



Sermon Transcription • Psalm 19 (NIV)

The Word

Pastor Mark Burch

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

Welcome here! It is great to be in the book of Psalms and we're studying this summer, Israel's song book: the book of Psalms. And I've gotta confess, that as a younger person particularly as a teenager and a young adult, I didn't have a great passion for the book of Psalms. I found them um... maybe over emotional. They are raw, they are real, there is nothing held back in the Psalms. It's like listening in to someones' private prayers. Some of them are somewhat shocking, how people will talk to God, "Where are you God?" "Why do bad things happen to good people, God?" and "Why do my bad people neighbours continue to live their joyful life seemingly?" "How long are you gonna wait, O Lord? How long are you gonna hold back while it seems that our world is going from bad to worse?" and things like "My enemies are chasing me up and down! God is silent always. My bones are wasting away!" I mean honestly, it sounds like a bad country western song. Which typically I mean that's the only kind of country western song there is, so that's... why they were based on the Psalms. But as a younger adult, true confessions, I have to admit that the Psalms weren't really my favourite. I quite honestly found them to be over emotional. You'd read some of them and you're like, "Take a vacation, buddy! Like, think some positive thoughts! Think some happy thoughts! Take a pill..."

But the longer I have lived, and the more of life that I have faced, in particularly, the more water under the bridge that have been turbulent waters, and hard times that you face in your life, the more real and meaningful the Psalms have become to me. And so it's a privilege to be able to wrap up. The summer series is ending this weekend. And we're gonna look at Psalm 19 together; that basically says to us, Psalm 19, if you want to summarize it down, "God wants to be known." He wants to be known and so he reveals himself to us in two primary ways: through creation and through this book [points to the bible].

And so I have a very, very simple truth that I want to try to convince you of today, and it is simply this: the way that you relate to this book will change your life. For good or not for good. The way you relate to this book will change your life. Because the words of this book, if they are taken seriously and if they are read with an open heart, and if they are empowered by the Holy Spirit actually have the power to change every aspect of your life. There is no area of your life that does not come under the searing light of scripture. There is no concern or challenge that you face, there is no tragedy or joy and triumph that this book doesn't somehow address. And you might be saying, "Well that's a no brainer, preacher. Thanks for telling me something new that I didn't know." But the sobering truth, the sobering



truth about the North American church these days is that while most Christians own Bibles, most of us are not really being shaped by our Bibles. We tip our hat to the scriptures and to this book, but we don't actually read it all that much and what we do read, we don't very often actually put into practice. And I know you're thinking "Well, preacher. You are certainly a Debbie Downer this weekend. Glad I came to the services." But I'm not just saying that, there's evidence for what I'm saying, and we'll come back to that very happy thought later in the service.

But additionally, our culture is changing. And you're well aware of this. Our culture is in a massive shift and I want to steal a picture from my friend Ed Stetzer, I like to call him my friend cause I met him once, he writes great books. He put this map up of the cultural stream, [go to screen at 4:01] if you will, if culture is a river that we're flowing along and the left is the past and the middle is the present and the right is the future. That in the past, the last 200 years Christianity has been the mainstream in North America. And three large groups: confessional Christians, so we might say those who actually lived out their confession of faith and they practiced it and they were actively engaged in the life of the church. Congregational Christians, another group of people who belonged to a church, they might have been baptized or dedicated as a child, they go to Christmas and Easter services, certainly they get married and buried in the church and if you ask them "What church do you belong to?" They could name one, "I go to the Baptist church...the Presbyterian church, the Mennonite church." And then you have a larger group of people that are just cultural Christians. Because our culture has been shaped by Judeo-Christian values so while they may have no affiliation to a local church, south of the border, the money says "In God we trust". North of the border, we sing "God keep our land glorious and free." Obviously we are a Christian nation. And this has been the main stream for 200+ years in North America. Most people wanting to identify with Judeo-Christian values, but the times are changing. And there's a new island that's coming into the river and it's dividing the culture in a different way. Because the fastest growing religious demographic in North America is the "No Religion" category. Secularism is rapidly taking the mainstream in our culture and those confessional Christians, those true actively engaged Christians are being marginalized and sidelined down into a stream on the opposite side of the island from the mainstream. We'll come back to that as well. But I want to restate my simple thesis: that how you relate to this book will change your life.

And I think that's what Psalm 19 is fundamentally is all about. So I'm gonna ask you to read it together with, in fact, would you stand with me at all of our campuses: Mission, East and West. Stand here. We're gonna read it together, so the slides are self explanatory: the leaders' part and then the congregation's part. So just jump right in with me. Psalm 19

Leader:

**"The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.**

All:

Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.



Leader:

**They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.**

All:

Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

Leader:

**In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.
It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.**

Leader:

The law of the Lord is perfect,

All:

refreshing the soul.

Leader:

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,

All:

making wise the simple.

Leader:

The precepts of the Lord are right,

All:

giving joy to the heart.

Leader:

The commands of the Lord are radiant,

All:

giving light to the eyes.

Leader:

The fear of the Lord is pure,



All:
enduring forever.

Leader:
The decrees of the Lord are firm,

All:
and all of them are righteous.

Leader:
They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;

All:
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.

Leader:
By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

All:
But who can discern their own errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.

Leader:
Keep your servant also from willful sins;
may they not rule over me.

All:
Then I will be blameless,
innocent of great transgression.

[And all of us together...]
May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

O Lord, would you open our hearts to hear and receive, would you open our eyes to see and would you open our ears to hear your voice. In this gathering today we ask, in Jesus' name, Amen.
Grab a seat.



It's a pretty straightforward chapter of scripture, really. And maybe the most important thought is simply this: that God wants to be known. That we serve a God who wants us to be aware of his presence. We seek a God who speaks to us and as you study the scriptures you will see that he speaks in many, many ways. He speaks actually through the internal voice; Ecclesiastes says God has placed eternity in the heart, so there's something in the soul that cries out for him. Romans 1 says, it is our conscience that give witness—that bear witness to this truth. He speaks through circumstances. He speaks through people. He speaks through the joys in our lives and often he speaks most powerfully to the pain that we face in life. At times, he speaks through visions and through dreams, and through prophetic words. But this text in particular draws our attention to the two primary ways that God speaks. That God speaks through creation and he speaks through the written Word. And we could just press pause on the first seven words in this text and it would be enough for a full study. Psalm 19:1,

“The heavens *declare* the *glory* of God”

The heavens declare the glory of God. And a couple massive implications. Two parts: the heavens, the created order speaks and it speaks about something specific—the glory of God. So first, we're told that the created order is constantly talking to us. That there is a billboard in the sky, if you will, that declares that God exists and that he is glorious and so many passages speak to this. Psalm 8:1, 3-4 says,

“Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens... When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them...”

Psalm 29:3-9 talks about the speaking voice of the Lord. I love it. It says,

“The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory *thunders* [if you've ever stood at the ocean shore in a massive sea storm, you know how they thunder], the Lord thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic...And in his temple all cry, ‘Glory!’”

Glory! You see, these passages and dozens more call us to this concept: open your eyes! Open your ears! Open your hearts because all around you, verse one and two says, creation is crying to you everyday and every night “There is a God! <louder> There is a God! <even louder> There is a God!” If you open your eyes and ears. Now it says in verse three and four, creation actually has no words, it's not really shouting those words to you. And yet it is a universal language that's spoken around the globe. And the sound is deafening if you're tuned into it. And then there's five and six, it uses two kind of really funny illustrations, he says “it's like a bridegroom, the energy he has on his honeymoon”, think about that for a while; or like a champion, an Olympic runner who is jumping out of the gates to run his course, like the sun bursting across the sunrise at a 186,000 miles a second, <woos> [spins hand as if around a globe] around the globe, no one is saved from this revelation of God. No one is deprived of



this message. Creation shouts and like a blanket that wraps itself around the world, every nation and every language, and every people will know. You cannot silence the voice of creation.

Communist states have tried, atheistic governance have tried, you cannot stamp out the voice of creation. There is a very famous story during the French Revolution that a soldier is bullying a peasant and saying to the peasant “We will tear down all of your steeples so that there will be nothing to remind you of these old superstitions.” And the peasant replied simply by saying, “Yes. But... you cannot block out the stars.” You see, the voice of God goes out. It’s like our kids sing in Sunday School: “My God is so big. So strong and so mighty there’s nothing my God cannot do. The mountains are his, the valleys are his. The stars are his handiwork too. My God is so big. So strong, so mighty! There’s nothing my God cannot do.”

But the second part, is also critical because it is a very big deal. The heavens declare the *glory* of God. And again, I think we can pause and simply drill into that thought, because it is a big deal. And why pause there? Because I think it’s a largely missing aspect in the typical North American Christian life, and sadly too many North American Christian churches.

If you do a quick run through the Old Testament, you will see the glory of God on display all the way through. Beginning of course in Exodus. God’s great acts of deliverance taking Israel out of Egypt and showing them his glory. And how in those 40 years in the wilderness, daily his glory is seen as the manna shows up to feed them everyday. And as there are streams of water in the desert. When Moses goes to Mount Sinai, the mountain is covered with cloud and fire and lightning so much so that the people stepped back in awe and wonder and in fear. God gives instructions, “Build me a tabernacle. Where you will meet with me.” And when the tabernacle is built, the glory of the Lord fills the place so that no one can even enter the tabernacle. A few chapters later in the book of Numbers, Aaron’s sons decide that they don’t really think that God’s rules are all that important, they offer what’s called “strange incense”. And Moses says to them, “Watch out boys. You’re gonna see God’s glory. You’re gonna see how seriously God takes rebellion against his holiness.” And then eh says to the people in the camp, “Step away from them. Step away from them. Get back from their families, you’re gonna see what God is gonna do. He’s gonna do something completely unprecedented before.” And the moment they stepped back, the ground opens up and swallows three entire family units—glory! Glory. One of the most sobering texts in the Old Testament was in a time of cultural unrest. Cultural upheaval. The nation is coming under God’s judgment. It’s the time of Eli and his sons who have rebelled against him. Eli has led well, but his sons don’t lead well and in one day, they are taken out in battle. When their father hears that his sons have died, he dies either of a stroke or a heart attack. And Phinehas’ wife, one of the son’s wife, is about to give birth, she goes into premature childbirth and she dies giving birth to that son. But without first naming him this: 1 Samuel 4:21,

“...named the boy Ichabod, saying, ‘The Glory has departed from Israel!’”



Later, Solomon's temple's built. And the glory of the Lord fills that house. And we're told in 1 Kings 8:11,

"And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple."

Psalm 24:7-8,

"Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
the Lord mighty in battle."

Isaiah has a vision of being in the temple. And eh train of the Lord's robes fill the temple and there's smoke, and there was fire, and the seraphim are crying "Holy, holy, holy!" And Isaiah's response is what? "Woe is *me*! Woe is me! I am undone! I can't stand in the presence of God! I am a man of unclean lips! All the people I live with are people of unclean lips!" And Ezekiel has multiple visions of the glory of the Lord and three times specifically it says, Ezekiel 1:28,

"...his was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell facedown..."

And Ezekiel is almost humorous, cause God picks him up at the scruff of the neck. And he's like "I got work for you to do, boy! Get up off your face."

I've taken a lot of time there and why? Because if you read your Bibles, you will know that glory is a big deal. God wants us to see and hear and know and experience his presence and his glory. And most people who are exposed to the glory of God, ended up on their faces in worship, trembling, and in fear. And you might find yourself wondering, I've certainly asked myself this question often, "Have I ever *truly* encounter the glory of God? If that's what happens."

Now maybe you know that all the references I quoted so far are Old Testament references. In the New Testament, there's an astounding thing that takes place. You see, in the Old Testament we're told, "You can't stand in my presence. You can't look into the face of God or you will die." "Who can ascend the hill of the Lord?" is the question. And there's only one person who can ascend the hill of the Lord, the one who has clean hands and a pure heart. And that discounts all of us. None of us can ascend the hill of the Lord—according to that. Clean hands and a pure heart? [pause] Except one. There was one. There is one who had perfectly clean hands and a perfectly sinless heart who met every requirement of the law. Who lived a sinless life. And that one, Jesus Christ, ascended the hill of the Lord on our behalf. And now in the new covenant, in the New Testament, we have the awesome



privilege we're told, of literally standing in the presence of God! Hebrews says, we can come with *boldness* into the very throne room of God and not fear being struck dead! 2 Corinthians 3, an incredible text when it says, referring to the old covenant, that Moses covered his face because the glory was fading and when the Old Testament was read, a veil covered the eyes of the listeners. But not so in the New Testament! When now the law's read, when the scriptures read, the veil is lifted and we look at it says literally, "Into the face of God and we are changed by the Spirit of God through the word of God into the image and likeness of God unto the glory of God from ever increasing glory unto glory," it says! Amazing!

The glory of God is a big deal. But the text goes further. Cause left there, it's not enough. You see, the witness of creation we're told, isn't enough. Creation awakens within us this knowledge of the spiritual. But we need words. We need words to tell us more. We need to be *told* who this Creator was and is. Words to tell us that we've rebelled against him, and that *he* made the way for us to be right with him. You see, without words, we come up with all kinds of weird and wonderful and wacky spiritual impulses without the words. We start to worship "Mother Earth". Or we bow and worship to the sun and the stars. We give to created things more importance than they really have. We began to think that all living creatures are animated by the Spirit of God. So humans are just... part of the great circle of life, thank you *Lion King*. The trees and the rocks and the animals and the fish, they all have spirits too! Thank you, *Pocahontas*. And we can connect with them... And instead of worshipping the Creator, we end up worshipping the things that he has *created*.

Romans 10 asks a provocative question, it makes a statement first. It says, "Everybody who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." That's a provocative statement. You call on the name of the Lord, you will be saved. What an amazing promise. But then it asks the question, Romans 10:14-15 (paraphrased), "But how can they call on one who they've never heard of? And how can they hear unless somebody preaches to them? And how is anyone ever gonna preach unless we send some preachers and some missionaries and evangelists to take this message to them? And so therefore, 'How beautiful are the feet of those servants who go taking this gospel message!'" And then that paragraph ends with this phrase: "So then faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of Christ."

You see, We need words. We need *words*. So you come back to Psalm 19, and the verse seven and nine, if you're scanning through your text, six triads that describe the beauty and the power and the effect of the word. And the first are basically six names for the word of God: [refer to video at 21:56] the law, the statutes, the precepts, the commands, the fear, and the decrees. Just six different words, six different angles, six different descriptors of God's revelation to us.

And then each one of those words get an adjective attached to it. [refer to video at 22:09] The law of the lord is *perfect*, the statutes are *trustworthy*, the precepts are *right*, the commands are *radiant*, the fear is *pure*, the decrees are *firm*. In other words, you need some advice on how to live your life? You need some guidance for some decisions that you need to make? You want a guaranteed source of knowledge that is always 100% true? This is it! Here's your book. Right here. Perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, pure, and firm. Build your life on *this*. What effect does it have on us?



The third part of that six point triad is this [refer to video at 22:50]. It refreshes and revives the soul. It makes wise the simple (Yeah turn to your neighbour and say “You need that”), it makes simple people wise. It gives joy to the heart. It gives light to the eyes, the light on my path. It endures forever, all flesh is like grass, the flower withers, the flowers fade the grass withers, but the Word of our Lord abides forever. It is completely righteous and just; let justice roll down like a river. It has been called a roadmap for life, a guidebook for survival, a game plan for eternity. Call it what you will, David concludes in verse 10-13, it is more valuable than all the money in the world. More than gold, much fine gold, it is sweeter to the taste than honey directly from the honeycomb. And through its wise counsel, we are warned and in keeping these words, there is great reward. So O God, O God, may the words of my heart and the meditation of my mind be acceptable in your sight, O Lord.

And so these questions:

Where do you turn when the flood waters are rising?

Where do you find hope in a storm? Where do you anchor yourselves when the world is going crazy?

You see those are relevant questions cause I don't know if you've taken notice, but the times we're living in are a little crazy. Have you picked up on that? Just watch the weekly news. It'd be interesting every week if we just came together and talk about the crazy stories we saw this week or in the past month. This week, like the moment we sit in right now, like literally right now, the protests that are burning in Hong Kong, the escalating tensions in the Kashmir region, the mass shootings of just a couple weeks ago in Texas and Ohio, the cities across North America where crime had been declining for decades is now on the rise and city governments are doing crazy things in response to this. We're living in what some call “an age of outrage” or an “age of chaos”. When it seems like anger is just brewing just below the surface, ready to explode. Just one Facebook post, or one tweet away from an explosion of unrest. And even secular voices are now beginning to say, “Enough is enough is enough! Will someone with common sense not step up to lead us out of this chaos?”

If you've not heard the names Jordan Peterson, Jonathan Haidt, [picture of their books at 25:21] I'd encourage you to check 'em out. They've written some thought provoking books in the last couple years, that have irritated both the political left and the political right at the same time—it's an amazing feat! Peterson's book *The 12 Rules for Life: An Antidote for Chaos*, is the subtitle, have sold over two million copies. He's just a small town Alberta boy who teaches psychology at the University of Toronto. Last year he took a year off from teaching and went around the globe on a tour for his book and over 300,000 people showed up to listen to him talk. Primarily, young adults and majority, young men. His message? Basic common sense. The world is going crazy and we need to find a bigger story to make sense out of our lives. Now here's the point, he is not a Christian. He doesn't claim to believe in God. In fact, if you listen to his podcast, when he's asked “If you believe in God.” It is provocative. Cause he's saying “If I said I believed in God, I'd actually have to live it out. So therefore I have to say I don't.” And yet his talks, his books, his podcasts are packed with more scripture than the average sermon if you get on the podcast today, or the average church service. He uses more scripture than most preachers these days.



Jonathan Haidt's book *The Coddling of the American Mind* tackles three great lies, or three great untruths, they call them, or what they tongue-in-cheek call three stupid things that universities are teaching our young adults, shaping an entire generation of university students. And the subtitle is this: how good intentions and bad ideas are setting up a generation for failure. And you go, "What does this have to do with us? What does this have to do with Psalm 19? Would you get back to the bible, preacher?" Okay, fine.

Simply this, we're living in crazy times if you haven't awoken to that. And these two voices among many others like them, who are not Christian voices, secular voices who are calling out that "Enough is enough is enough. We are killing ourselves. Our society is unhinged. We need a set of values outside ourselves and greater than ourselves. We need a source of wisdom and common sense." And it sounds an awful lot like Psalm 19:12, "Who alone can discern one's errors?" Who alone can do this? We're not smart enough on our own. We need a worldview shaped by something or someone greater, more powerful, wiser, more rational than us. Why are we here? Where did we come from? What is the purpose of our lives? Where are we headed? How then shall we live our lives? These are the questions that matter. And these are the questions that young adults are asking and unfortunately we're giving them some very bad answers.

And Psalm 19 points us to the source of life. A source of wisdom and truth. Creation awakens within us an awareness that there is a God. And the written word directs our path. And so I told you that I had a simple truth that I want to put before you today. If you take nothing else with you, please remember this phrase: how you relate to this book will change your life. How you relate to this book will change your life. And again, you're saying "You're preaching to the choir, man. You're in a church service, buddy. We know this. We've heard this. We believe this. Look at our confession of faith. We have a statement on the word of God. We believe it to be fully authoritative." I get that.

Five years ago, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada commissioned a study and released a report called the "Canadian Bible Engagement Survey". The Canadian Bible Engagement Survey. I'm not gonna take time to read it, it's a long report, you can get on their website, download it for free. You can read the entire thing. It was sponsored by EFC as well as the Canadian Bible Forum, which is basically the who's who in Bible translations and distribution. Ministries like The Bible League Canada, Canadian Bible Society, The Gideons of Canada, and Wycliffe Bible Translators, and others like them. Basically they said, we've been giving away Bibles for years, and we've been selling them cheap as borscht for years; but what are people actually doing with those Bibles, we would like to know? Specifically we would like to know how Canadians are engaging with their Bibles. And so it's a Canadian study. And the results are staggering. I encourage you to look it up. But the Coles' notes, if you want this long report in one sentence, here is the report in one sentence: Canadians don't read their Bibles. That's the report in one sentence. The majority would say, taken the survey, they "believe the Bible" we just don't have time to read it or talk about it. This summary statement: About 1 in 7 Canadian *Christians*, 1 in 7 Canadian Christians, 14%, read the Bible least once week. The majority of Canadians, including those who identify themselves as Christians, read the Bible either seldom or never. Some of the findings, there were many, I want to just throw three on them on the screen for you.



1. The majority of Canadians (69%) and half of Christians agree that the Bible has irreconcilable contradictions.
2. Almost two-thirds of Canadians (64%) and six in ten Christians agree that the scriptures of all major world religions teach essentially the same things.
3. Only 6% of Canadians and 11% of Christians talk to others about the Bible outside of religious services at least once a week.

So, those three just alone. Fifty percent of Christians say that the Bible has irreconcilable contradictions. Sixty percent of Christians say that every other holy book: the Hindus, the Muslims, the Buddhists—their books are the same as our book. They teach the same thing. Ninety percent, the only time we talk about the scripture is when we're in a gathering of God's people and no conversation throughout the week. Is this not sobering?

You say, why do I raise this research and why is it critical? Because of the times that we live in. We need an anchor because we live in turbulent times. We need a well formulated worldview. The days maybe getting darker if you think back to the cultural river that we looked at and that island that is segregating confessional Christians off from mainstream secular culture. We have got some great opportunities coming our way in the years ahead don't you think? The church has been here before, friends. Read your church history, 2000 years of it. But many, many times the church has been here before. Many times the world has said "Religion is dead." We have pushed God effectively out, but it's like a vacuum. They've pushed out all the air out of their lungs and inevitably there is this <loud gasping for air> gasping for meaning and they turn again to the scriptures and go, "Maybe we need to think about that God all over again." You see, God's purifying his church. He's purifying his people. And the question is, will we be ready and prepared to speak and to live and to love like the word directs us?

So we gotta land this baby, I understand that. It's summer, you're supposed to preach short. I never preach short. So anyway, we're gonna land it now.

If this book is indeed the key to life, as Psalm 19 says it is, then let me ask you some simple questions then I want to pray for you. How should we relate to this book? Let me ask you this: Do you own a Bible? And if you don't own a Bible, all of our campuses this week and we made sure that we have Bibles available. Go by the info desk, talk to an usher, talk to another pastor, we have free Bibles. If you don't own a Bible, do not leave this weekend without taking a Bible with you. We will give you a copy for free. But do you own a Bible? Do you know where it is? Will you set aside time to read it and listen to it? And get it into your head and into your heart? Will you meditate on it? Will you chew on it? Will you roll the thoughts over in your mind? What would that require? Well it will require some space in your schedule. And some space in your brain. And you know as well as you do, that there are so many competing noises and activities that keep us from the word of God. And it means that some other things will have to go. We may have to turn Netflix off a little earlier so we can go to bed a little earlier, so we can get up a little earlier.



Beyond reading it, will you find a friend or two to talk about what you're reading? The fastest way to grow in discipleship has been proven just simply talk about what you're learning from the word of God. If you want to formalize it, get two or three friends just say "Let's just meet every week and talk about the scriptures." If you want to do it informally, even this weekend, as you have a coffee, or a lunch, or a meal, or you take a walk with a Christian friend, instead of politics, instead of the weather, instead of sports, why not ask the question "What has God been teaching you recently through his word?" What a great conversation.

In all of this, here's the bottom line. We prayed together before our services, our worship team, and I said to them, a message like this has the ability to have people leave feeling guilty. And feeling shamed, and that is the last thing on the planet we want. So if in any way, shape or form you're feeling guilty or shame or condemnation, put that out of your mind. That is from Satan. The bottom is line is this: the world, the flesh and the Devil do not want us in this book. The world occupies our minds with many, many, many, many, many, many, many <repeats> things. And a lot of them are good things, but we're occupied. Our flesh, frankly, is lazy, mine is and yours is too. And the Devil does not want us to read this book. And if those things are true, then the only way that I'm gonna get into this book is if the Spirit of God changes my heart. It will not be my own will power, it will be an act of God's grace that causes me to hunger and thirst for this book. And so I'm gonna ask you if you would simply begin to pray "God, give me a thirst that nothing else can quench. Create in me a dissatisfaction with all the other sources of counsel and wisdom that I'm getting. Help me to see the stupidity of so much 'good advice' offered by the world. God give me a hunger that only comes by your spirit. And then like Peter who said to Jesus, we can cry out 'To whom shall we go if not to you, Jesus? Because *you* have the words of life.'" May that be our prayer. Would you stand together with me? I'd like to pray for you. The worship team's gonna come and lead us.

And so God, I pray by your Spirit. That you would gift us with the work of your grace. We confess Lord, that left to ourselves, we don't hunger and thirst for your Word like we should. We confess quite frankly that we're often distracted and busy with other good things. We confess that our flesh is lazy. And then we also acknowledge that there is a spiritual battle that we don't always understand but that the enemy doesn't want us in this book. And so Lord God, I pray for every man and woman, boy and girl who is hearing this message, that you would give them this gift of your grace that you would create in us a thirst that only your Word can quench. A hunger that only your Word can fill. That we would be men and women, boys and girls, who long to live according to this book. We ask that in Jesus' name, Amen.