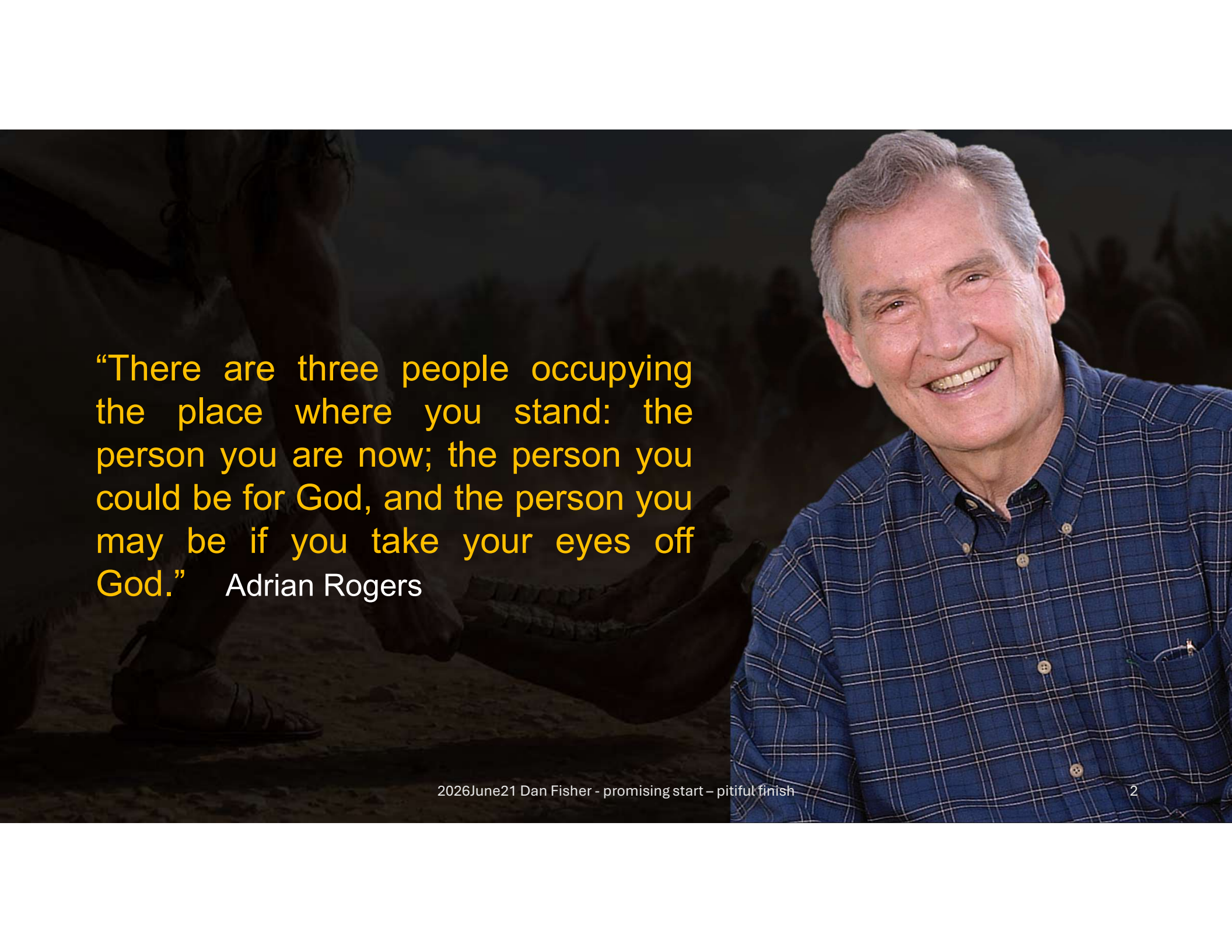


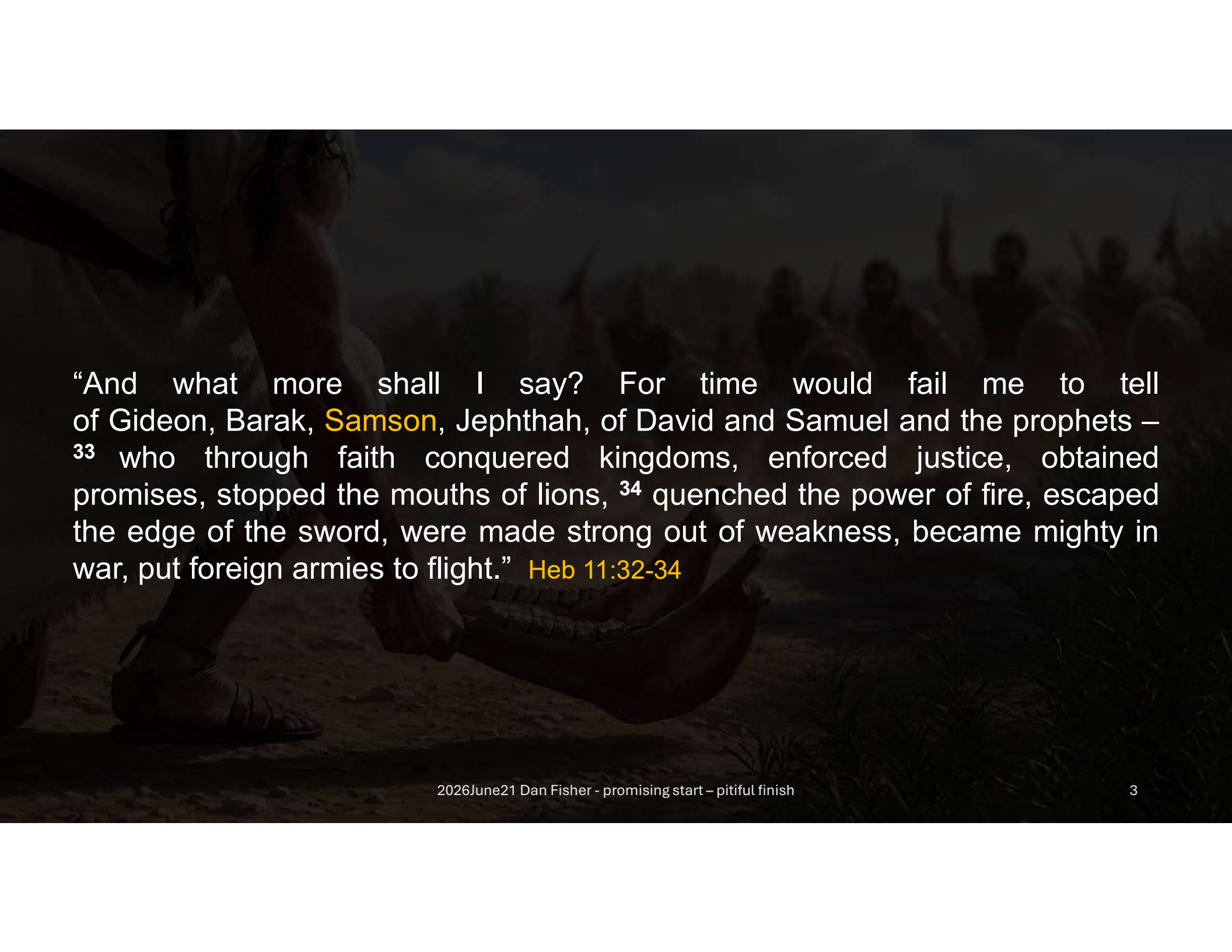


# promising start - pitiful finish

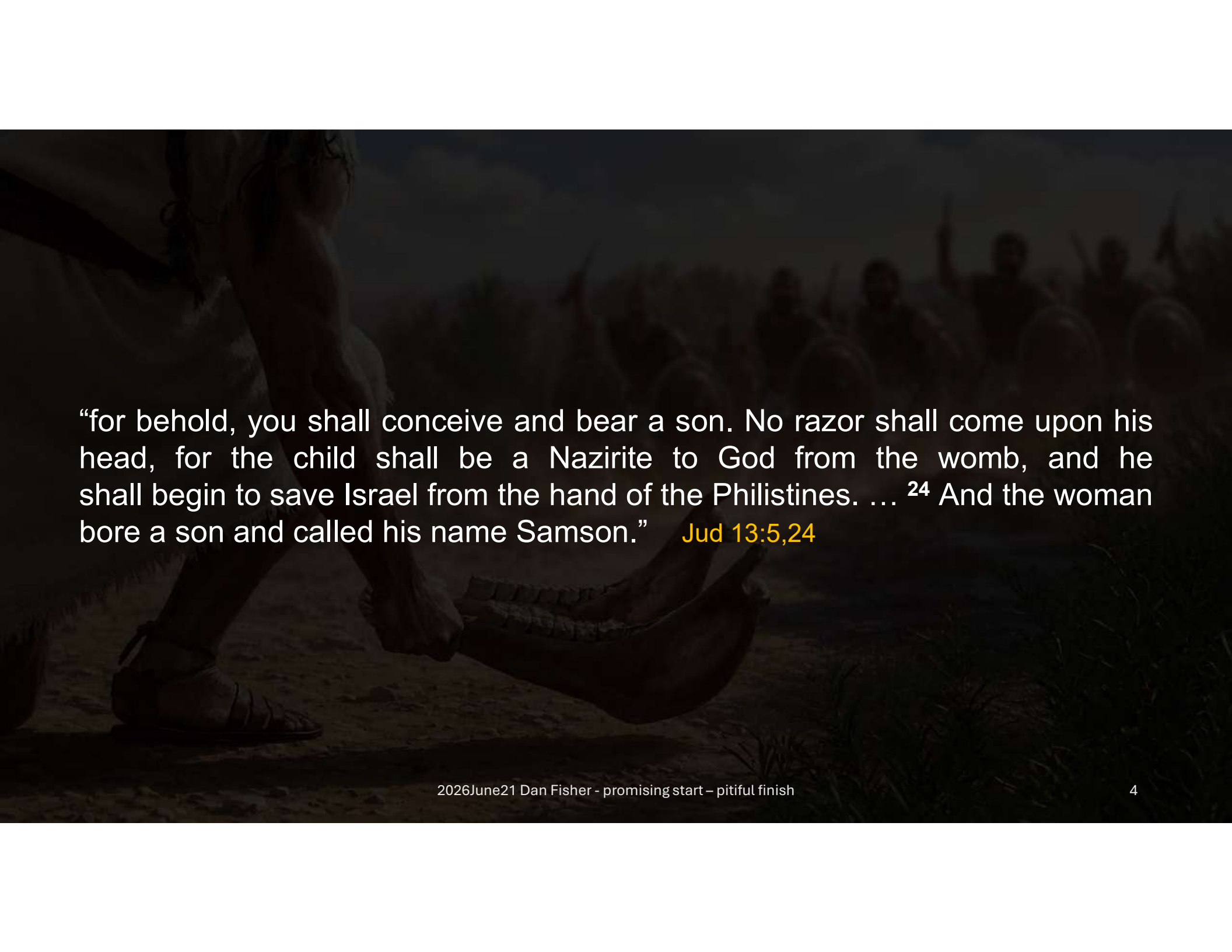
what makes & breaks spiritual champions



“There are three people occupying the place where you stand: the person you are now; the person you could be for God, and the person you may be if you take your eyes off God.” Adrian Rogers



“And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, **Samson**, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets –<sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,<sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.” **Heb 11:32-34**



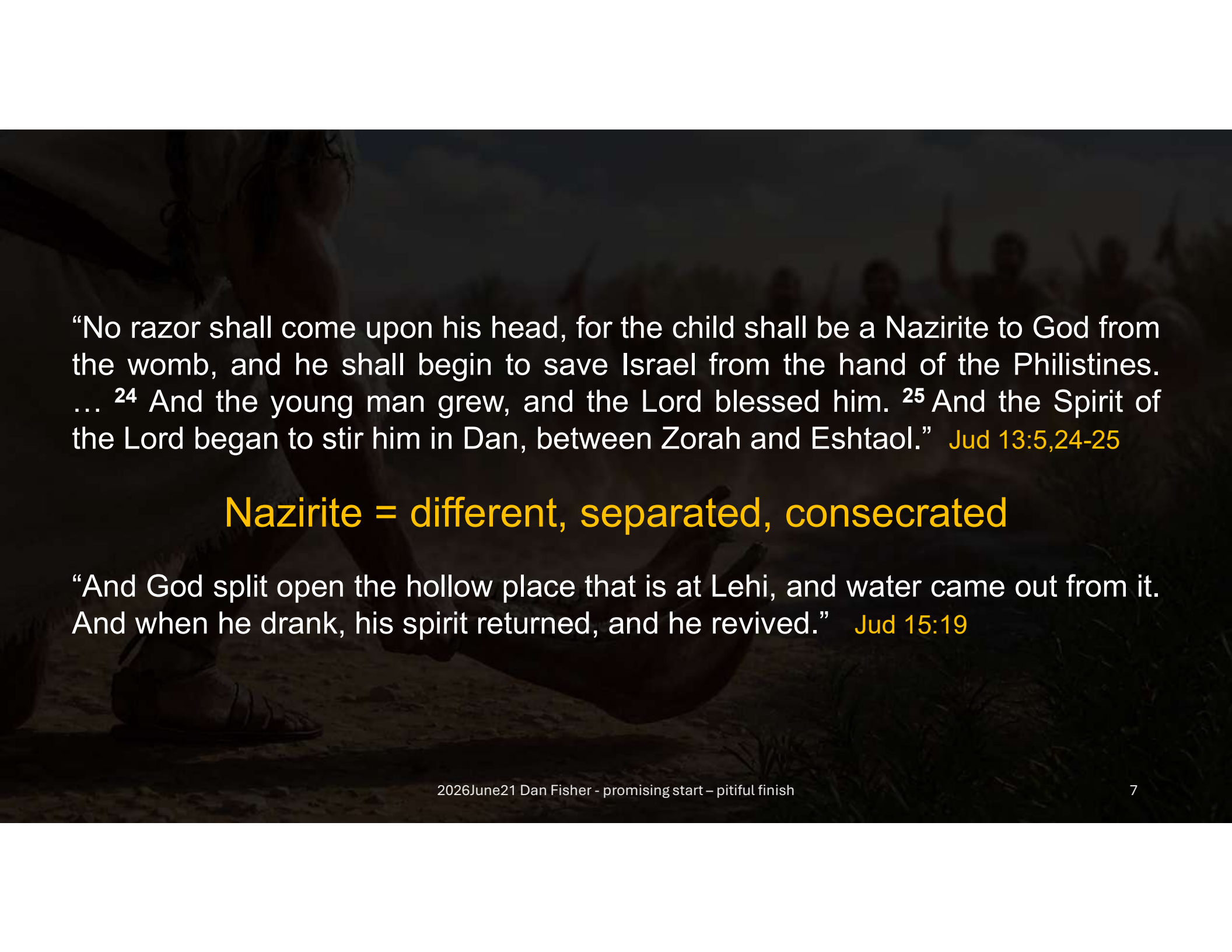
“for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. ... <sup>24</sup> And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson.” **Jud 13:5,24**



**Samson = sunshine**

A dark, atmospheric scene from a movie. In the foreground, a man's legs and feet are visible, wearing a loincloth and sandals. He is holding a severed head. In the background, a crowd of people is visible, some holding spears. The scene is dimly lit, creating a somber and dramatic mood.

# 1. Consecrated man




“No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. ... <sup>24</sup> And the young man grew, and the Lord blessed him. <sup>25</sup> And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.” **Jud 13:5,24-25**

**Nazirite = different, separated, consecrated**

“And God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and water came out from it. And when he drank, his spirit returned, and he revived.” **Jud 15:19**



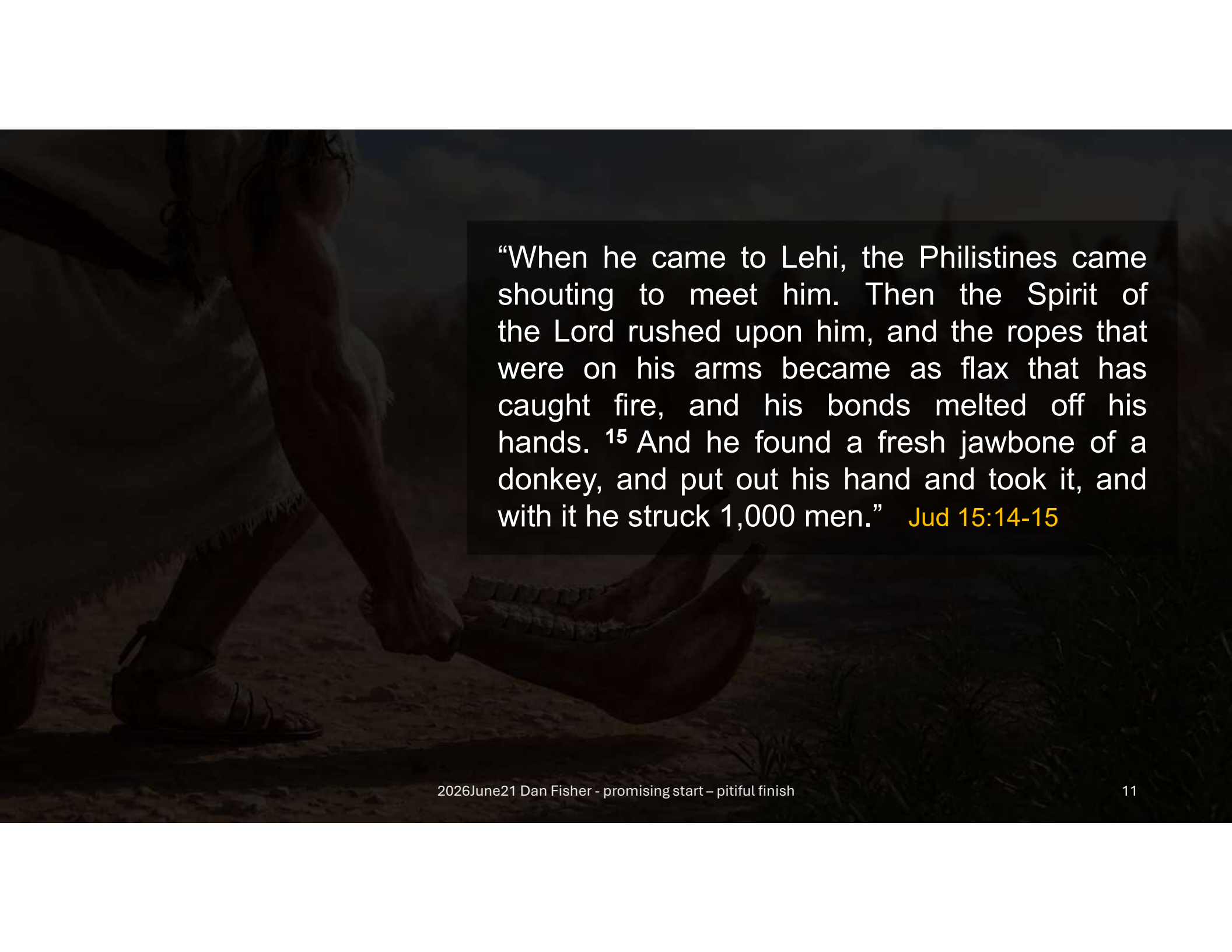
## 2. Courageous man

A dramatic painting depicting a man with long, dark, wild hair and a beard, wearing a simple white tunic, wrestling a large lion. The man is shown in a powerful, muscular physique, leaning over the lion with his hands firmly gripping its head. The lion is roaring with its mouth wide open, showing its sharp teeth. The background features a vast, rocky desert landscape under a sky filled with large, billowing clouds, with a bright light source breaking through the clouds behind the man. The overall tone is heroic and intense.

“Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat.” **Jud 14:6**



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“When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. <sup>15</sup> And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men.” **Jud 15:14-15**

A dark, atmospheric scene from a movie. In the foreground, a man's muscular arm and hand are visible, holding a severed head. He is wearing a loincloth and sandals. In the background, a large crowd of people is visible, some holding spears or shields, suggesting a battle or a significant event. The overall lighting is very low, creating a somber and dramatic mood.

### 3. Conquering man

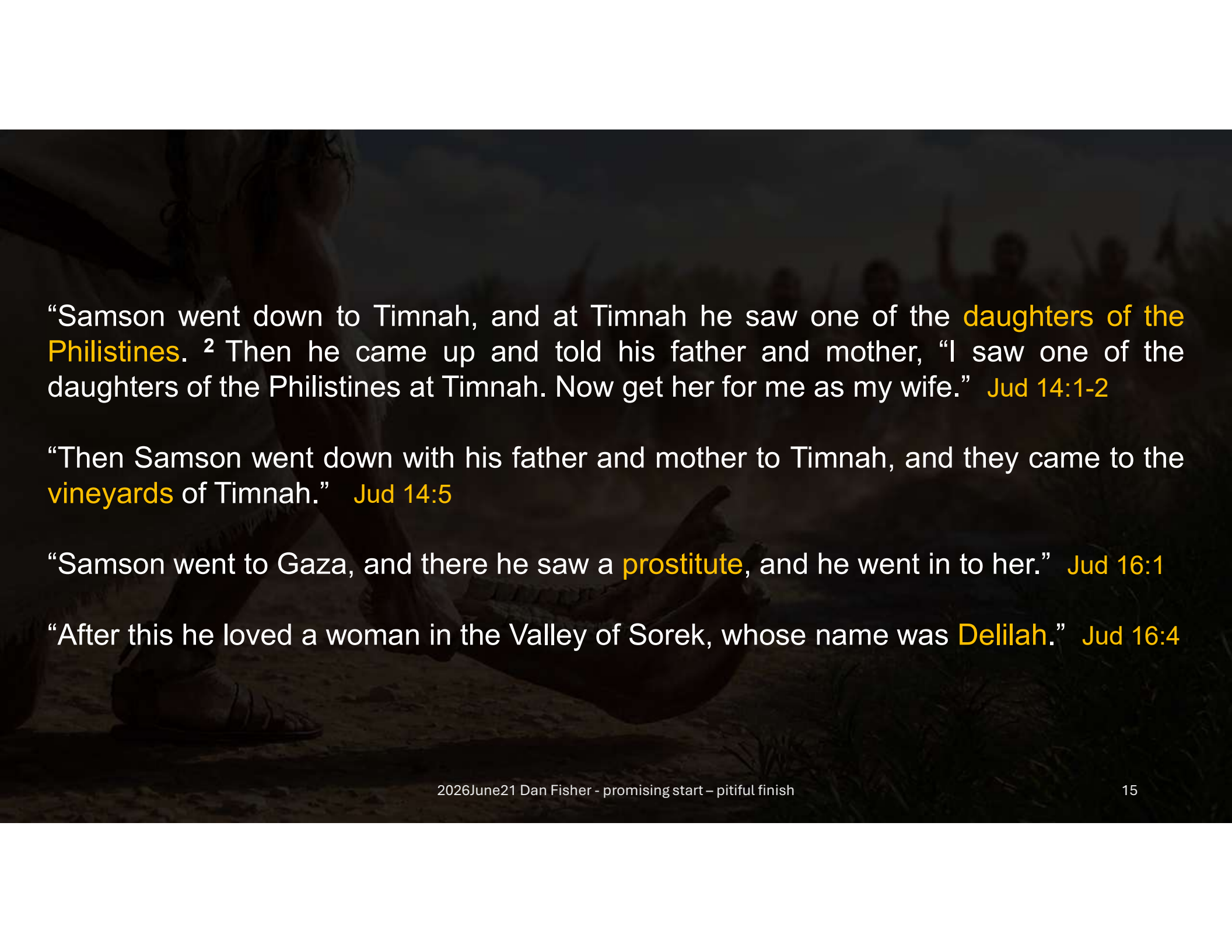
“were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.” **Heb 11:34**

“If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, ...  
<sup>8</sup> Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.” **Lev 26:3,8**

“One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the Lord your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. <sup>11</sup> Be very careful, therefore, to love the Lord your God. <sup>12</sup> For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, <sup>13</sup> know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the Lord your God has given you.” **Josh 23:10-13**



## 4. Compromising man

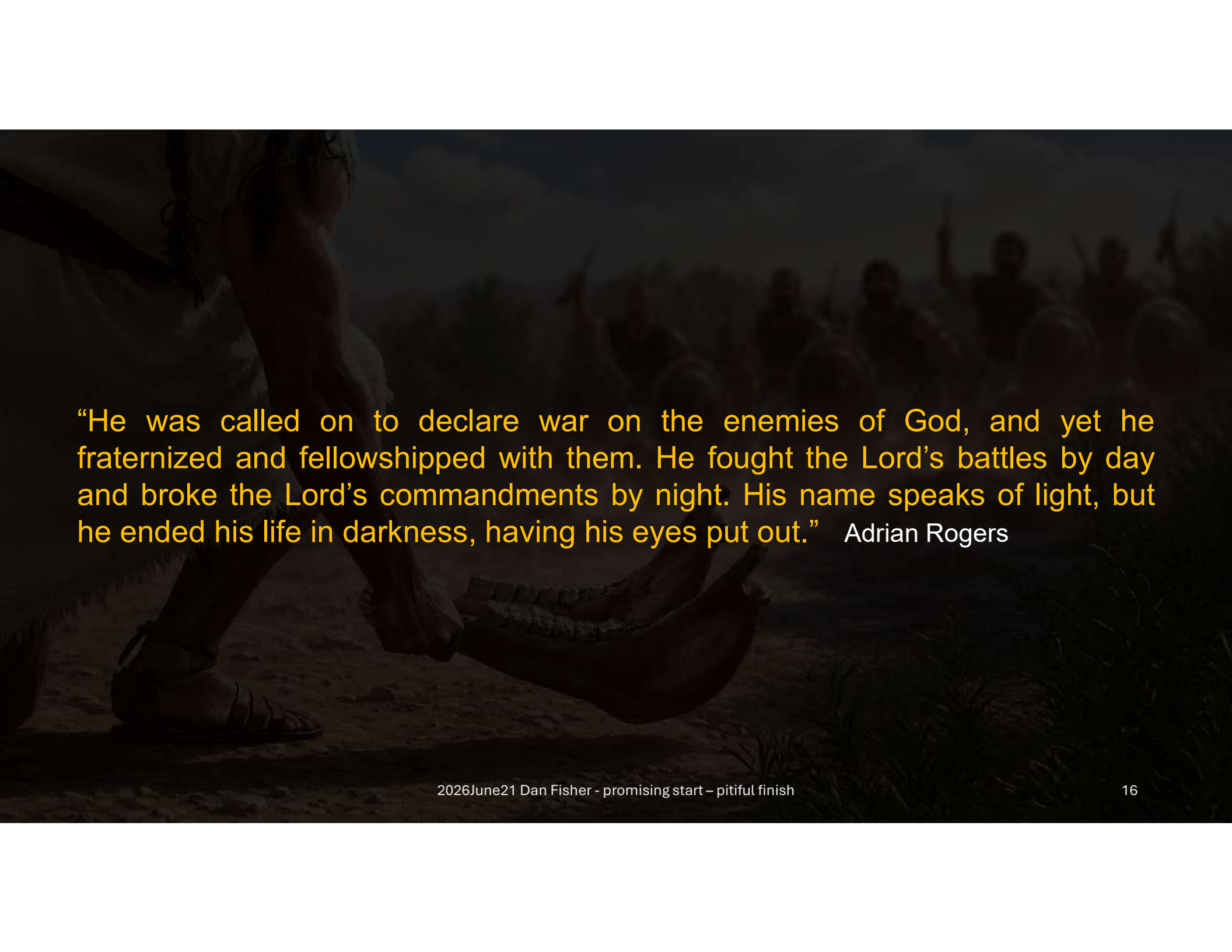


“Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the **daughters of the Philistines**.<sup>2</sup> Then he came up and told his father and mother, “I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife.” **Jud 14:1-2**


“Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the **vineyards** of Timnah.” **Jud 14:5**

“Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a **prostitute**, and he went in to her.” **Jud 16:1**

“After this he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was **Delilah**.” **Jud 16:4**



“He was called on to declare war on the enemies of God, and yet he fraternized and fellowshipped with them. He fought the Lord’s battles by day and broke the Lord’s commandments by night. His name speaks of light, but he ended his life in darkness, having his eyes put out.” Adrian Rogers

A portrait of Chuck Swindoll, an older man with white hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is dark and out of focus, showing what appears to be a crowd of people.

“Samson was a he-man with a she-weakness.” Chuck Swindoll



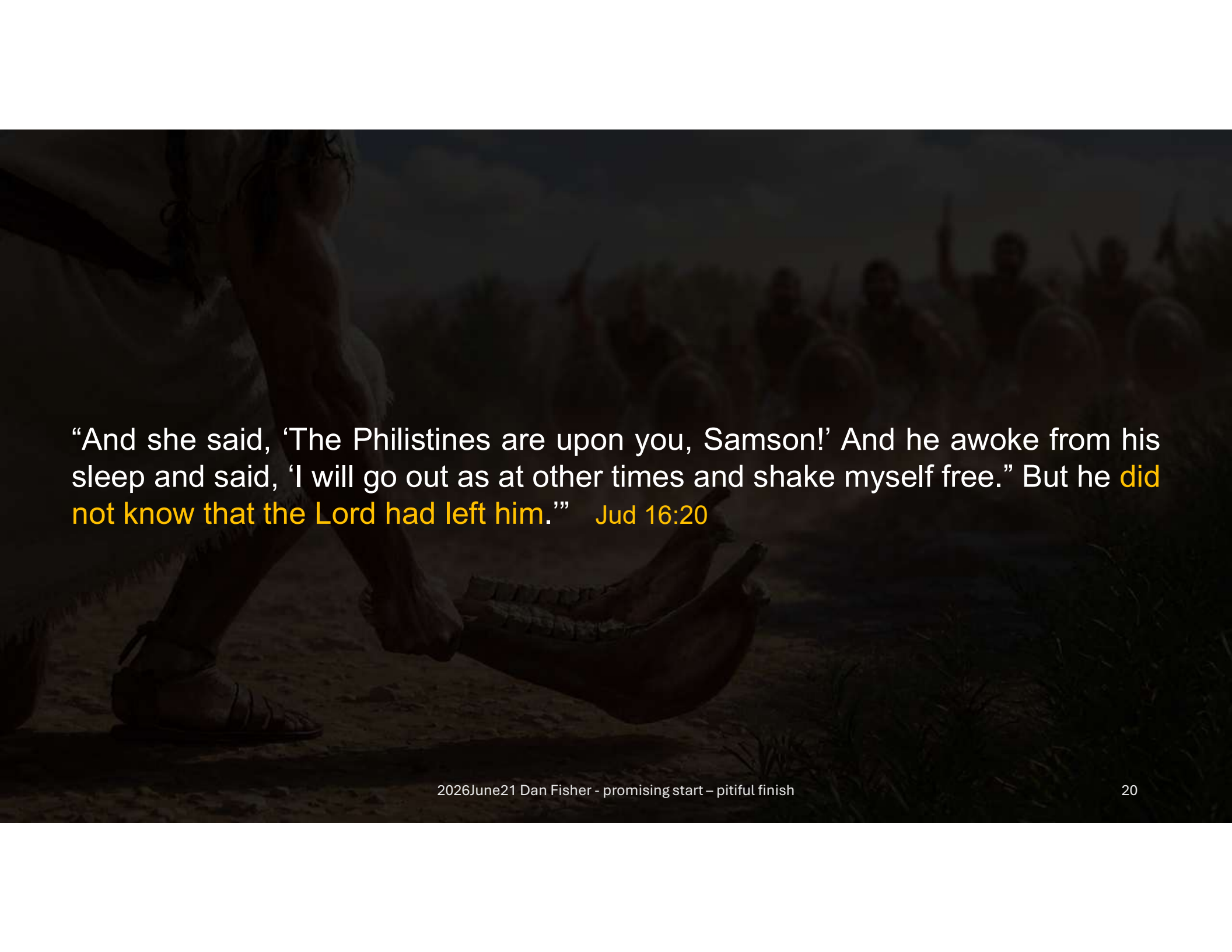
## 5. Credulous man



- Bind me with green bowstrings (16:7)
- Bind me with green ropes (16:11)
- Weave the 7 locks of my hair (16:13)
- Cut my hair (16:17)

“and I shall become weak and be like any other man.” Jud 16:17

“Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him.” Jud 16:19



“And she said, ‘The Philistines are upon you, Samson!’ And he awoke from his sleep and said, ‘I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.’ But he **did not know that the Lord had left him.**” Jud 16:20



## 6. Conquered man

“And the Philistines seized him ...  
and brought him down to Gaza  
and bound him with bronze  
shackles.” **Jud 16:21**





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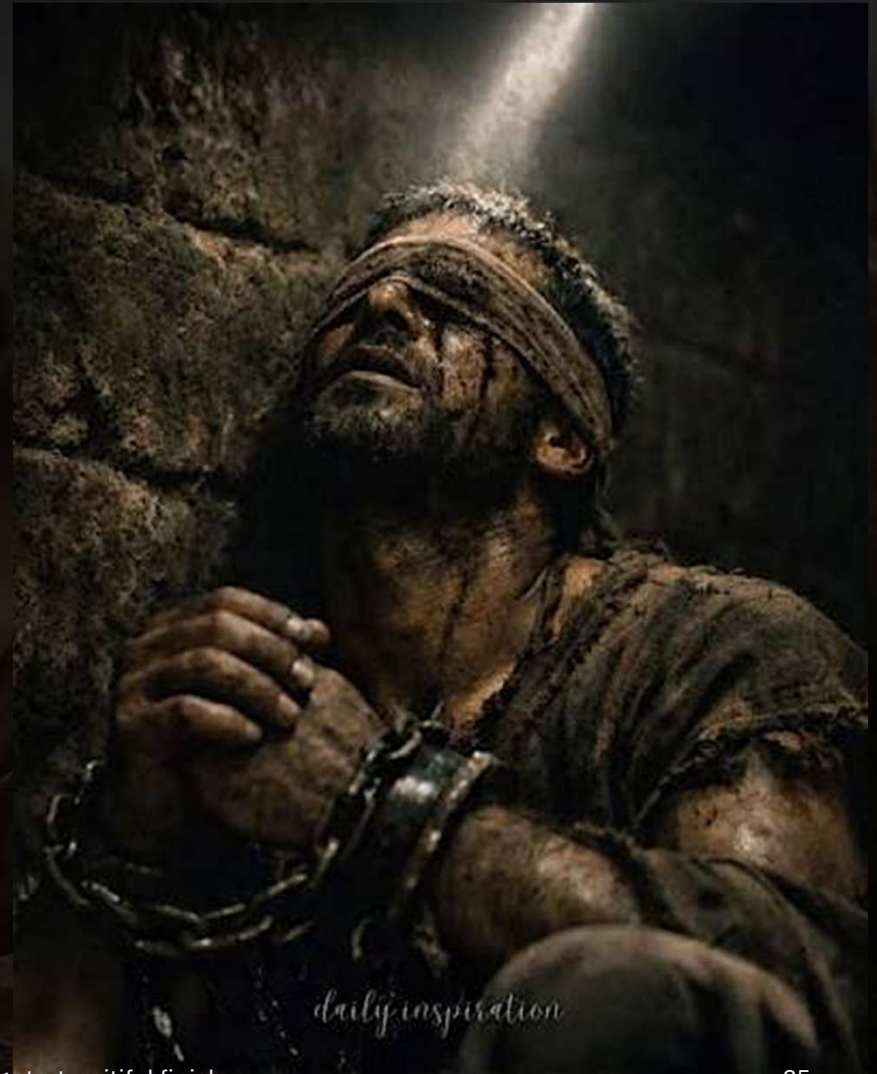
“And he ground at the mill in the prison.” **Jud 16:21**



## 7. Crippled man

“and gouged out his eyes” **Jud 16:21**

“But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.” **Jud 16:22**



“So they called Samson out of the prison, and he entertained them. They made him stand between the pillars. <sup>26</sup> And Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, ‘Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.’” **Jud 16:25-26**

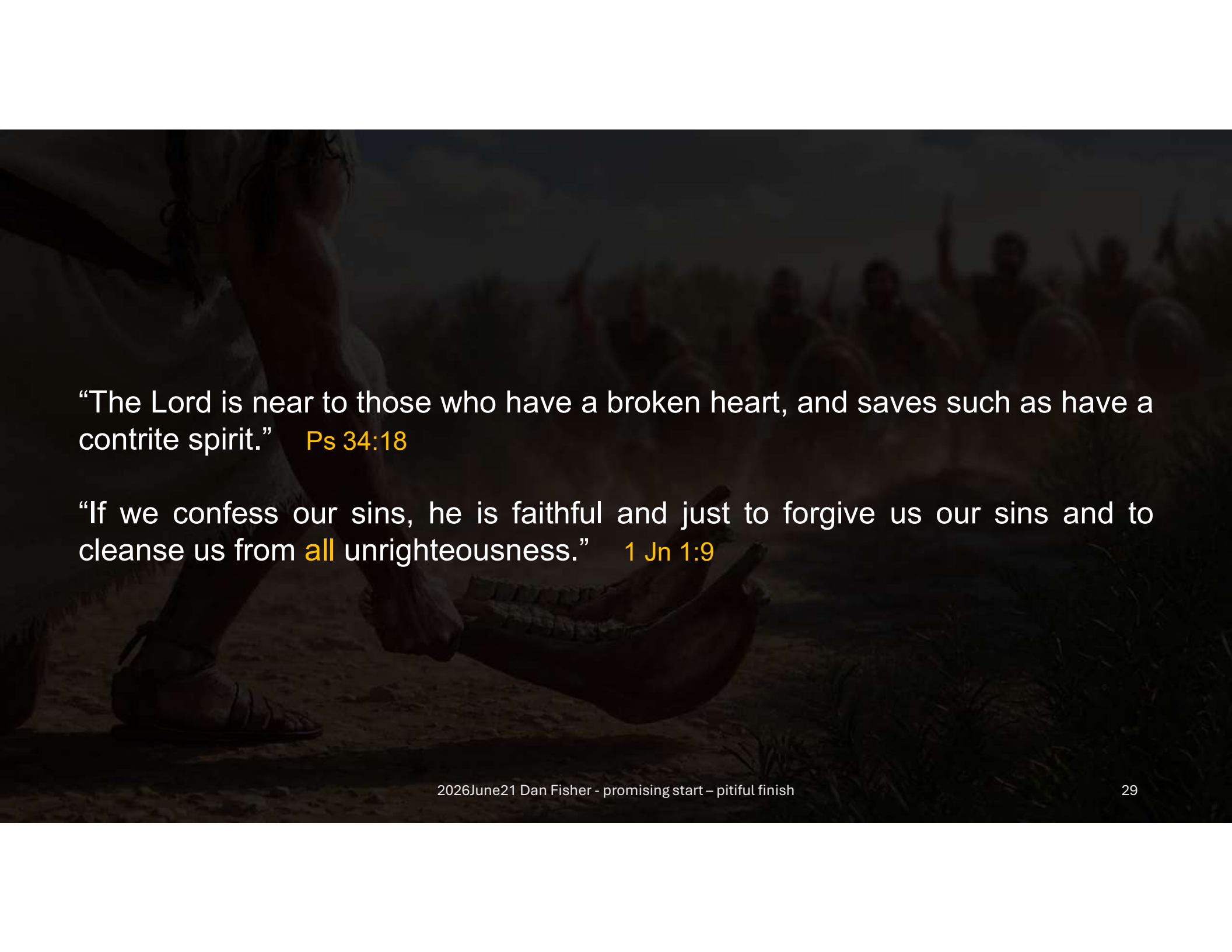


“Then Samson called to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.’<sup>29</sup> And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other.<sup>30</sup> And Samson said, ‘Let me die with the Philistines.’ Then he bowed with all his strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life.” **Jud 16:28-30**



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“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” Ps 34:18

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 Jn 1:9