

# Cultural Demoralization is Real and the Gospel has a Cure!

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[ 0 : 00 ] The text for this morning is Proverbs chapter 25, verses 25 through 26. Proverbs chapter 25, verses 25 through 26.

And the title will actually be somewhat more relevant than sermon titles normally are. And the sermon title is this, You are not there, you are here. Let me read the text to you.

Verse 25 of Proverbs 25. Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain, is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked.

Now this text, as we can see, has some connection. The Proverbs have some connection to one another. I preached through the book of Proverbs earlier in the year. One chapter every single week for 31 weeks in a row.

And it was the first time I had really gotten, you know, intimate with the Proverbs in the sense of spending my whole week meditating upon them. And one of the things I learned that maybe I would pass on to you as encouragement is I learned to see the interconnectivity between these Proverbs in a new way.

[ 1 : 12 ] And the way that I begin to see them is that, first of all, you'll have Proverbs like this where there's a contrast happening. And there's a lot of this in the book of Proverbs. What I begin to realize is that in many respects, Proverbs are sort of like a food and wine pairing.

They go together, but they're not the same thing. They have different things communicating, and yet they are fit together through the Holy Spirit's oversight of the composition of this book.

They're fit together to communicate certain messages that the single proverb does not communicate on its own. So think of it like a food and wine pairing. That really was helpful to me when that finally dawned on me.

Okay, so the text, as I said, is relatively straightforward. You can read it and say, well, okay, I think I understand what this means. But there are a few contextual matters that I want to put before you.

And the first one would simply be this. We do not live in an environment where, in the land of lakes in particular, where we have a scarcity of water. One of the things we need to do in reading these Proverbs is just to understand that to those folks who read this originally, for whom this was written originally, scarcity of water was a really big deal.

[ 2 : 21 ] I don't know anyone who has died of thirst. People in the original audience either probably knew of someone or knew someone who knew someone who may have actually died of thirst.

When we read passages about water in particular in the Bible, we really lack sort of an emotive connection that the original audience would have felt when they had seen mentioned.

For instance, in verse 25, of cold water in particular, of a spring in particular, of living water and these sorts of things. It's hard for us, with the availability of water, to understand the emotive response someone would have felt when they had read those particular passages.

Another thing to think about is that in addition to our easy access to water, we have easy access to communication and to travel.

And so verse 25, that would be something you'd want to bear in mind because like verse 25 says, like cold water to a thirsty soul is good news from a distant land. And that would maybe be a little difficult for us to connect with because we don't really have the experience of sending a loved one off with no communication for a great number of months at least, and to have that person return.

[ 3 : 36 ] Sometimes when you're in the epistles, you can see this happening in real time in the epistles where Paul will send someone to check in on the state of a church or to check in on the state of an individual and then return with that information.

So you'll see this proverb actually happening practically as you read the epistles. Another thing to think about is that the water itself was scarce and good water was even more scarce.

So you had, there wasn't a lot of water in general. And then even with that water available, a lot of it wasn't drinkable. A lot of it wasn't usable. And the thing about that is, is that people would build their homes around these water sources.

And for the most part, these water sources would hold up, but not always. You could potentially settle in an environment that has reliably a 10-year drought.

There's a spot in southern Kansas that is wetlands, and then every 10 years, it dries up. And so you wouldn't know that thing, of course, back then, and you'd build your house around an environment thinking this is a good place to be, and then find out all of a sudden that it's no longer a good place to be.

[ 4 : 53 ] Now, you could add on sorts of other additional complications. An animal could fall sick and die and fall into the water source, ruining the water source for a time. You may not know that.

It may not taste any different. And so the problem of good water is also present in our text because verse 25, we see the good water, the cold water to the thirsty soul.

But in verse 26, we have this idea of a muddied or polluted spring. There's a passage in Isaiah where, I'm sorry, Jeremiah, where Jeremiah is throwing a bit of a fit, throwing a bit of a pity party.

And he says to God, were you like to me an unreliable stream? And the meaning is, is like, God, I built my life around you. And now it feels like you've dried up.

It feels like you've abandoned me. And God, God slaps him around a little bit and says, let's separate the worthless from the worthwhile and so forth. And God says, you're wrong. I'm not unreliable.

[ 5 : 48 ] You can trust me and so on and so forth. So those are things to think about. I think another thing to think about as we get into the text further is just to understand that when it talks about in verse 26, the righteous giving way to the wicked, that doesn't necessarily mean sin or compromise, though it could.

Certainly that's one way we would see that. But also just this phenomenon we see in wisdom literature in general, where sometimes it looks like the evil just win. Again, they are smarter, they are stronger, they're better organized, and so on and so forth.

So when you're reading verse 26 and you're seeing the righteous give way to the wicked, that doesn't necessarily always mean spiritual, moral compromise, fall into temptation.

It could also simply mean that you were watching someone who was doing well, and then suddenly it looks as if evil was stronger, smarter, cleverer, and so on and so forth.

Now, that's a bit about the text, and let me explain the title. The title comes from one of the funniest moments that's ever happened to me in my marriage. I started ministering very young.

[ 6 : 57 ] I would only be married a couple years. As Nate referenced, we've been married for about 28 years now. And very early on, I was pastoring in a very small town in Illinois, and my paycheck for the whole month was \$800.

And we actually had trouble eating. Like, we were actually doing very poorly. As you can imagine, even though that was quite some time ago, \$800 was not enough to feed, at that time, myself, my wife, and two little babies.

And we had this car. I'll never forget this car. It barely ran, and it didn't have air conditioning. There was a moment where we were traveling somewhere, and we had the babies in the back seat.

It's 100 degrees outside. We've got all the windows rolled down. And it's the kind of car where you dare not stop too long at a stop sign. You're just, like, not sure that it'll be there for you when you want to go again.

Both girls filled their diapers in the back of that car at that stop sign. Or I became aware of the filling. Let's put it that way. Angela and I were fighting.

[ 8 : 06 ] That's my wife's name. We were fighting probably, like, over nothing, except that we were hot and feisty and young and poor and, you know, all those sorts of things. So we've got this incredible stench coming in the back seat.

We're both sweating. Me, in particular. I'm just dripping sweat. And we're at this stoplight. And at the same time that we're there, a guy in a Jeep pulls up.

Brand new Jeep. Doors off. Top off. Listen to the Eagles. Speak of Dad Rock. Take it easy. Peaceful easy feeling was playing on his radio.

And this guy's my age. And he's sitting there in a tank top with the doors off and the top off. And next to him is a girl my wife's age. And she's sitting there with a tank top also.

And they look so happy. And this stoplight would not, it just felt like terminal, like it just wouldn't turn green.

[ 9 : 07 ] And I found myself with my arm on the window just looking over at these people who had chosen a completely different path in life than I had. And my jaw was a little dropped and I just was staring.

And then, out of nowhere, I saw stars. A huge light kind of flashed in front of my eyes. And I realized that my wife had hit me in the head. She had smacked me.

She's a little person. It wasn't abuse. She had smacked me in the head and said, I know what you're thinking. I could, like, you stop looking over there.

You're not there. You're here. You're here right now. You're not there. You already made your choice. You're here. You're not there. And I just started laughing because I got caught, you know.

Imagining the other path and so on and so forth. And 28 years later, I'm so glad I chose the path that I did. I'm so glad that God blessed me in that direction. But that idea of you're not there.

[ 10 : 10 ] You're here. Like, that's something I want to carry through as I continue to talk with you this morning as we look at these two verses. So just bear that in mind. Now, when we look at these verses, we do see two very different states.

And one of the things I'd like to draw to your attention is just sort of our cultural moment. The moment we're living in culturally right now. And let's look back at the text and then talk about where are we with these two verses culturally.

Okay? So verse 25, Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news to a far country or from a far country. And verse 26, Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked.

So I would argue that culturally speaking, we are very deep into verse 26. We are very deep into verse 26. For the last 23 years or so, I have witnessed a phenomenon that some refer to as demoralization happening at every level in our culture.

Demoralization just means the process of making someone lose confidence, enthusiasm, or hope. It means causing someone to doubt the goodness of a situation, to remove their hope, their encouragement, and so on and so forth.

[ 11 : 29 ] Now there are different ways to think about demoralization, but one of the more helpful ways that I've heard is to break it into four categories. There's moral demoralization, which involves making it difficult for people to discern right from wrong.

There's perceptual demoralization, which is making it difficult for people to discern between real and fake. There's social demoralization, which makes it difficult for people to know who they can trust and who they can't trust.

And then there's epistemic demoralization, which just means it is increasingly difficult for people to know what is true and what is false. And I have watched this unfold in the last 20 years of my lifetime and seen that everywhere I look for the last 20 years or so, we have been experiencing a cultural demoralization.

Now I would argue that that's what verse 26 describes. Verse 26 describes looking at a water source that you have come to rely on, hope in. You find a water source, you're very thirsty, and it turns out that either the water source was polluted all along or it suddenly becomes polluted.

And I would argue that over the last 20 years, what we're seeing is at an institutional and cultural level, we're seeing institution after institution after institution give way to the wicked.

[ 12 : 57 ] And essentially the institutions that bring us life that are supposed to preserve our goodness and our neighbor's goodness, one by one, systematically, not only the institutions, but individuals, we see consistently good water turned bad.

And remember, it's hard for us to understand how important water is. Over the last 20 years, I've seen almost all of our government agencies either be corrupt or at least inept.

Author Walter Kern, a novelist, came up with a word that I like, slobitage. It's like such poor performance, such ineptitude that it looks like it was on purpose. Slobitage.

We've seen our financial markets become something that they had never been before. The single most secure asset in the American economy crashed in 2008.

We've been printing massive amounts of debt and deficits for years ever since. One day, just Google deficit increase over the last 20 years, you'll see what I mean.

[ 14 : 10 ] Celebrity pastors. We find not only to be fallen men, which we all are, but very often frauds, fraudulent. Not simply fallen, but often fraudulent.

Some of the most crowning moments of athletic achievement in the past 20 years have since been tarnished by performance-enhancing drugs. The safest place for most of us growing up would have been your public school.

And today it feels like we only get a month or so break before we see another tragic shooting at a public school or some other public place.

I read earlier that 50% of all voters believe that cheating will affect the 2024 election. We are living in a time of cultural demoralization.

All of the institutions and individuals we want to turn to for help and hope are showing themselves to be polluted. We've grown so accustomed to discovering hidden hypocrisy that the English language is itself changing and adapting to accommodate this moment we are in in the culture.

[ 15 : 23 ] And so now we have phrases like mainstream media and big pharma and deep fake and fake news and trolls and bots and phishing. It was revealed recently that 19 of the 20 most popular Christian Facebook accounts were actually automated bots coming from Russia.

If you wonder why grandma keeps getting hacked, why her Facebook account keeps getting hacked, it's because she shares the footprints in the sand meme and suddenly Russia knows about grandma.

So that's where we are in terms of our culture. And I think it's very important to understand that. I think it's very important to see it, to call balls and strikes and to say, in many respects, the emperor has no clothes.

But you know, there's an old saying, you've probably heard it before, that for every one look at yourself, you take three looks at Jesus. And I would say that we should look at the culture and we should understand the moment we're in.

But for every look at the culture, we should take three looks at Jesus. So what I just did with Proverbs 25 and 26 is I just looked at it through a cultural lens.

[ 16 : 28 ] And I said, which one are we in? It ain't the cold water to the thirsty soul one. It's the polluted stream one. But now let's look at that text, not culturally, but Christologically.

Let's not look at and ask, where are we in the culture for a moment? We've identified it's not pretty. Let's ask, where are we in Christ? Now, I could jump right to the end, get you to Chile in three minutes by pointing out to you that verse 25 is about the gospel ultimately.

There is no better news. There is no more distant land. There is no greater thirst than what is represented in the gospel. And we will get there.

But I want to kind of walk you through something I observed last Easter that I would refer to as the demoralization of the disciples and then the remoralization of the disciples.

Here's what I'm talking about. I'm just going to use John, the book of John, as an example of this. When you read the early part of the gospels, you see the disciples acting like they had just discovered the greatest fountain of all time.

[ 17 : 45 ] Right? That's when you pay attention to how the disciples respond to encountering Jesus, they're gobsmacked. They think they're the luckiest dudes in the world. They've just found the water source that they want to build their lives around and they leave everything to pursue that.

And so, for instance, in John chapter 1, verse 41, Andrew runs and gets Peter and says, we found the Messiah. In that same chapter, Nathanael says, Rabbi, you are the son of God.

In chapter 2, Jesus manifests his glory at a wedding by turning water into wine. In chapter 3, John the Baptist is so sure that this is who he thinks it is that he says, he must increase and I must decrease.

And then in chapter 4, you've got the woman at the well, another water story. And we've got the woman at the well going to all the people in the village and saying, come and see the man who told me everything I have ever done.

Could this be the Christ, she says, to her Sumerian neighbors? And this kind of thing continues through the Gospels. The crowds are large.

[ 18 : 54 ] The miracles are outstanding. Who is this man that even the wind and waves obey him? Every page is another example of the disciples thinking, how lucky are we? We found the cold spring for our thirsty souls.

And then something happens in chapter 18. A sudden arrest. A trial.

Torture. Can you imagine seeing the man who spoke storms into stillness? Can you imagine seeing that man get scourged?

Can you imagine seeing the man you thought was going to be king die on a cross? Can you imagine the man who was going to be king die on a cross?

And so for a moment, a crucial moment, attention we should revisit repeatedly. We have to be comfortable with the moments when God appears to have abandoned us and failed us.

[ 20 : 03 ] We're not helping our young people understand that that's a part of the Christian experience. They're overreacting. They're overreacting to their first wave of doubts and calling it deconstruction.

It's like, no, you're just a dude who looks at God the way we all look at God. You're not special. You're just a normal person having normal kinds of doubts. And so we want to embrace not just, we don't want to make it easy and say, Jesus is the cold water.

Be dismissed. Eat some chili. We want to walk through the tension that the disciples themselves felt. And that tension was, we have found the Holy One of God.

He is the Christ. Who is this that can calm the storms? He is the Son of God. To another righteous man got mowed down by the wicked.

Not in the respect that he compromised. Not in the respect that he sinned. But in the respect that in those two chapters, it just appears he wasn't up to the challenge.

[ 21 : 14 ] It just appears that evil is stronger and smarter. Interesting aside that, you know, conspiracy theories are like a thing now and we talk about them a lot.

And so on and so forth. It's really encouraging to see that in this particular moment, the disciples became aware of a real conspiracy theory that was actually working against Christ.

And executed against Christ. And an unfair trial. And so on and so forth. And they become aware. And what it looks like at that moment is that the schemers on the side of darkness had a better plan.

And they had more power. And so now they go from saying, we're here in verse 25 of Proverbs 25. We're here. We found the cold water.

To we're here. We're in verse 26. He couldn't stand against the wicked. He gave way to the force of evil.

[ 22 : 29 ] But then Sunday. This is just how the Christian life feels sometimes, my friends. Friday can feel a lot different than Sunday.

And praise God that our feelings aren't our faith. Sunday. Reading from the book of John in chapter 20. Both of them, Peter and John, were running together.

You can tell John wrote this because he's constantly bragging about his hops. About his speed. Both of them were running together. Listen to this. But the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb.

And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there. But he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came following him and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths laying there and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head.

Not lying with the linen cloths, but folded up in a place itself. And then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in. And he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

[ 23 : 33 ] Then the disciples went back to their homes. It took a moment for it to sink in. But they flipped again. They flipped back to verse 25. They're like, no, no, no, no. We thought we were in verse 26. We're actually in verse 25.

We're not here. We're there. And that's, I think, the essential kernel, the most important implication of Proverbs 25.25 is the gospel itself.

Crowned by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. So I want to just close out our time here by looking at that verse again and thinking gospel thoughts.

Okay? All right. So verse 25. Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. Now, we could meditate on a variety of aspects in which the gospel lines up with this particular text.

For instance, we could think more deeply about the distance idea. Because Jesus is good news from a distant land. This is the Christmas message that we're gearing up to celebrate and sing about.

[ 24 : 48 ] That Jesus is good news from a distant land. We could think about the massive ontological or spiritual differences even between us and God that's due to sin.

And we were not going to work our way to reach and overcome this massive distance. God came to us. He is the good news from the distant land.

We could talk about the mystery of a gospel. Cold water is cold because it's buried in the ground. And then it bursts forth, often sometimes in unexpected places.

Or you discover it and you didn't know it was there. So we could talk about how the gospel hidden for the ages has now been made manifest to us. And that we're all eager drinkers, slurper uppers of the cold water of the good news.

But I want to draw your attention to something that's a little more relevant to the cultural moment. I want to draw your attention to the word news. Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

[ 25 : 52 ] The first reason that the gospel is good news from a distant land, the most essential reason, bear with me, the most essential reason that it's good is that it's news.

It's not, we don't have a good idea. Sorry to Jordan Peterson in advance, we don't have a good mythological map of meaning. We don't have good hopes.

The gospel is good news built on a historical fact, the life, death, and physical bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now, I want you to really key in on the factual nature of the gospel. The newness, if you will, of the good news.

The historicity of the news. Why? Well, because in a moment of cultural demoralization with AI and deep fake and leaders we thought we could trust who turned out not to be trustworthy, in an age full of feelings over facts, we need a gospel that is based on news.

[ 27 : 09 ] We need a gospel. And let's be honest, friends. The second it stops being true, it's no longer good. It's bad.

Because lies are bad. Telling people to live their life according to the gospel if the gospel is merely an idea or a hope. We're not in good anymore.

We're in bad. So of all the words that we could pick apart, man, you could really talk about verse 25 in the gospel for quite some time. But of all the words we could pick apart, I just want to put in front of you the word news.

It is factual. It has happened. I don't know if you're familiar with the minimal facts argument about the resurrection. But there was a man named Gary Abramas, a professor who essentially just tried to say, like, listen, the resurrection really happened.

And even using arguments that the average secular non-believing Bible historian would use, I can show you that the resurrection really happened. And I'll just go through these really quickly.

[ 28 : 14 ] You can find better discussions of this online. But he has ten minimal facts. And the first one is Jesus was a real historical person. Two, we have plenty of evidence that he was crucified.

Three, we now understand that crucifixion leads to death 100% of the time. Studies have been done to understand anatomically and physically and medically what happens when someone's crucified. They never survive.

They never survive. Swoon theory is out the window after these studies. Number four, many people claim to see and interact with Jesus after his death. Number five, some of those people were themselves skeptics of Christ's messianic claims.

Paul and James. Number six, the message that Jesus was raised from the dead was taught immediately. It was not invented at some later date. We have plenty of evidence to verify this.

Number seven, since this was first preached in the same city where it happened. This one I think is important. This was preached first. The resurrection of Jesus was first preached in the same city that it happened.

[ 29 : 15 ] That makes the empty tomb imminently verifiable. What do we mean by that? Well, if I told you that Jesus had risen and that the tomb is in Lenexa, where I live, you would have no way of easily verifying that account.

But if I said that the empty tomb is down the road next to Caribou Coffee, it's such an impactful claim that you would take the time, the five minutes or whatever, to drive down there and check it out.

So you need to understand that among all of these evidences, this one's somewhat impressive in the sense that this message spread rapidly in the very town where the tomb was.

Number eight, Paul was a real historical person who is considered even by his skeptics to be a formidable intellect. His first letter to the Corinthians is believed even by skeptics to be authentic.

He really wrote it. He really said Jesus rose. Number nine, he tells us that Jesus appeared to many witnesses, most of whom were still alive when Paul wrote the letter, also verifiable then, and that he even appeared to a group of 500 people.

[ 30 : 26 ] There's no example of mass formation psychosis where 500 people hallucinate at the same time. Number 10, the details of the resurrection, including the women finding him first, are not compatible with the conspiracy claim.

What does that mean? If you're making something up and you want people to believe, you don't have, at the time, second-class citizens be the first witnesses to the thing. That's a problem.

You don't do that. So there's 10, there's many more kind of evidences, what they call minimal facts, that Jesus really rose from the dead. And reminding you why we're talking about this, because the good news from the distant land is news, not hopes, not wishes.

It's history. And I just want to say, like, well, what is the message? I don't want to leave this out. What is the news itself? The gospel of Jesus Christ is a letter from the transcendent holy God saying, you are now on behalf of my son, welcome here.



Your great debt has been fully paid by my beloved son. He has propitiated my wrath against you, and he's credited you his righteousness. He who knew no sin became sin, so that in him you might become the righteousness of God.

[ 31 : 37 ] The message from the distant land, the triumphant, transcendent throne of God is, you guys can come and be with me forever.

And I want to leave you with this, just one more detail of verse 25. I want you to think about thirsty soul. Thirsty soul. You may be looking around and agreed to my essential assessment of the culture, and you might be wondering, what is God doing?

One word. Thirst. Friends, I have been attempting. Don't be impressed by this. Don't be impressed by this. I'm warning you. I've been attempting to share the gospel with random strangers for over 20 years.

I'm really bad at it. Don't be impressed. But I've been trying for 20 years, at least. I taught myself how to do small talk with strangers, just so when I was standing in line at the coffee shop, I could talk.

I'm not naturally a small talk guy. I want to talk about the demoralization effects of the culture last 20 years. And so I had to learn some things to even be able to do this.

[ 32 : 47 ] And so I tried to figure it out, and I'm pretty good at it now. I can talk to people. It's quite impressive. Even pastors can learn to talk to people. Guys, I've been doing this for over 20 years.

I have never been in a moment that is as easy and as fruitful as right now. I know a man who has been doing campus ministry for the same time, same amount of time, talking to students about the gospel.

And mind you, he's 20 years older than he was when he started, which would seem to maybe not help him. He said he has never seen a time of interest in the gospel and God's word than he has seen today.

And I just want to report to you from the front lines of those efforts that what you're seeing in the news might lead you to believe that the opposite is true, and it's just wrong. What you're seeing is that there's a vocal minority of individuals who will get hostile with you when you share the gospel, and they feel more free than ever to be more hostile than ever.

And so you're going to get, the punch is going to hurt a little bit more, the punch is going to be thrown a little bit harder. But those people are so rare. What you find over and over again is that, let me put it this way, we can look at the institutions that we care about, and we can be kind of chagrined that they're falling into decay.

[ 34 : 19 ] It bothers us. It should bother us. We can see all the demoralization. We can see all of the facades starting to fall through. It kind of feels sometimes like all of our institutions are just papier-mâché.

And it's like, they look right, they look real, and then the smallest amount of whatever, and you just punch right through the thing. You know, as Christians, we can look at that and be like, well, that's a shame.

That's too bad. But you know what we can do? Is we can, after looking at that, go take a drink from Christ and be okay. But friends, listen, please.

Those without Christ, those polluted institutions, that's all they have. That's it. Like, for some people, and I know this is going to sound funny, but for some people, the most inspirational thing they had in their life was Disney.

I know that's pathetic, but it's true. And now they don't even have that, and they know they don't have that. Not reliably.

[ 35 : 32 ] Used to turn to Disney for inspiration to some degree, and now they get intersectionality, you know. Friends, people are thirsty. Why is God allowing this cultural moment to take place?

I believe God is increasing the thirst of the unbeliever, helping them to see transparently what was true all along. And that is, is that there is only one fountain to satisfy your thirst.

John 4. These folks are despairingly going to the well of higher education. Despairingly going to the well of self-help.

Despairingly going to the well of the Hollywood industry. Despairingly going to the well of sports. They're just looking for something to satisfy their thirst. And God, in his kindness, has helped them to see transparently now, for the first time ever in most of their lives, that's gross.

I don't want to drink from that. And we have the opportunity to say, well, you don't have to be there.

[ 36 : 44 ] You could be here. I can't close the sermon without reading from John 7, Jesus' famous exclamation. On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. Let's pray.

Father God, what a glorious thing to see that Jesus Christ has not and will not ever be outmatched, outsmarted, tricked, or seduced by the wicked.

Lord, we praise your name for standing firm. And you stood so firm and strong that even the grave could not retain its grip on you. Lord, I was reading in Psalm 11 earlier in the week, and there's a scoffer who appears early on and asks the question, If the foundations are destroyed, what will the righteous do?

We praise you, Holy Father, that we will never know. Our foundation will not be destroyed. We do not need to skitter around in a panic because the church's one foundation, as the hymn says, is Jesus Christ her Lord.

[ 38 : 09 ] She is his new creation, by water and the word. From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride. With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

We praise you, Lord, that when we read Proverbs 25, we know where we are, and we are grateful. The lines have fallen for us in pleasant places.

But Lord, we also feel, even in this prayer, even in this moment, we feel you stirring our hearts with compassion for the lost who have no living water.

And they must go to the well of disappointment every single day. They must filter out all of the debris, hold their nose, and drink another day of the water that does not satisfy.

And praise God, you are opening people's eyes to the reality. There are many who are still deceived and think what they're drinking is great, but Lord, there are a great many in the last 20 years whose eyes are now opening and saying, I do not have what I need to have in this world.

[ 39 : 19 ] Lord, by your great kindness, you are making them thirsty and helping them to see that they are thirsty. And Lord, you will continue to do this, I trust, in the coming years. And I pray that you would just give us faith to stand with Jesus and cry out to the world with compassion and sincerity and conviction, if anyone thirsts, let him come to Christ and drink.

Lord, I want to lift up specifically the many people in the Twin Cities who are dying of thirst. And I pray, God, that you would increase their thirst and let many of them find Christ and be satisfied.

God, I just pray Isaiah 12 over them. They will say in that day, I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though he was angry with me, in Christ his anger turned away, that he might comfort me.

Behold, God is now my salvation. God, we pray this for the people of this city, that they would say, he was angry with me, but in Christ his anger turned away from me. Behold, God is now my salvation.

I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. Lord, may many in the Twin Cities rise up and say, with joy, I will draw water from the wells of salvation.

[ 40 : 39 ]    Amen.