

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding an open, thick book. The person is wearing a blue suit jacket and a white shirt. The background is dark and out of focus. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Take Care How You Listen

— The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18 —

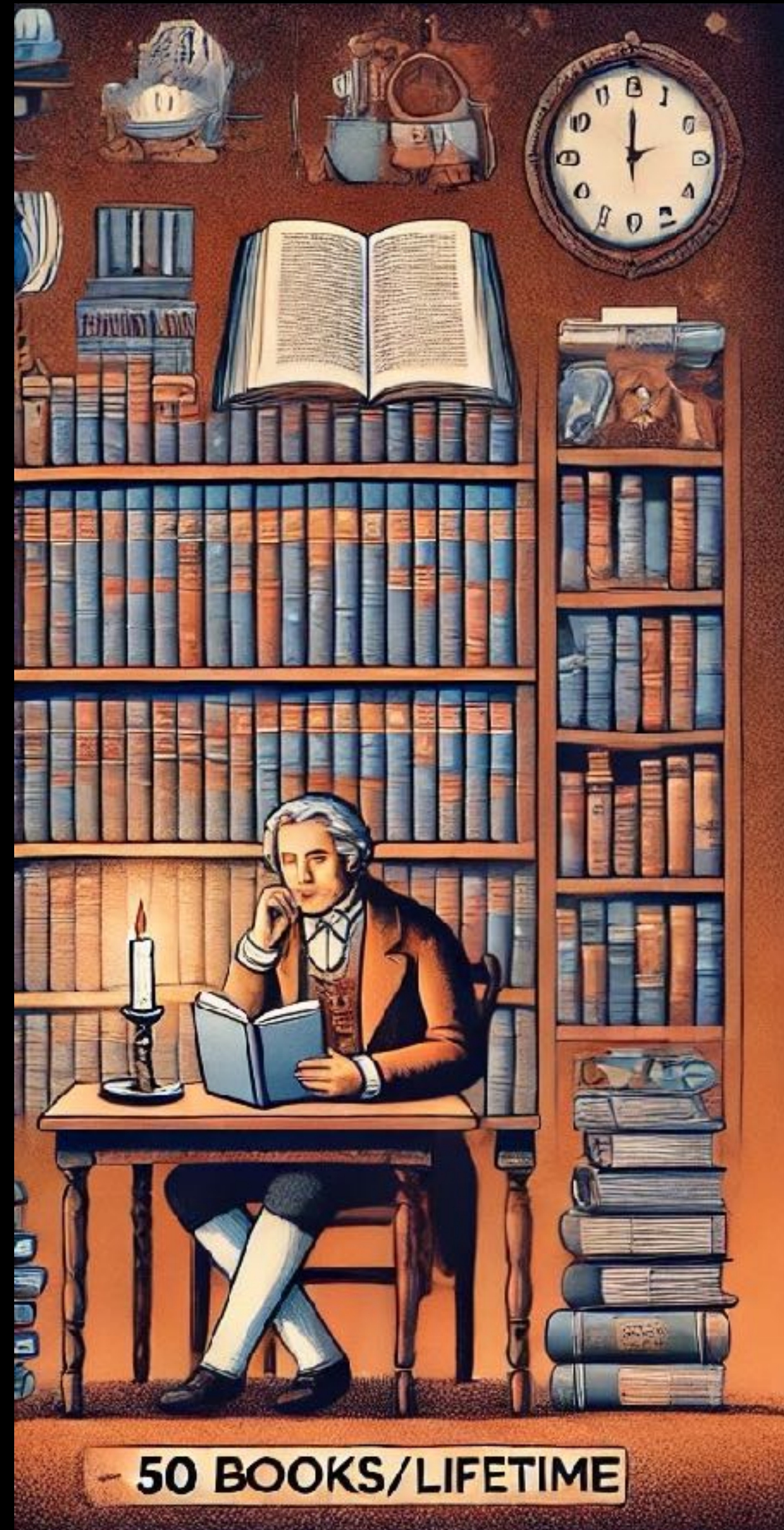


The Digital Age = An Explosion of Information

As of the early 21st century, more data is created every two days than was created from the dawn of civilization to 2003.

People today watch an average of 7 hours of digital media daily (TV, Internet, Social Media).

Platforms like YouTube upload 500 hours of video every minute of the day.



74 GB is like....

Watching 18 HD movies in a row

Streaming 37,000 songs on
Spotify non-stop for 100 days

Taking a selfie every minute for
16 days straight = 24,000 photos

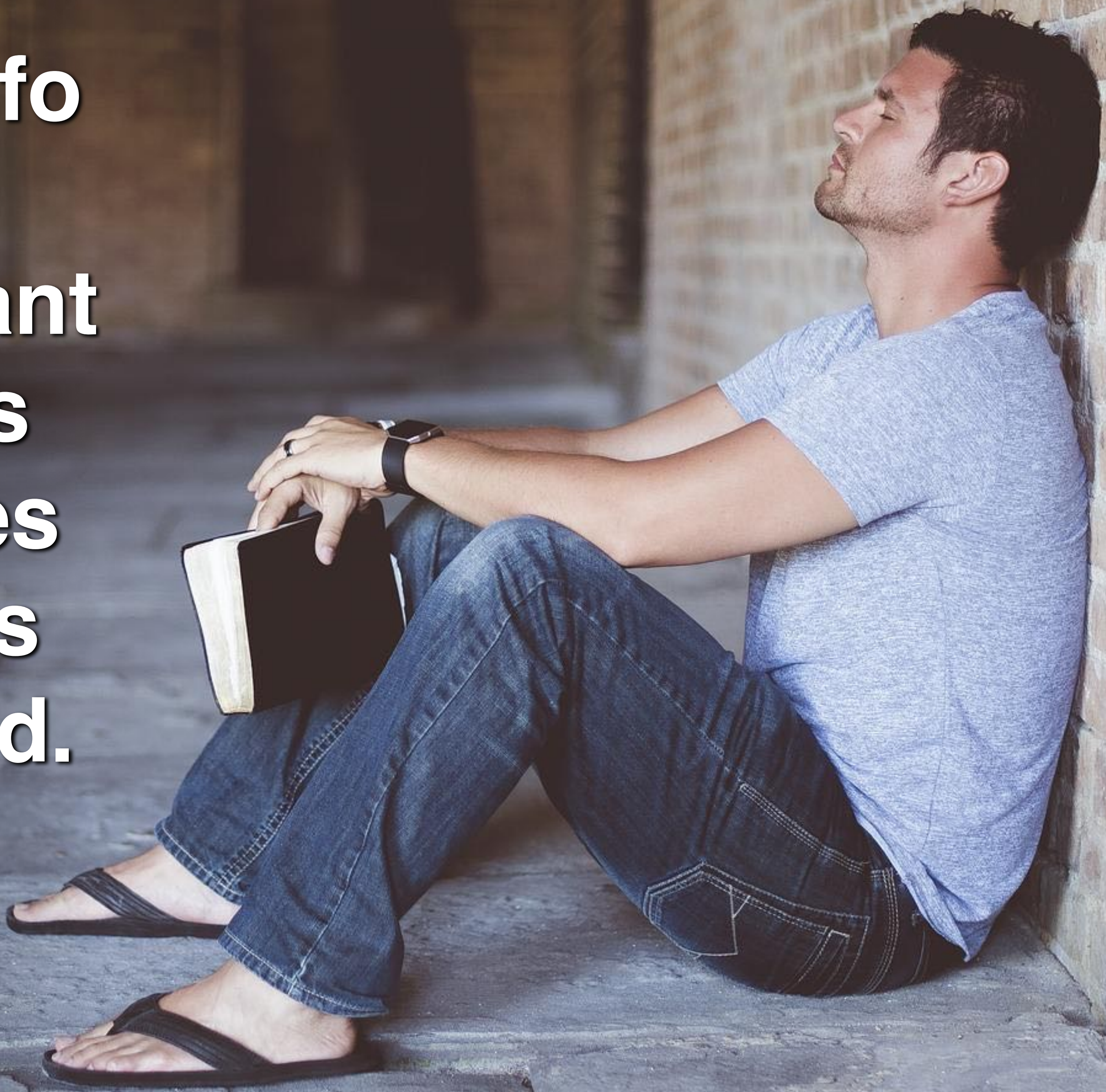
Receiving 37 million text
messages in a single day



**No wonder
I'm so tired!**



**With so much info
coming at us,
it's more important
than ever for us
to give ourselves
to His teachings
in 2025 & beyond.**



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding an open, thick book. The person is wearing a blue suit jacket and a white shirt. The background is dark and out of focus. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Take Care How You Listen

— The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18 —

The Gospel of Luke 8:1

1 Soon afterward he went on through the cities and villages, preaching and bringing good news about the kingdom of God.

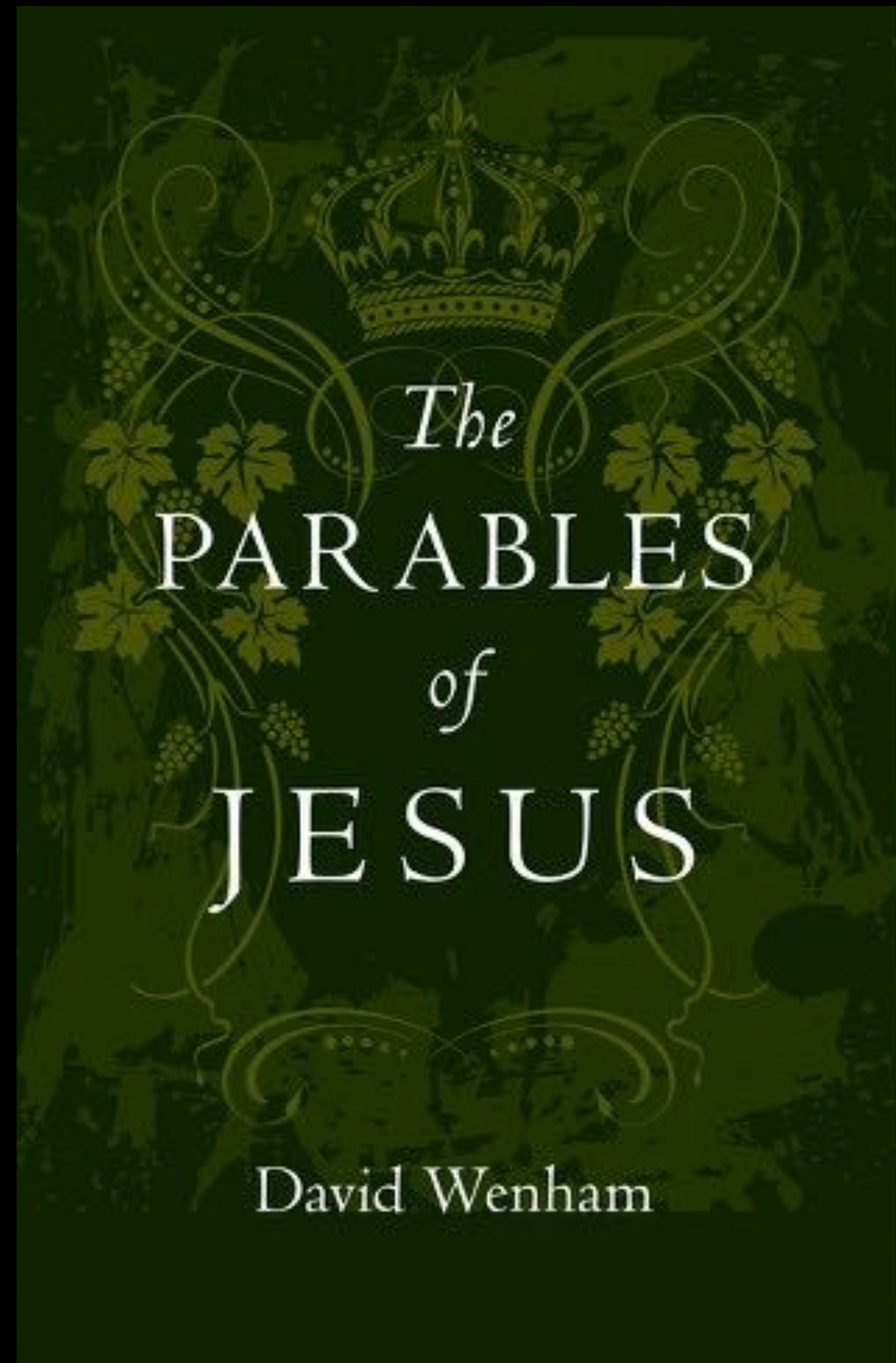


The Lord will be king over the whole world.

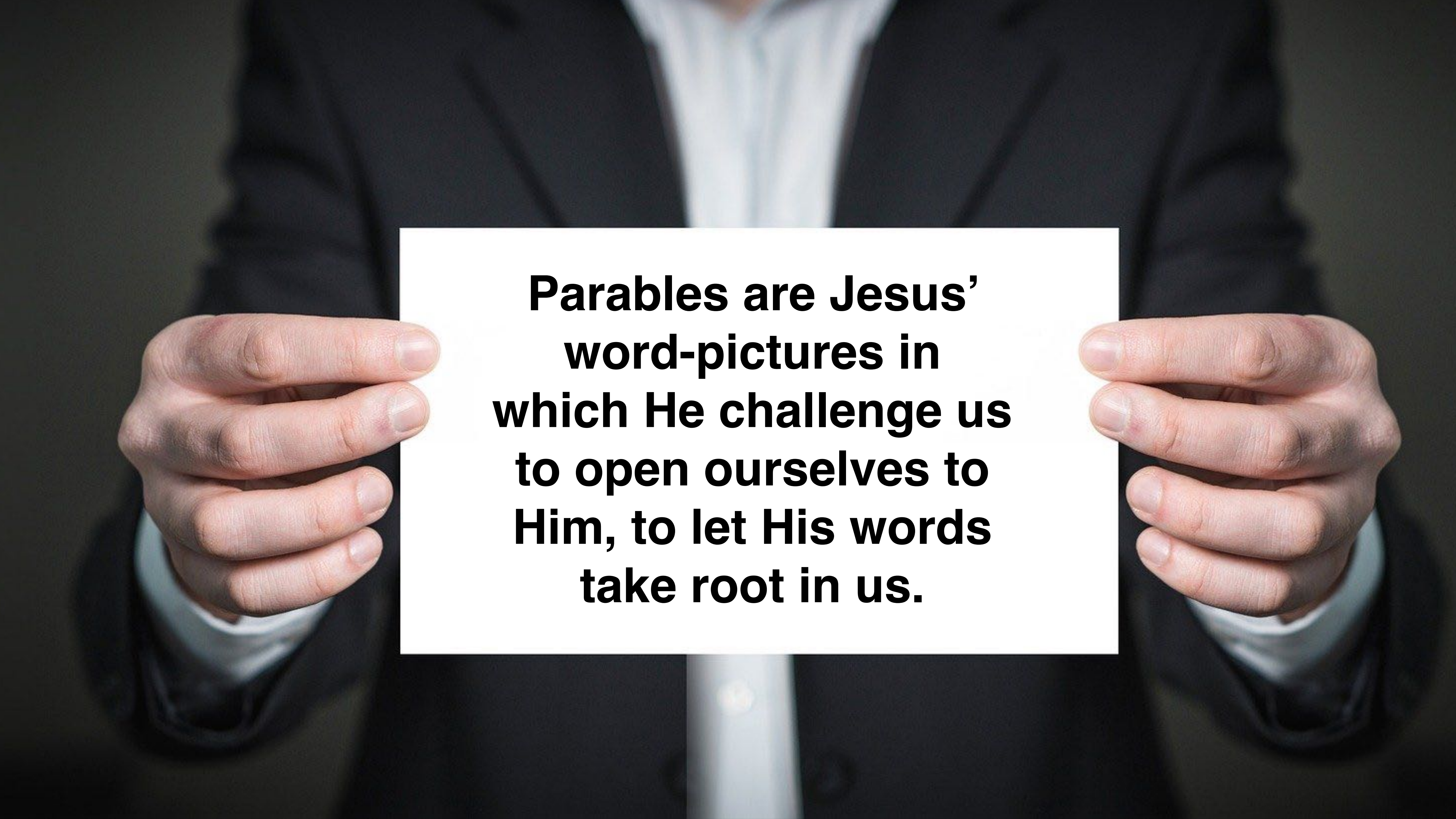
— Zechariah 14:9 —

The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

4 And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable.....



Jesus, especially when speaking to the crowds, spoke almost entirely pictorially, explaining his ideas in and through stories.... Jesus taught profound theology, yet he did so not in long and complex discourses, but through down-to-earth, real life stories.

A person wearing a dark suit jacket and a light-colored shirt is holding a white rectangular sign with both hands. The sign contains text in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Parables are Jesus'
word-pictures in
which He challenge us
to open ourselves to
Him, to let His words
take root in us.**

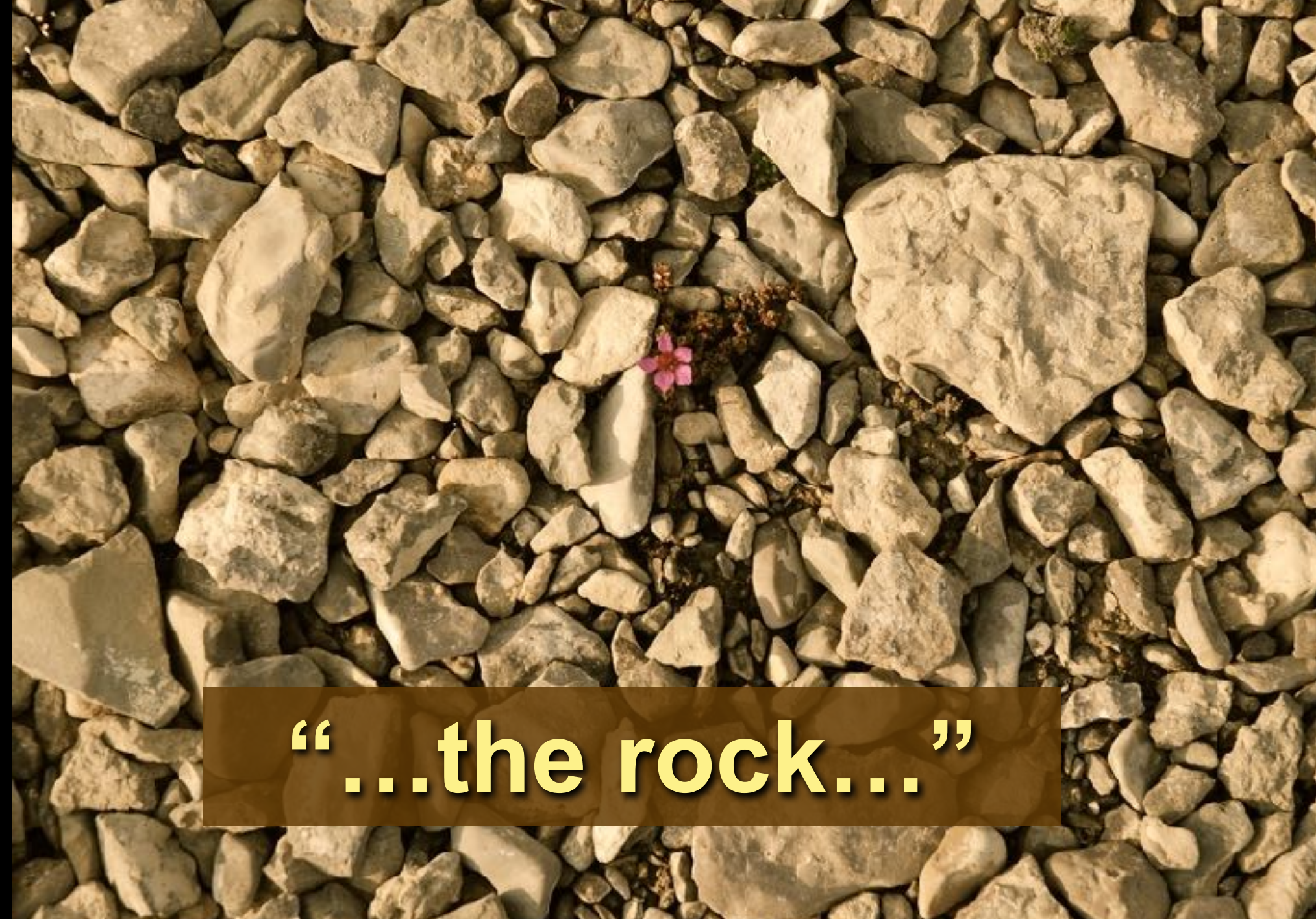
The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

5 **“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed it, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it.**

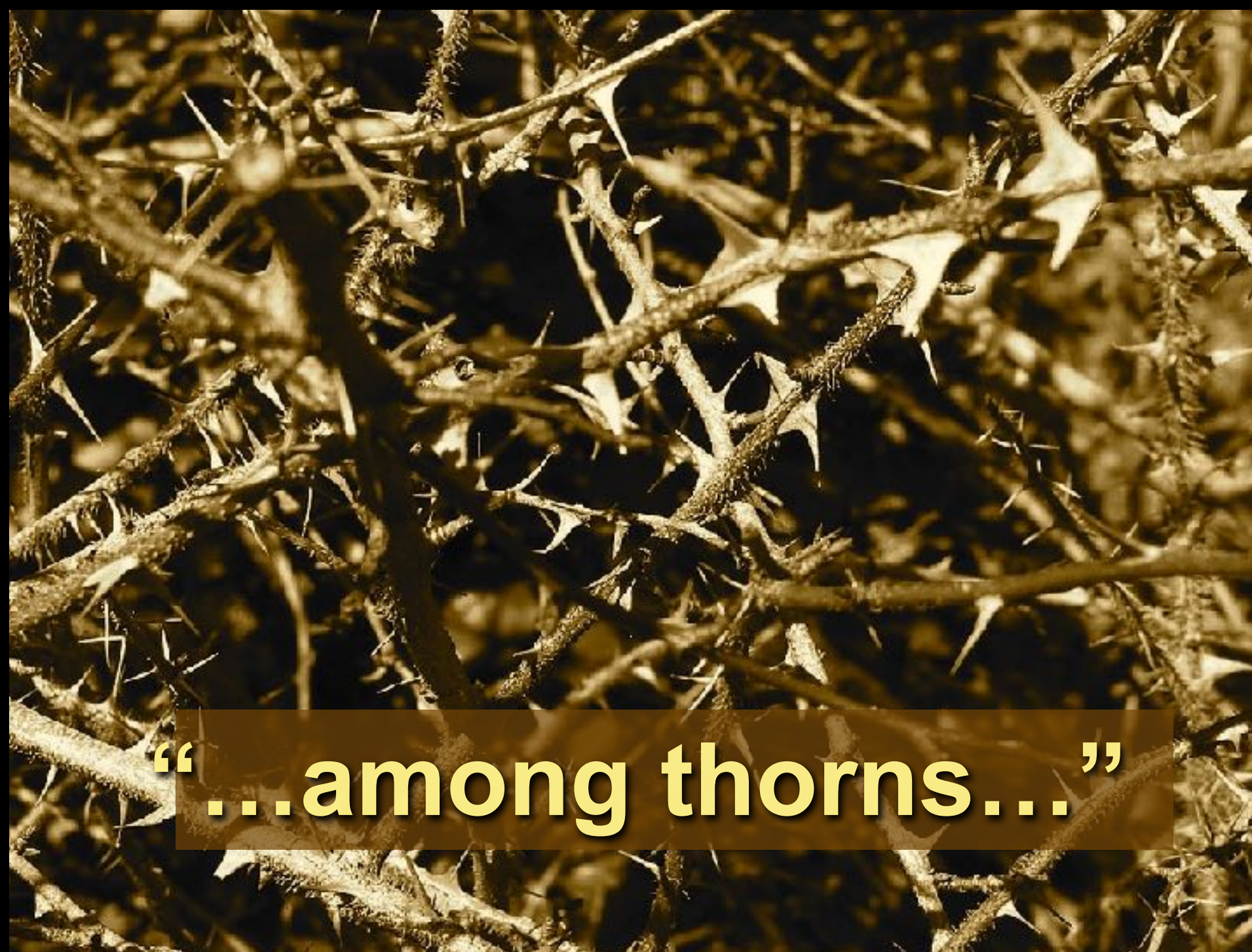
6 **And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil, and grew and yielded a hundred fold.”**



“...the path...”



“...the rock...”



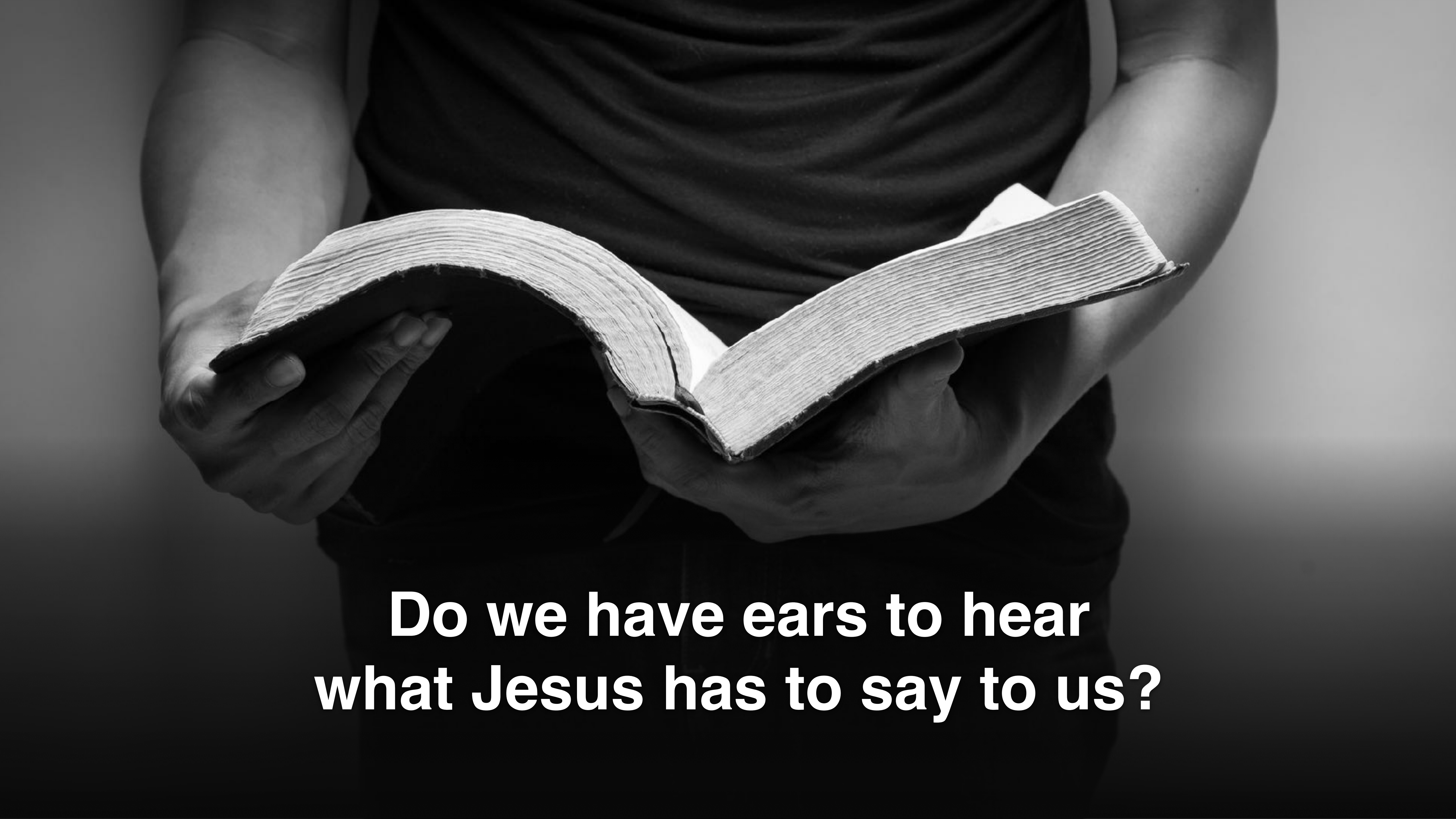
“...among thorns...”



“...good soil...”

The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

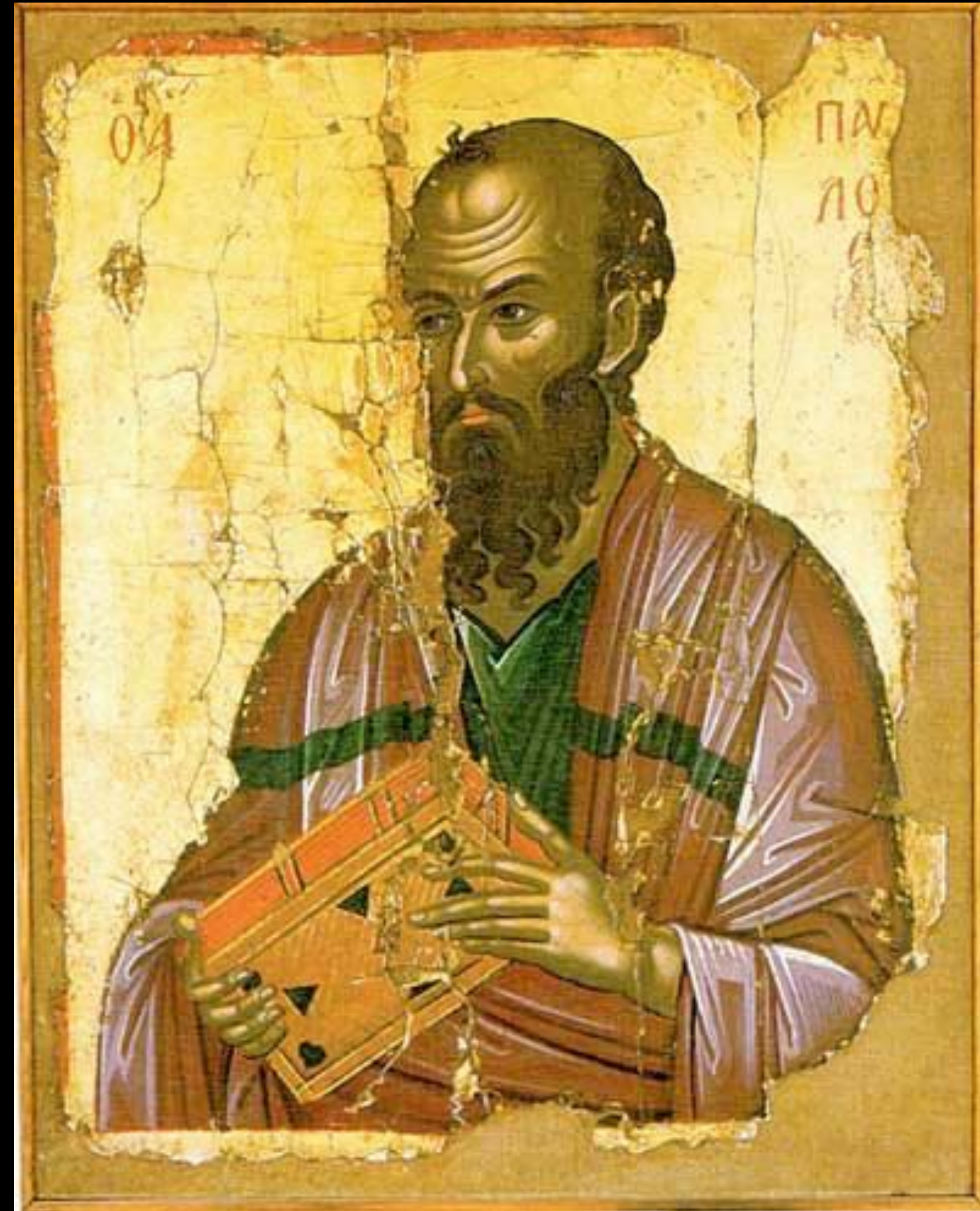
8 And as he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let them hear.”



**Do we have ears to hear
what Jesus has to say to us?**

**...having the eyes of
your heart enlightened,
that you may know what
it the hope to which he
has called you.**

The Apostle Paul
— Ephesians 1:18 —



The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

9 And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, 10 he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’”

**THE SAME SUN
THAT HARDENS CLAY...**



....ALSO MELTS WAX.

The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

11 “Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God....”**

— “ ” —

**Jesus came into Galilee,
proclaiming the gospel of God
and saying, “The time is fulfilled,
and the kingdom of God is at hand;
repent and believe in the gospel.”**

— The Gospel of Mark 1:14-15 —

The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

11 “Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God....”**

The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

11 “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 The ones along the path are those who have heard. Then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved....”

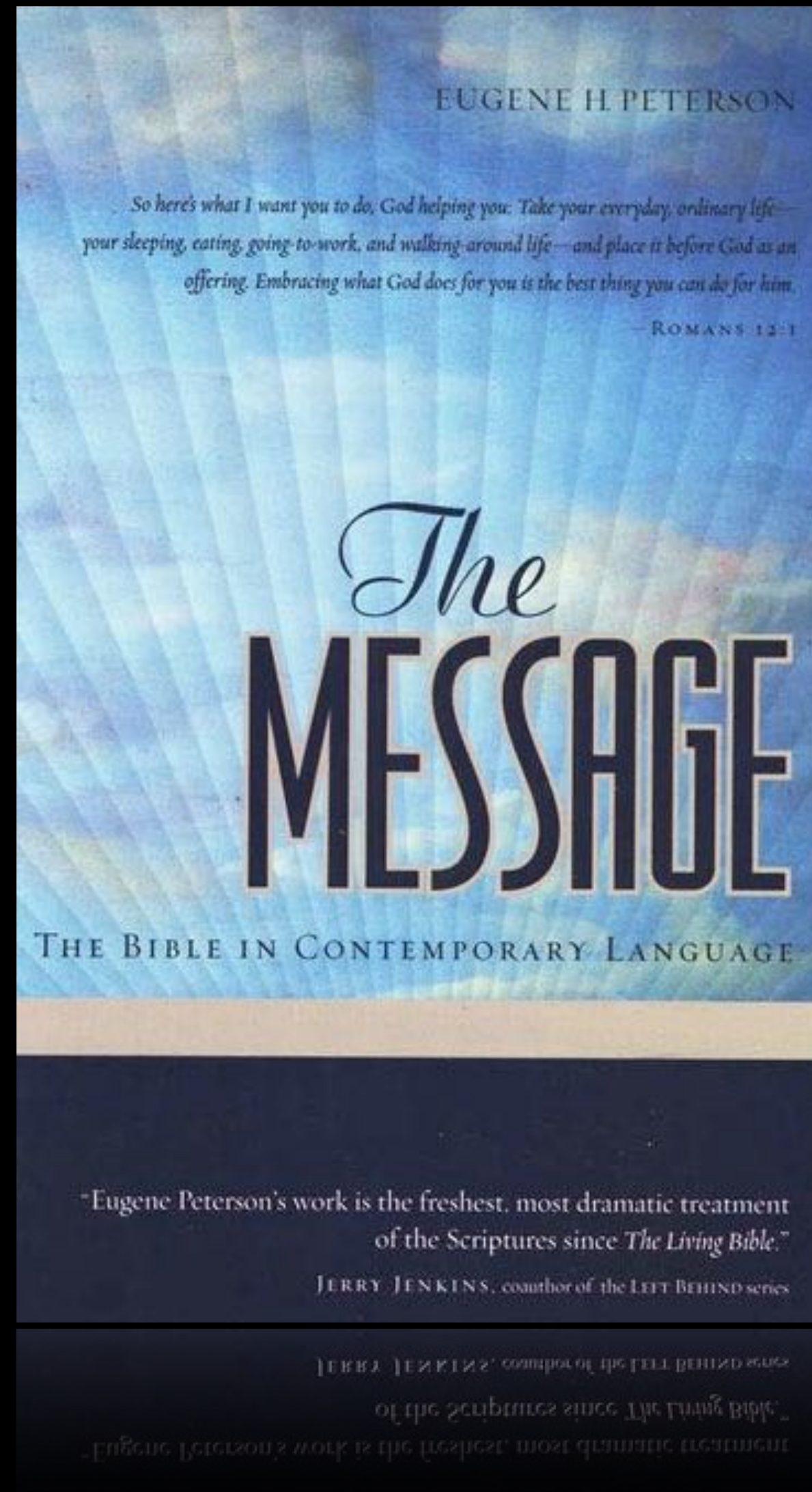
In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The Apostle Paul
— 2 Corinthians 4:4 —



The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

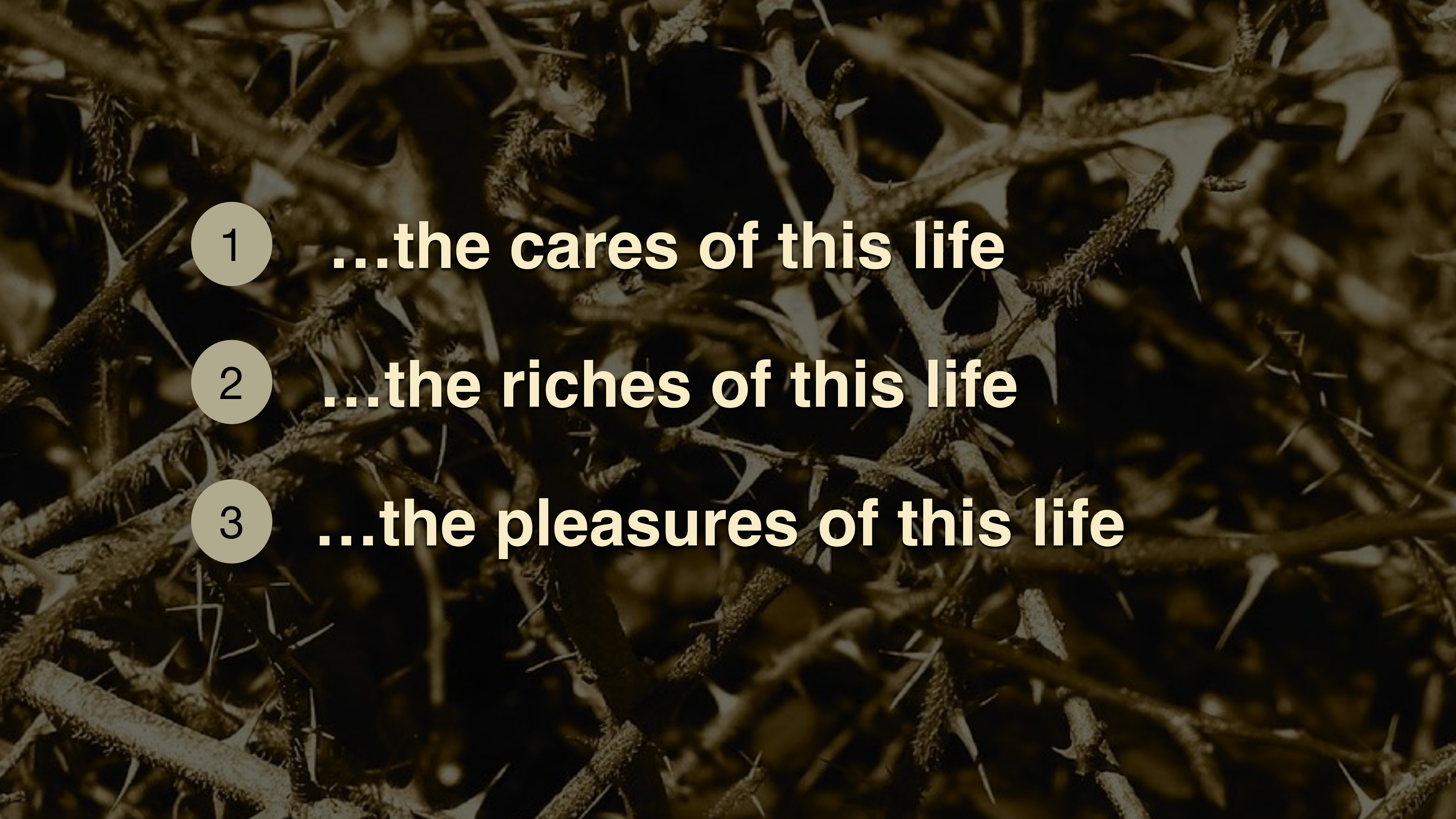
13 “And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But they have no root; they believe for a while, and in times of testing fall away....”



...those who hear with enthusiasm, but the enthusiasm doesn't go very deep. It's only another fad, and the moment there's trouble, it's gone.

The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

14 “And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and their fruit does not mature.”

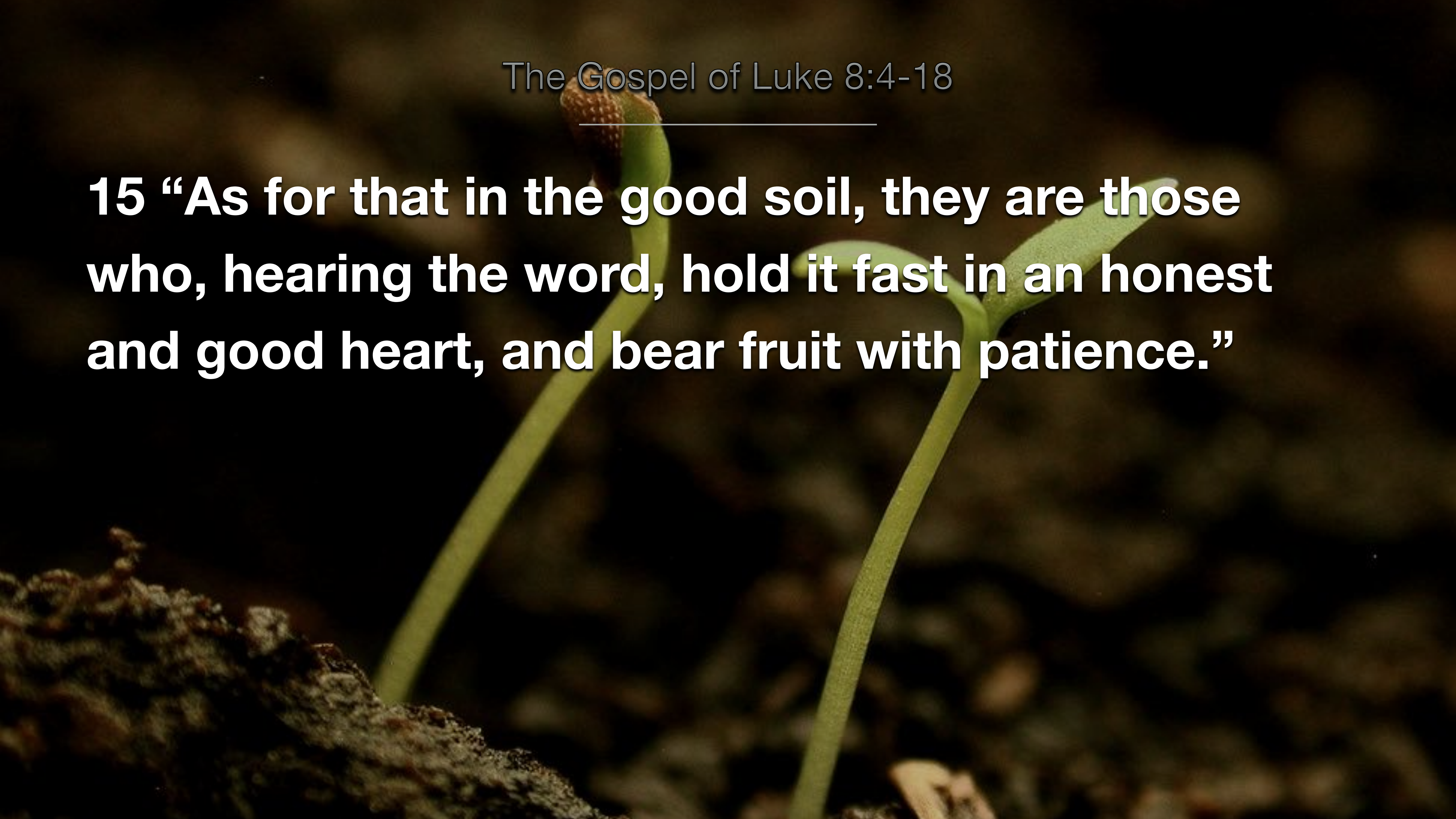
- 
- 1 ...the cares of this life
 - 2 ...the riches of this life
 - 3 ...the pleasures of this life

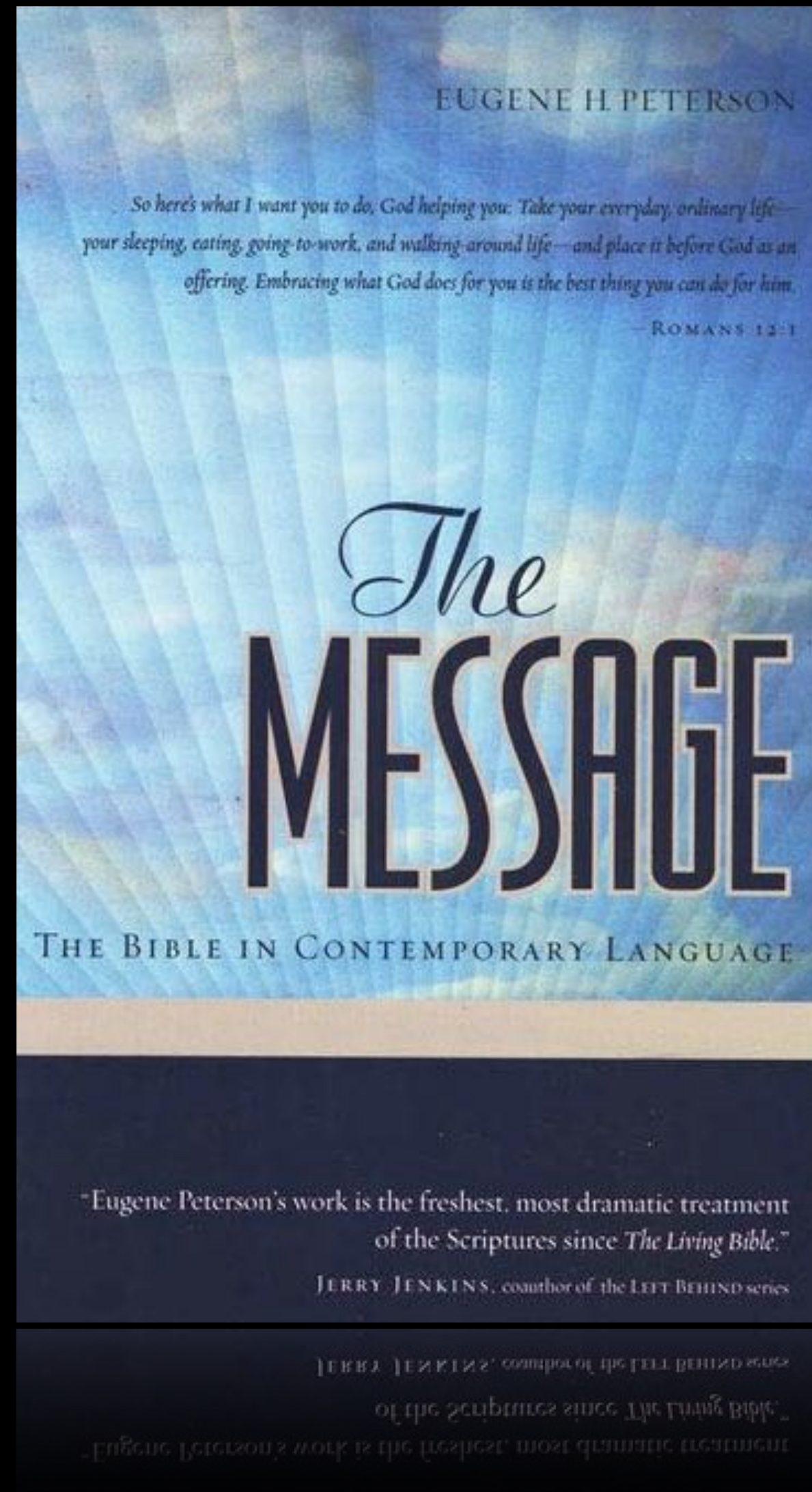
‘The pleasures of this life...’ —these are not evil in themselves. These are not vices. These are gifts of God. They are your basic meat and potatoes and coffee and gardening and reading and decorating and traveling and investing and TV-watching and Internet-surfing and shopping and exercising and collecting and talking. And all of them can become deadly substitutes for God.

—John Piper, *A Hunger for God* —

The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

15 “As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.”

A close-up photograph of two young green seedlings growing from dark, rich soil. The seedlings have thin, upright stems and small, rounded leaves. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown, suggesting a garden or field setting. The lighting is natural, highlighting the texture of the soil and the vibrant green of the plants.



But the seed in the good earth — these are the good-hearts who seize the Word and hold on no matter what, sticking with it until there is a harvest.

What would it mean for us to hold on to the Gospel of Jesus with a good and honest heart, until there is a harvest?



The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

16 “No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.

The Gospel of Luke 8:4-18

18 **“Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”**



1

**Let's Seek A Good and Honest
Heart From the Lord**

An anatomical illustration of a human torso, focusing on the chest area. The heart is centrally located and highlighted with a bright orange and red glow, indicating it is the focal point. The surrounding circulatory system, including arteries and veins, is depicted in a dark red color. The rest of the body, including the arms and torso, is shown in a translucent blue color, with the skeletal structure visible. The background is a solid blue color.

**The Heart of the Problem
Is the Problem of the Heart**



“....slow of heart to believe”

— The Gospel of Luke 24:25 —

“...this people’s hearts have grown dull.”

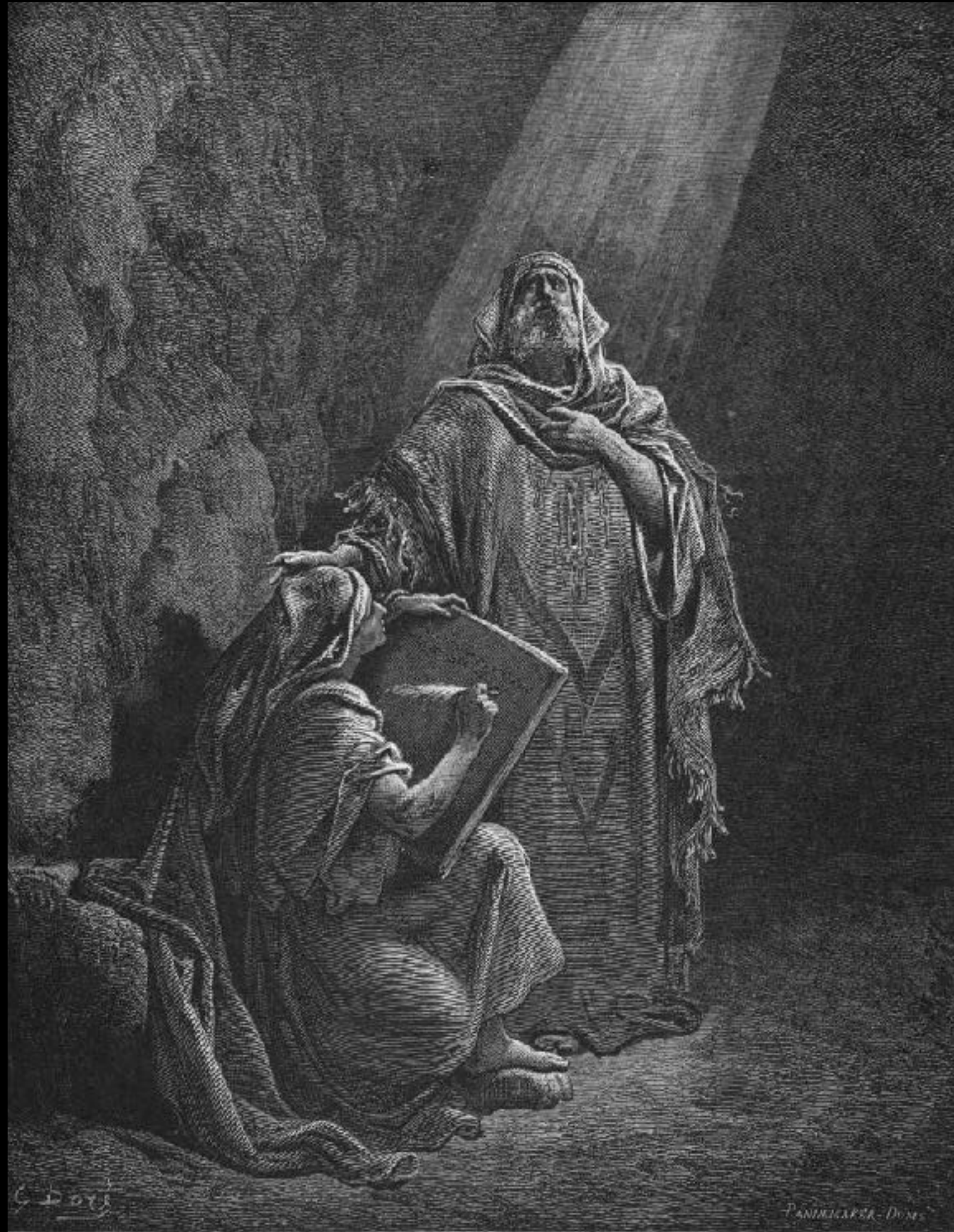
— The Gospel of Matthew 13:15 —

“...their heart is far from me.”

— The Gospel of Matthew 15:8 —

**“He looked at them in anger...deeply distressed
at the stubbornness of their hearts.”**

— The Gospel of Mark 3:5 —



**The heart is deceitful
above all things and
beyond cure. Who can
understand it?**

**“I the Lord search
the heart....”**

— Jeremiah 17:9-10 —

**Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
Create in me a new heart, and renew a right spirit within me.**

— King David in Psalm 51 —




**The Word of God
Literally Died
To Give Us
New Hearts
So That We
Could Receive
The Word of God**



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding an open, thick book. The person is wearing a blue suit jacket and a white shirt. The background is dark and out of focus. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the book's pages and the person's hands.

2

Let's Pay Attention To How We Hear



In 2025, we will be inundated with data competing for our attention. More than ever, we must pay attention to how we hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

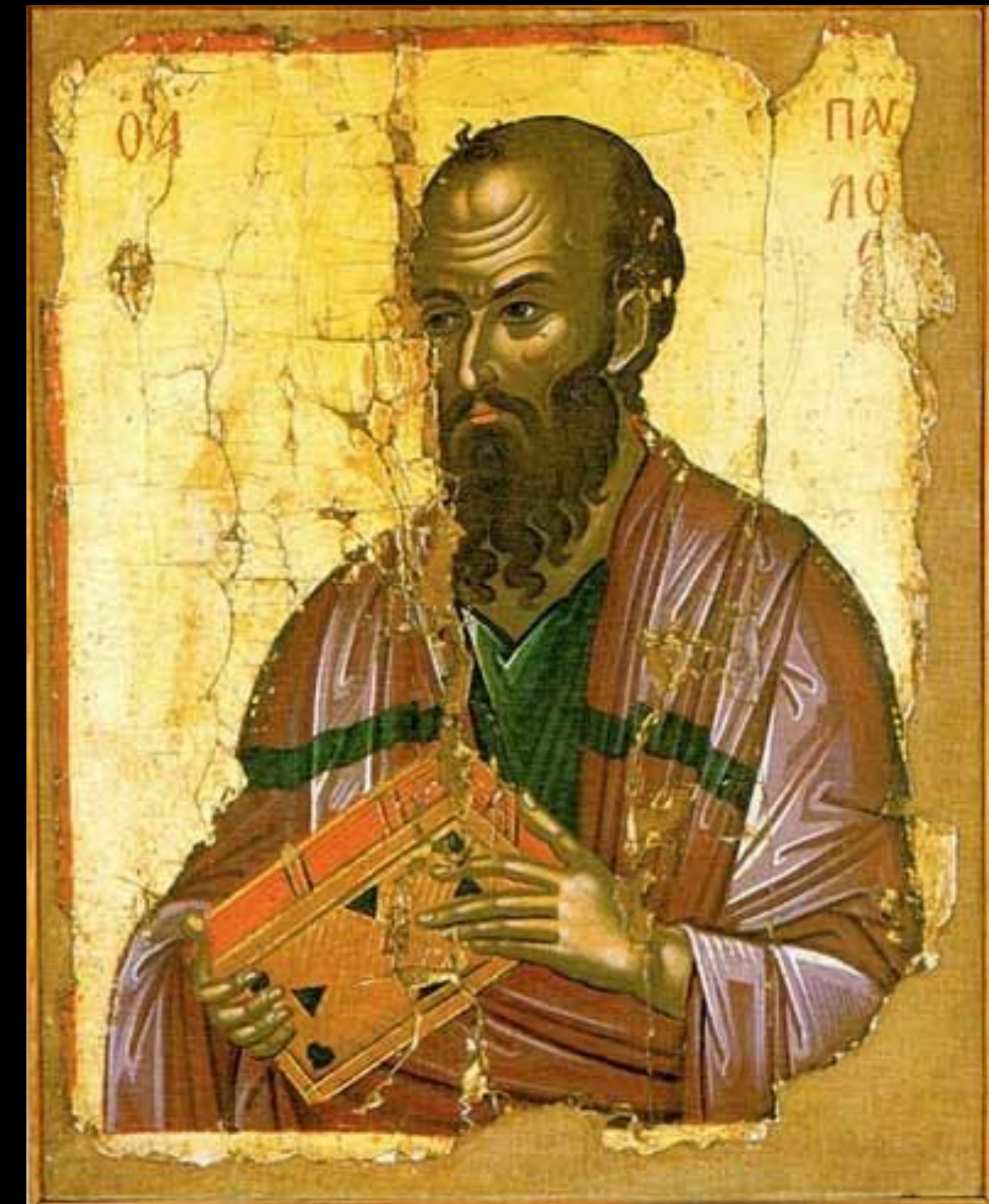
At Mercy Hill, the primary way we are disciplined together is through the “foolishness of preaching.”

Over 2025, we will have 50x to gather together to hear the Word of God preached & explained to us.

The question before us is, How well will we hear?

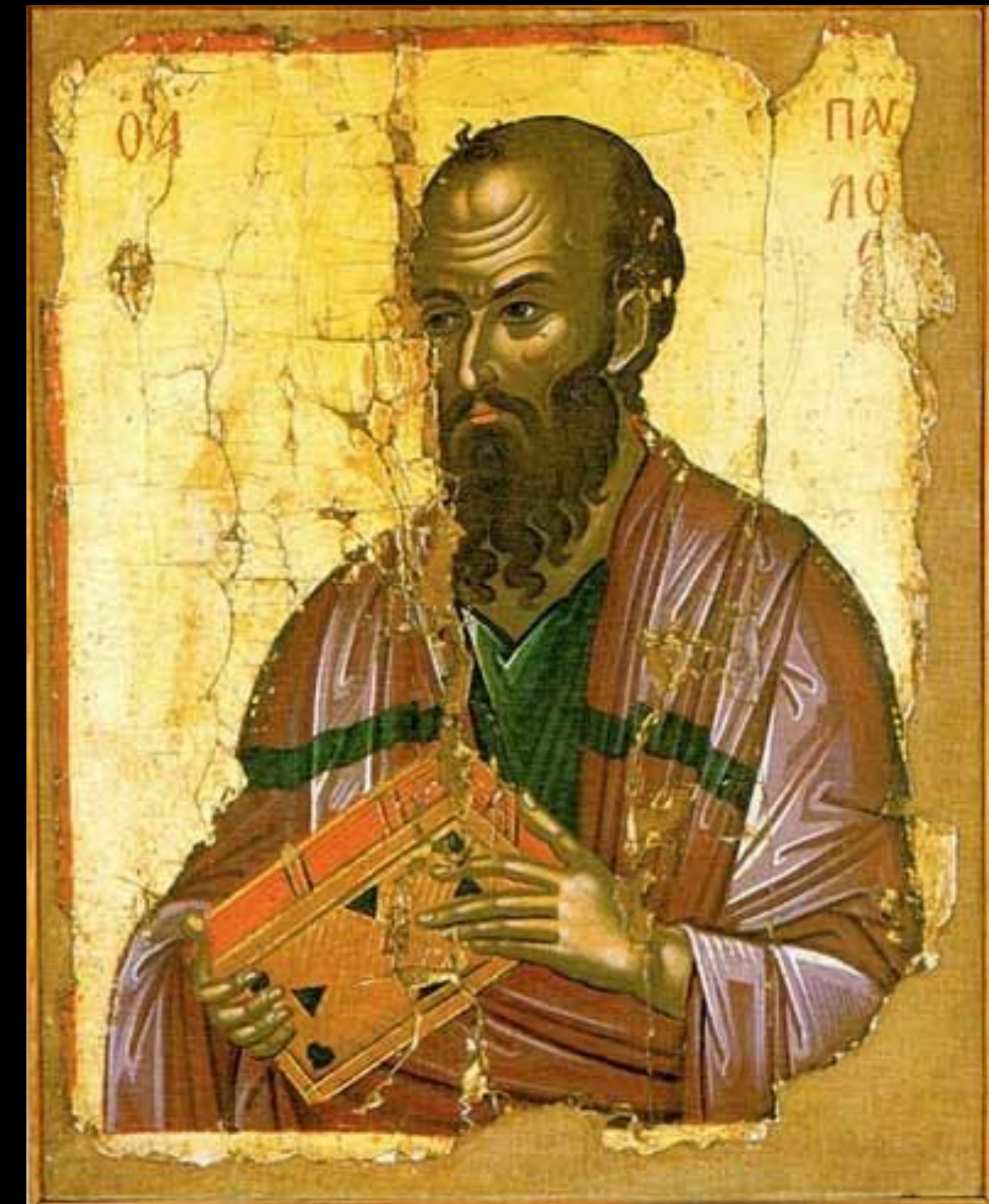


Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine.

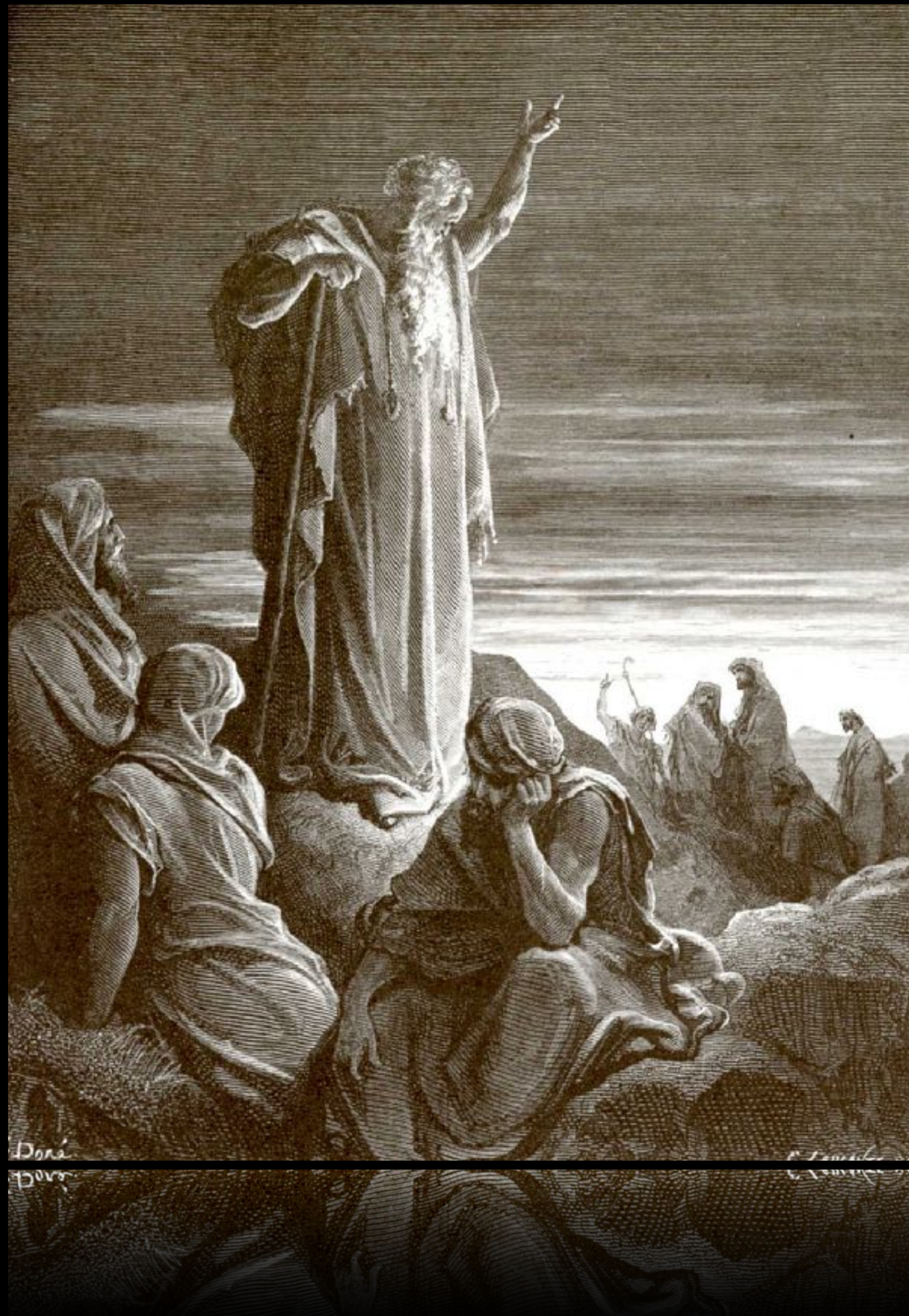


The Apostle Paul
— 2 Timothy 4:2-4 —

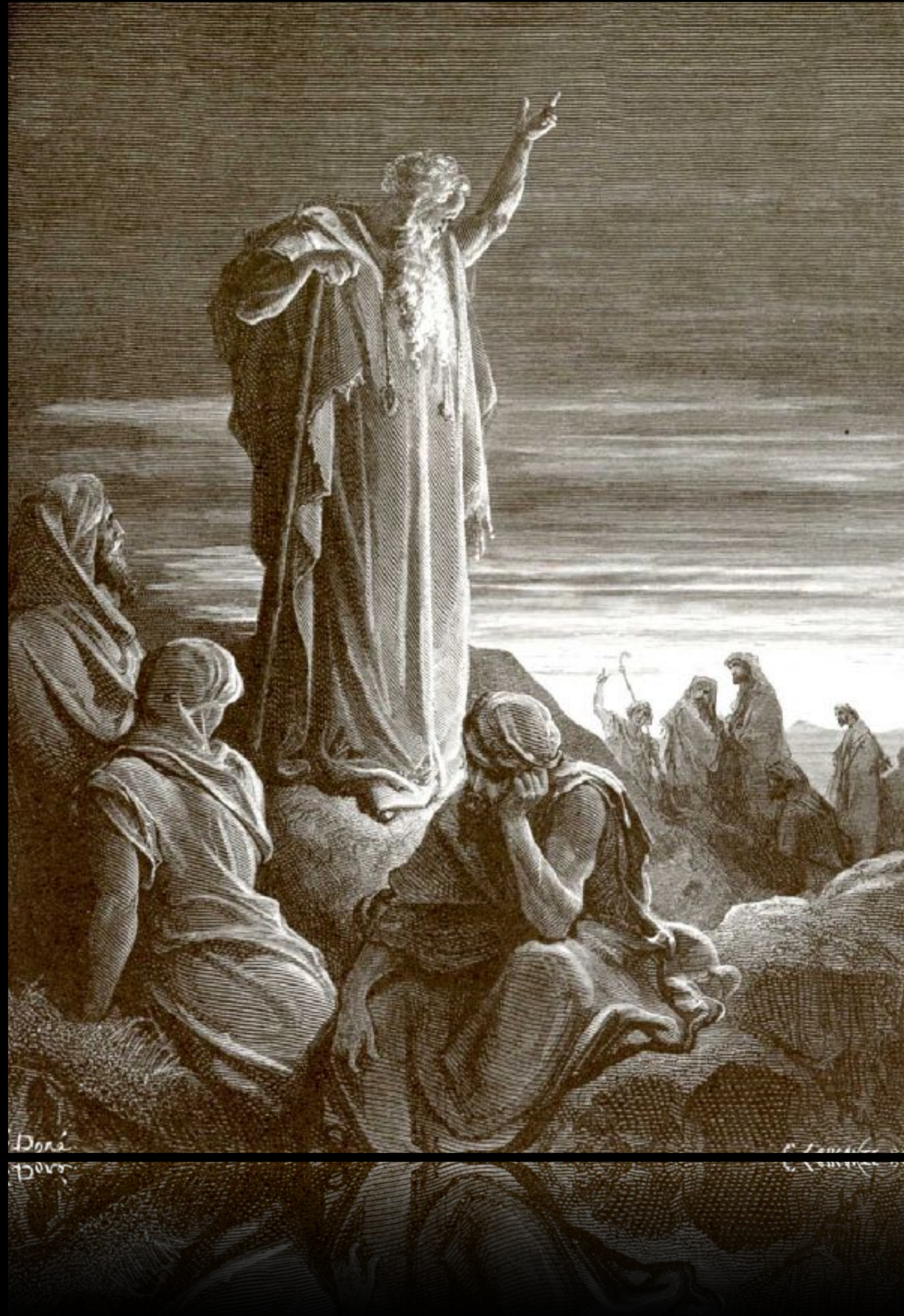
Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.



The Apostle Paul
— 2 Timothy 4:2-4 —



My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.



Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words, but do not put them into practice.

— Ezekiel 33:31-32 —



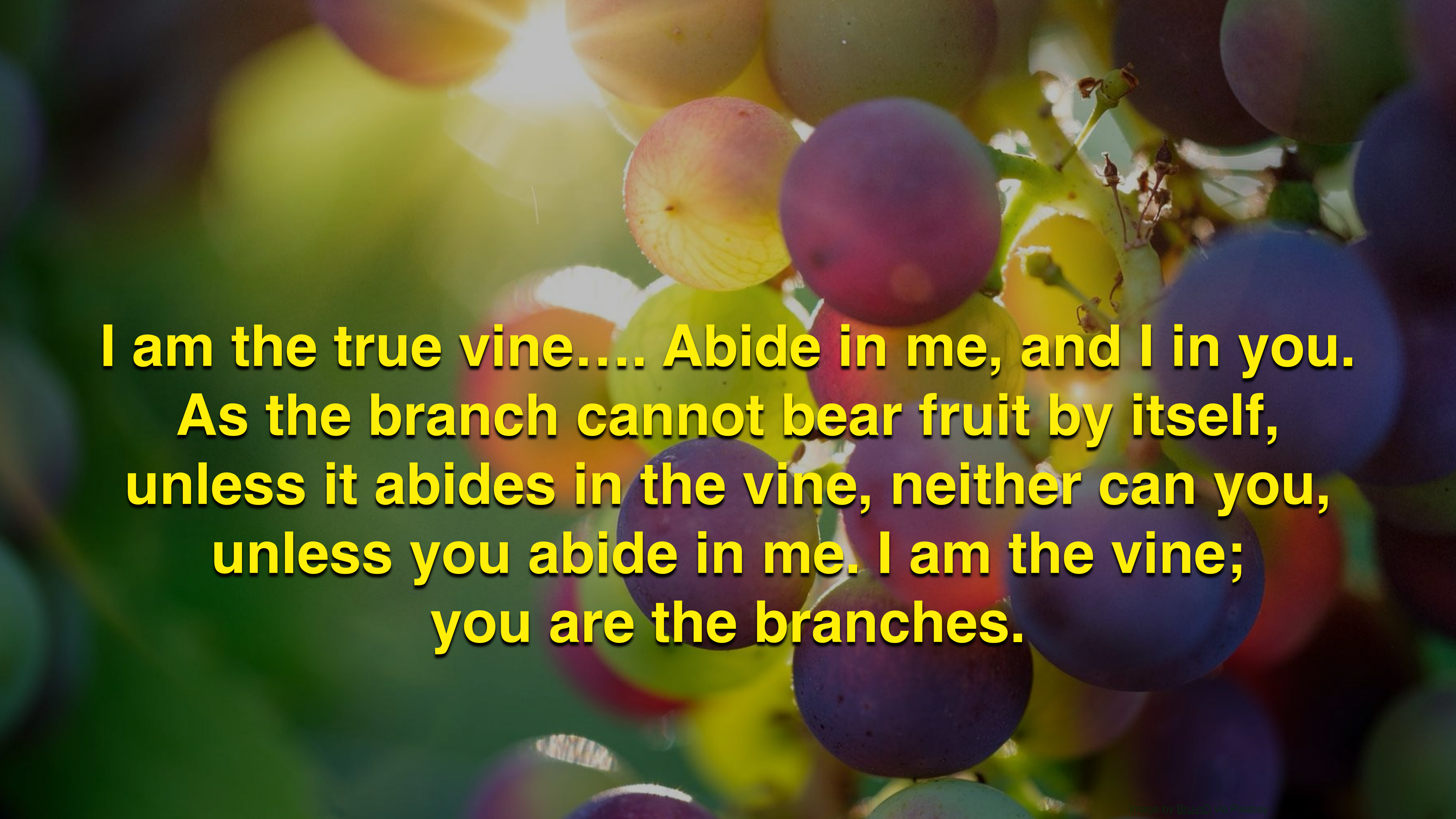
**Do not merely
listen to the word,
and so deceive
yourselves. Do
what it says.**

— James 1:22 —

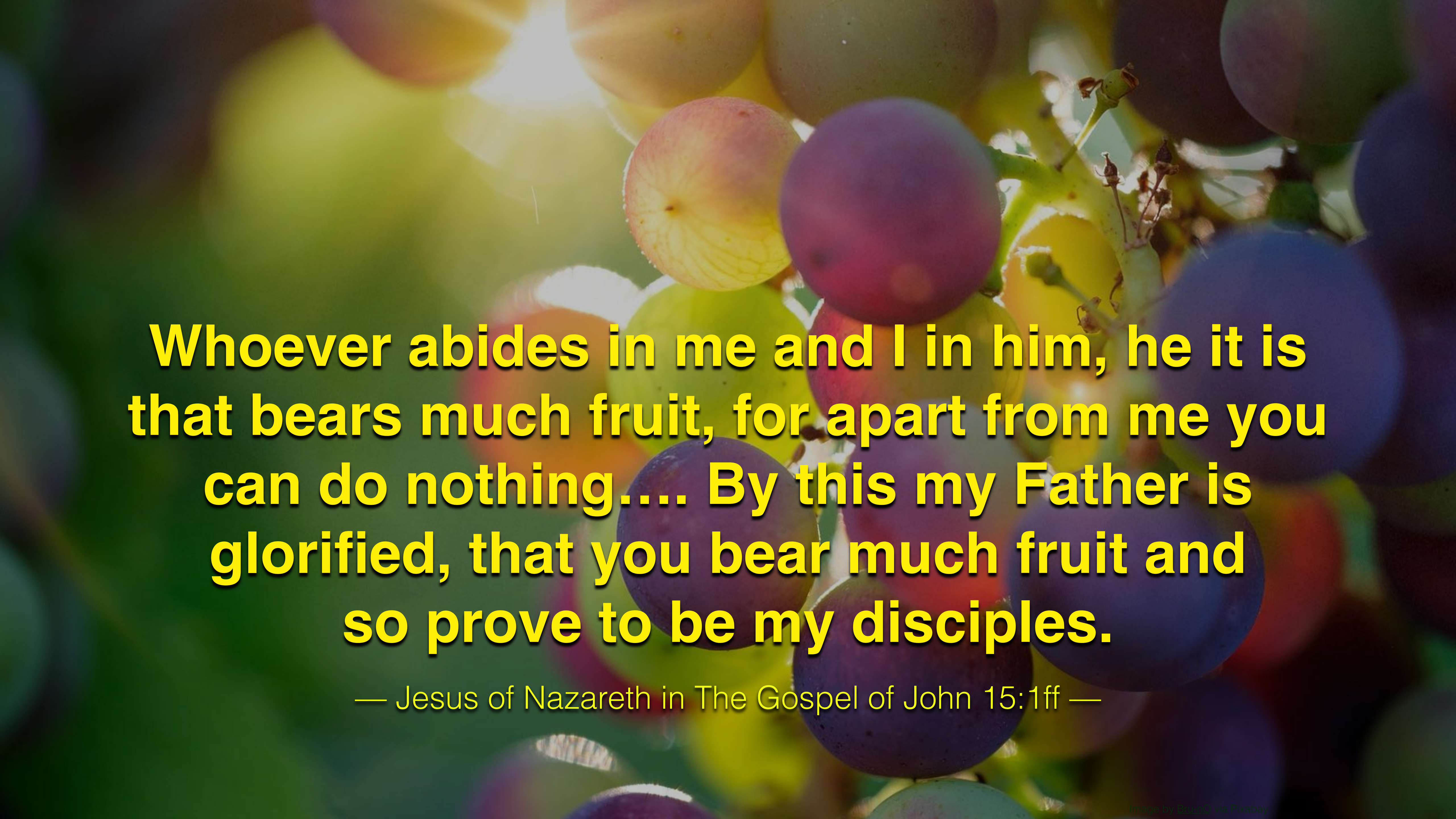


3

**Let's Abide
In Jesus So
That We Can
Bear Fruit**



**I am the true vine.... Abide in me, and I in you.
As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself,
unless it abides in the vine, neither can you,
unless you abide in me. I am the vine;
you are the branches.**



Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.... By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

— Jesus of Nazareth in The Gospel of John 15:1ff —



**“Atheist Activist with Failing Vision
Gets Help from Christians”**

— Christian Post - March 23, 2012 —

Patrick Greene had planned to sue Henderson County, TX, unless it removed a Nativity scene from a courthouse lawn, but dropped his threats when he began losing his vision.



Patrick Greene
“Atheist Activist”

“We didn’t expect this kind of treatment from these Christians because most Christians don’t act this way. But because of the fact that Jesus said ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ ..., these people are acting like real Christians.

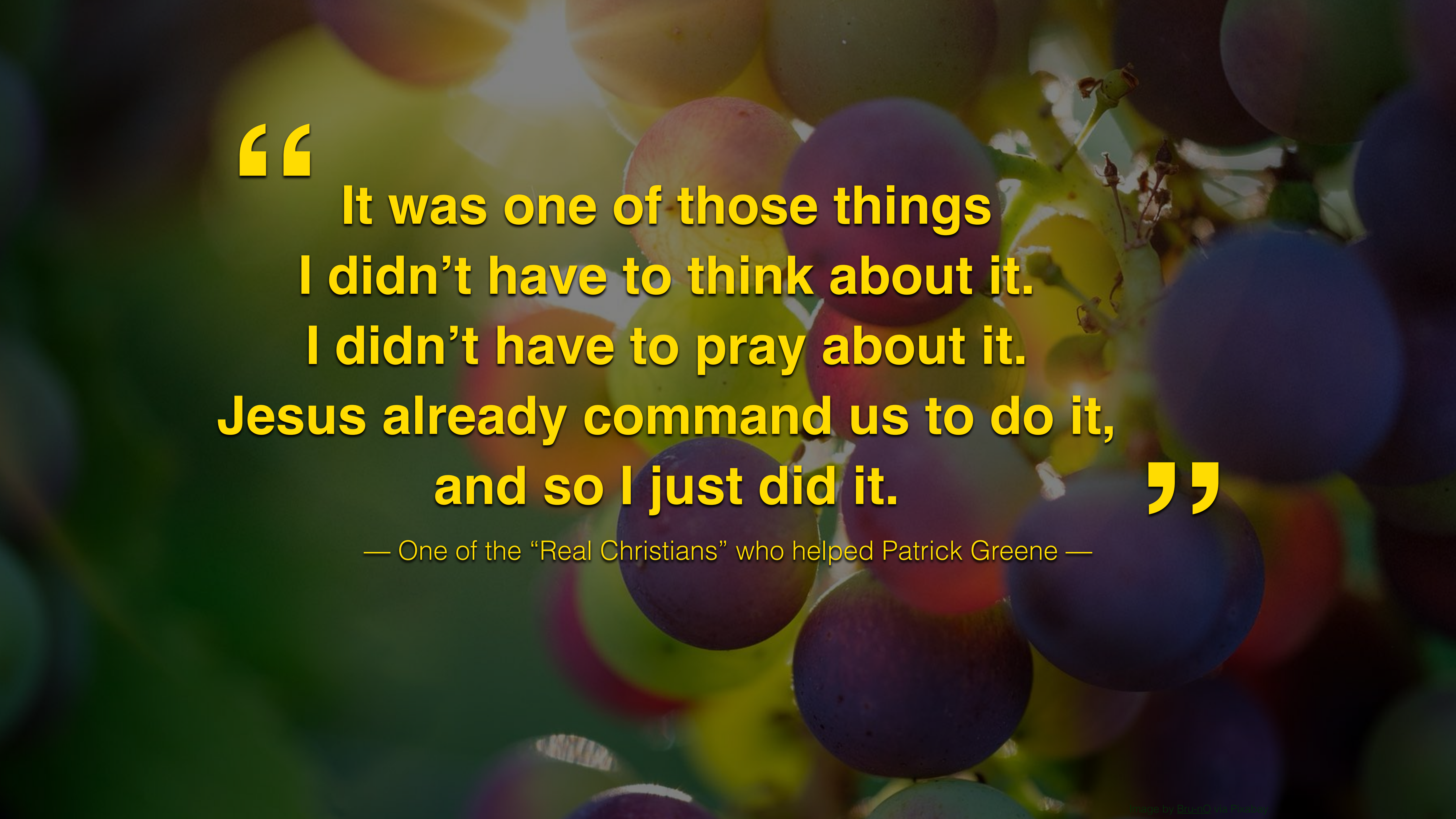


Patrick Greene
“Atheist Activist”

“Both my wife and I love them for that, because they are actually putting their actions where their beliefs are.... No Christian has ever acted like this way the entire time we’ve been married. These are the first actual Christians we’ve ever met in our lives.”



Patrick Greene
“Atheist Activist”



**“
It was one of those things
I didn't have to think about it.
I didn't have to pray about it.
Jesus already command us to do it,
and so I just did it.”**

— One of the “Real Christians” who helped Patrick Greene —

**MHC, May You Pay Attention
To How You Hear the Good News
about Jesus, That It May Produce
An Abundant Harvest in Your Life**

