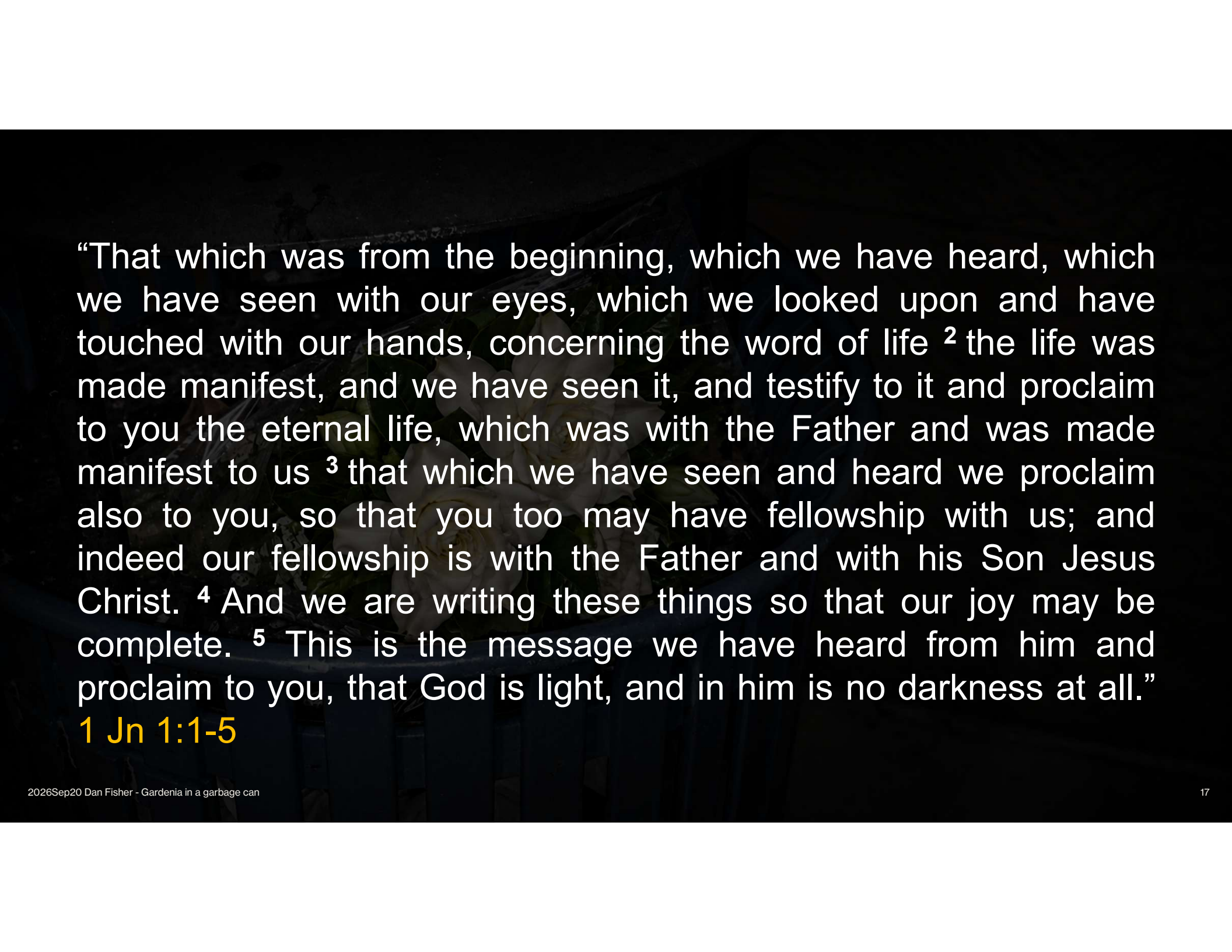


“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jn 1:1,14

“But he answered, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’ Mt 4:4

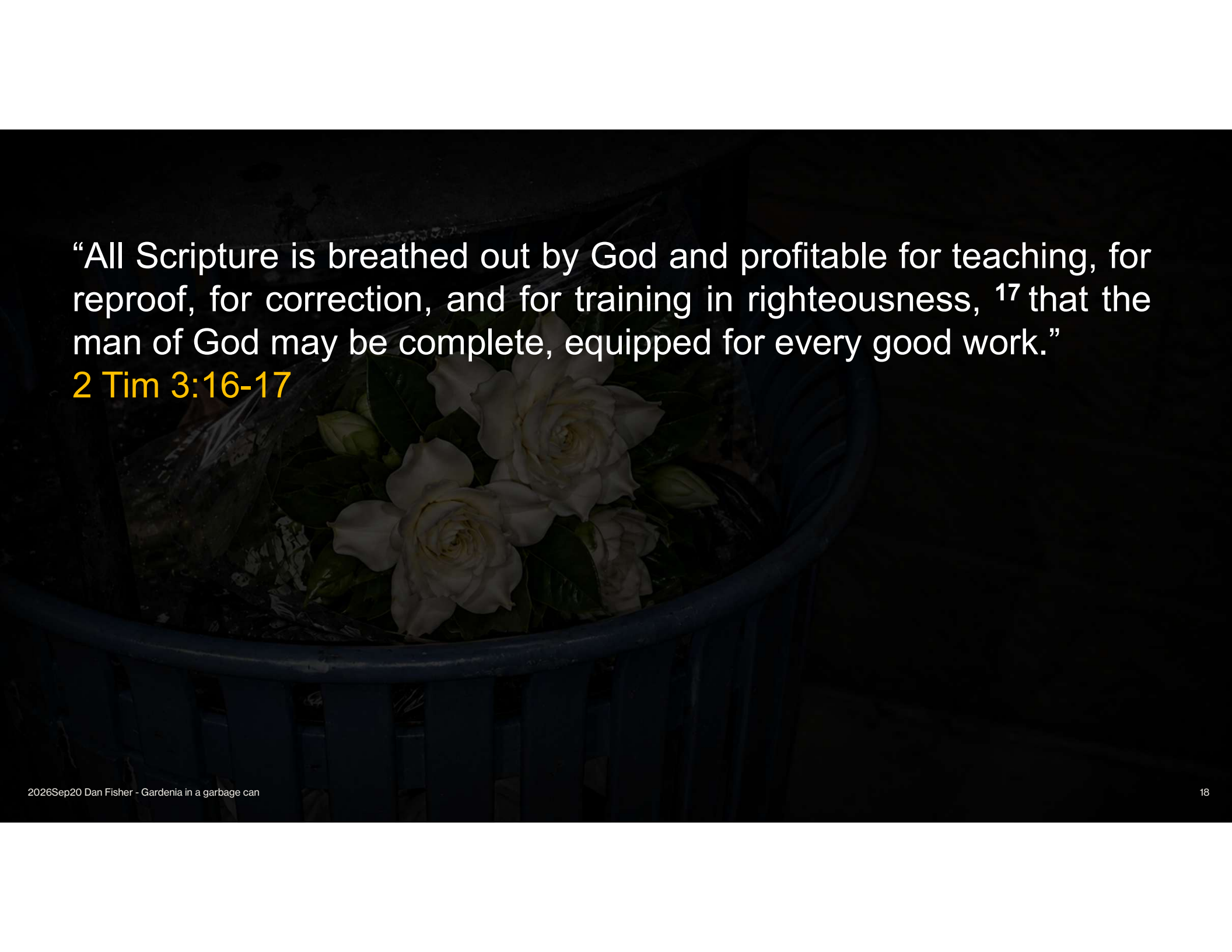
“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” Jn 6:63

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” Mt 24:35



“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

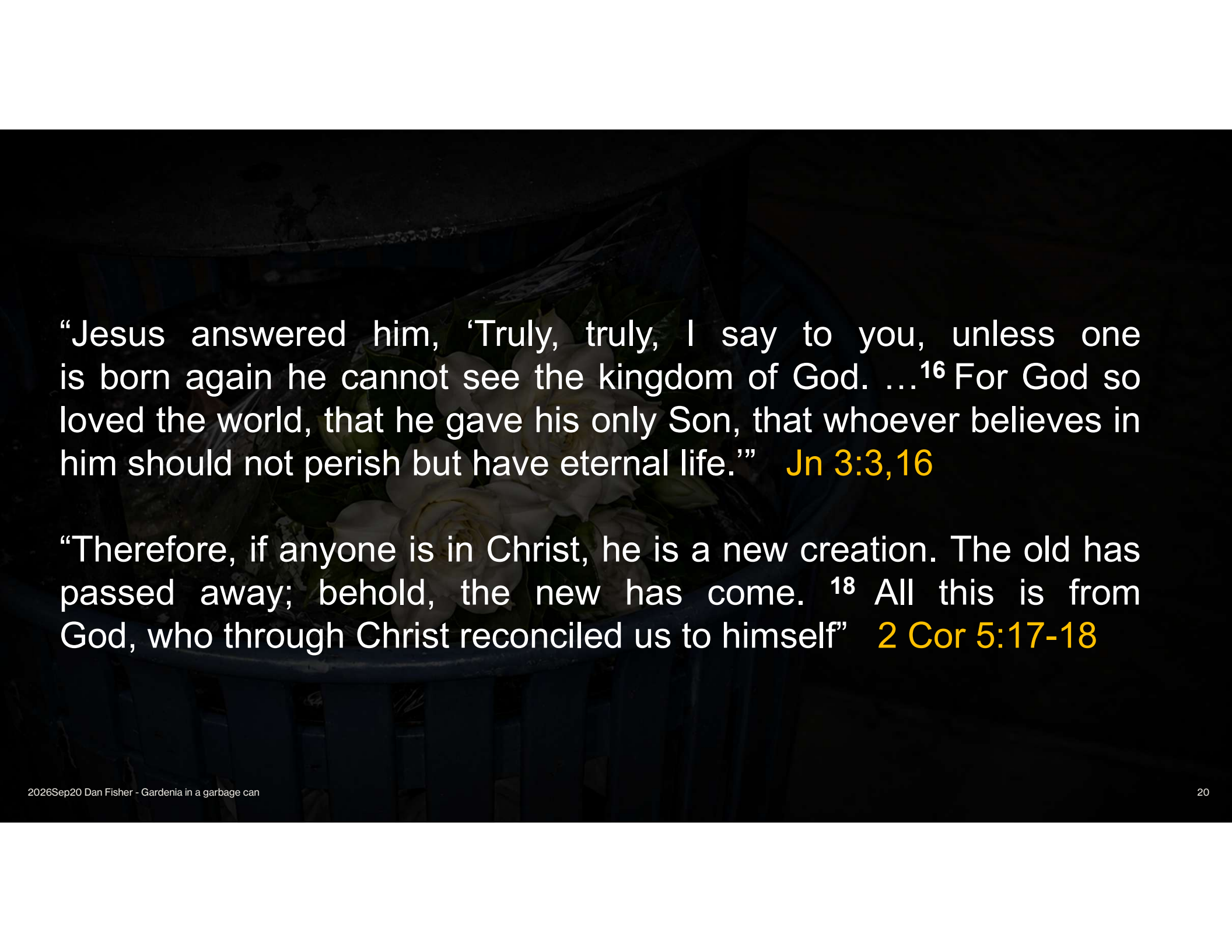
1 Jn 1:1-5



“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

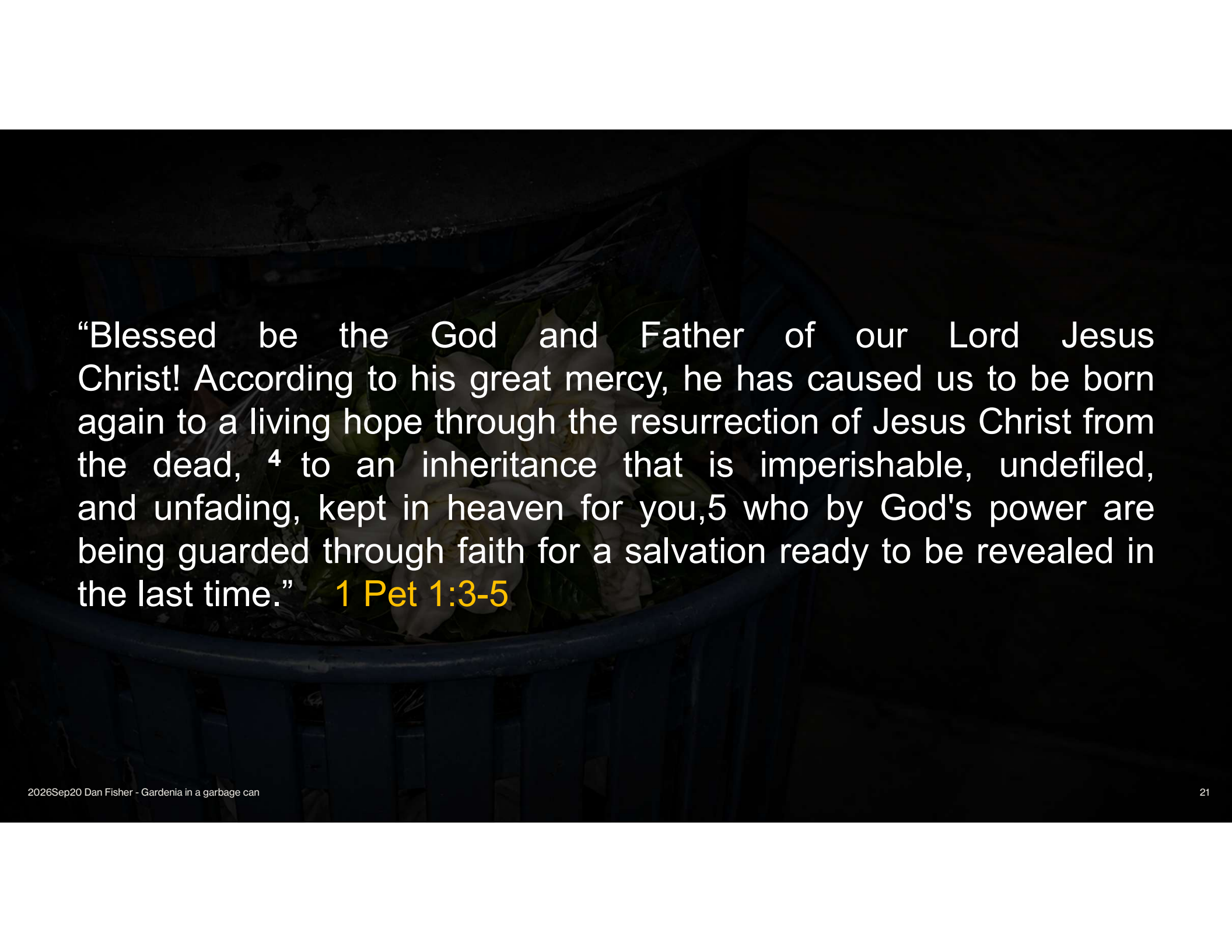
2 Tim 3:16-17

Guarantee #2: **The second birth**



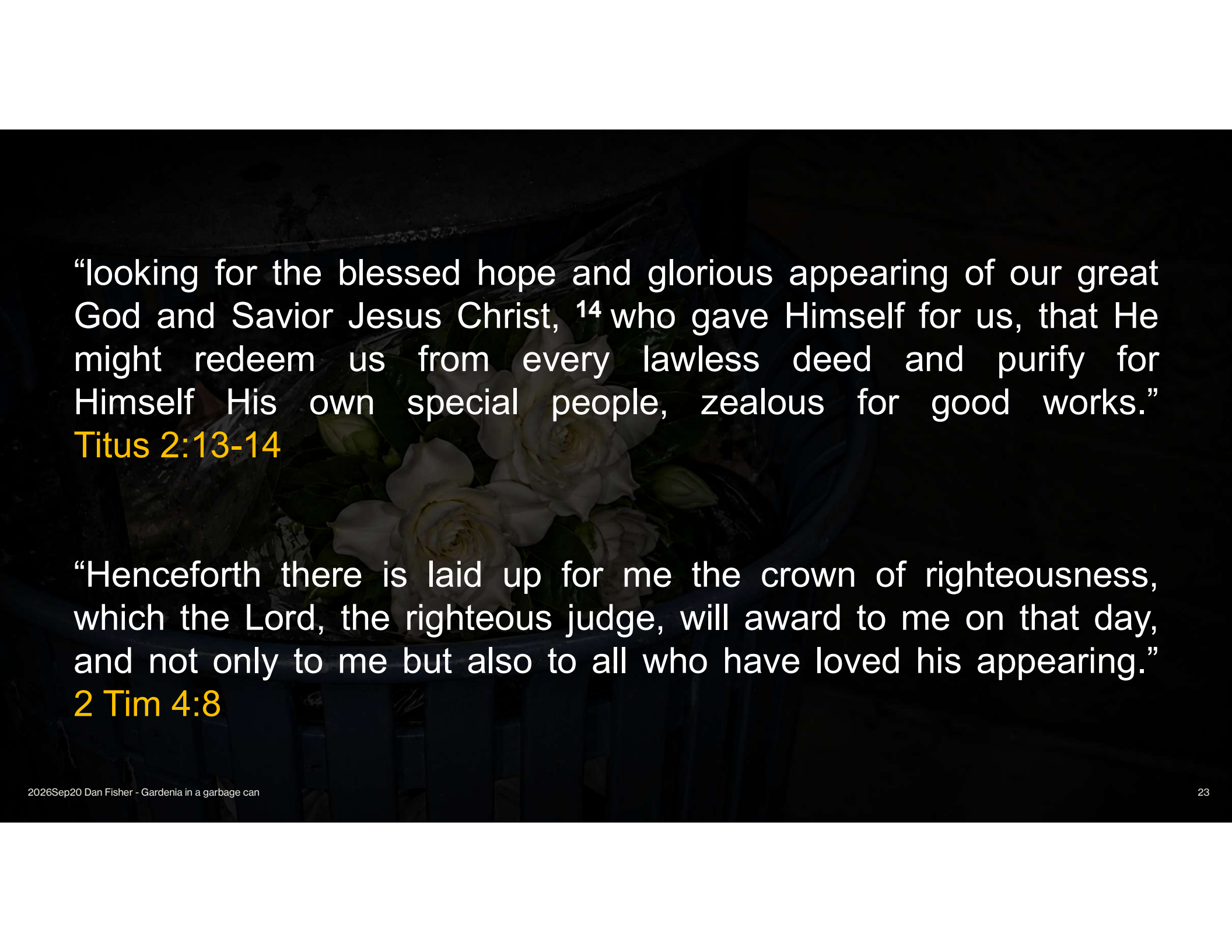
“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. ...¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.’” **Jn 3:3,16**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself” **2 Cor 5:17-18**



“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” **1 Pet 1:3-5**

Guarantee #3: **The blessed hope**

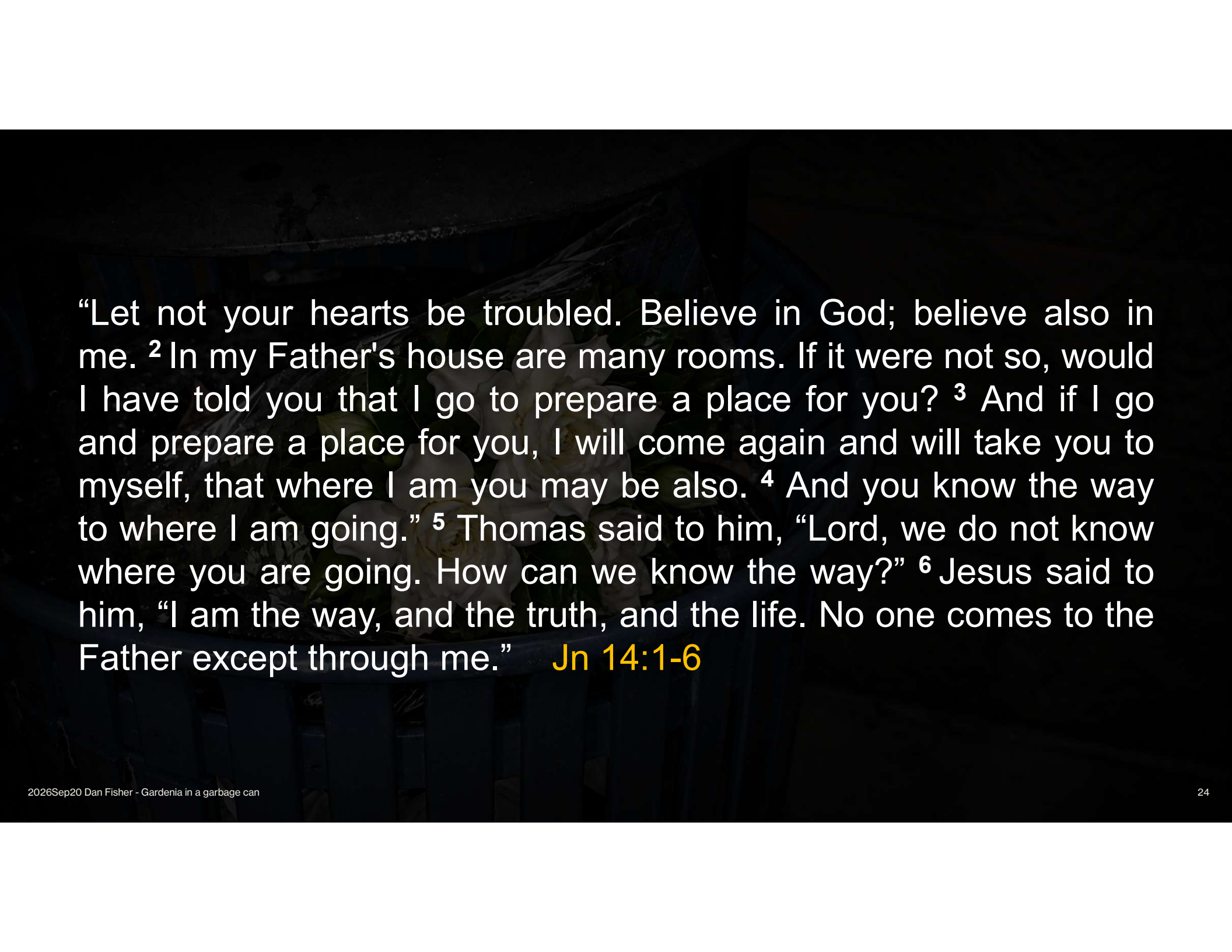


“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

Titus 2:13-14

“Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”

2 Tim 4:8



“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” **Jn 14:1-6**

God has given us guarantee upon guarantee

“So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the **unchangeable character of his purpose**, he guaranteed it with **an oath**, ¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰ where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” **Heb 6:17-20**