

In August of last year, it was reported that except in war zones, famines have all but disappeared worldwide.

The Human Progress article says five factors account for the growing access to food:

1. Agricultural productivity has greatly improved due to more scientific methods of farming.
2. The world has grown much richer and people can afford to buy more food.
3. Food has become cheaper, with the inflation-adjusted price of food in 2017 lower than it was in 1961.
4. Improved transport and communications allow countries with plentiful harvests to sell or donate their agricultural surpluses to countries suffering from food shortages.
5. The spread of democracy and a free press ensures that governments are more accountable, and that human-rights abuses are more widely reported.

Unusually large amounts of rain in East Africa in recent years have led to huge increases in agricultural productivity. However, it also has spawned one of the largest locust populations in decades. So, expect to be hearing once again of famines in parts of the world that are literally being devoured by billions of locusts.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.

“You can’t fix...” Psalm 95 3/15/2020

In spite of our progress related to food, a significant number of people are still hungry; as many as 1 in 9 according to some reports.

The problem is not primarily a lack of supply, nor local weather-induced famines, but combinations of such things as distribution, acquisition, corruption, effort and conflicts.

In other words, hunger today is mainly caused by things people do.

The progress in food supply can be added to the list of other advances humankind has achieved in areas such as technology, medicine, standard of living and life span.

But at the same time, the fact that human beings still go hungry each day reminds us of how little progress we humans have made against such things as self-centeredness and greed.

2600 years ago, the prophet Jeremiah declared,

**“The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse — who can understand it?”
(Jeremiah 17:9).**

Jeremiah didn’t qualify his statement by saying, **“The heart of my generation is devious,”**. No, he let the statement stand as an indictment of what it means to be **human.**

Consider our text for today, Psalm 95-

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

For forty years I loathed that generation and said, “They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.”

Therefore, I swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest.”

People in the Old Testament had complaints about:

- corrupt leaders,
- unfair systems,
- injustice,
- predatory lending,
- unscrupulous merchants,
- angry partisanship,
- human rights abuses and other troubling matters.

And here we are three millennia later with the same basic complaints. Why have we made great strides forward in technology and other fields but remain essentially where people were thousands of years ago in attitudes and the difficulties of living together with other humans on this planet?

What’s wrong with us?

One possible answer is, ***You can’t fix stupid!*** But not in the way you think.

Usually when someone says that they are referring to someone else. But one definition of stupidity is: ***“Behavior that shows a lack of good sense or judgment.”*** So, to be stupid is not to be ignorant. Stupid is not the opposite of smart. Stupidity is a universal trait.

The same person can design an award-winning public building and still be defeated by a parking meter with perfectly clear instructions on the side.

A chess player can visualize a tree of possible moves five or six deep but cannot anticipate running out of toilet paper until the moment he does.

Someone can create her own company but cannot seem to make a doctor’s appointment.

You know some foods aren’t healthy, but you eat them anyway.

You know exercise will likely raise your energy level and extend your lifespan, but you don’t exercise regularly.

You know that when you chew with your mouth open, leave hair all over the sink, abandon your dirty clothes on the floor beside the bed or leave the toilet seat in the wrong position, you send your spouse over the edge. Perhaps you even promise your spouse, who is close to throwing the china at you, that you will change, and yet — surprise! — you don’t.

We are often very slow to learn from our mistakes and sometimes never do. Can you remember you or someone you know doing or witnessing self-defeating behavior and saying, ***“We never learn, do we?”***?

Russian novelist and historian Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote: “The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either — but right through every human heart... even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts, there remains ... an uprooted small corner of evil.”

Luther was aware of this and called it **the bondage of the will.**

Simul Justus et peccator means that we are simultaneously saint and sinner.

Romans 7:15–25 (ESV)

For I do not understand my own actions.

For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.

For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

24 Wretched man that I am!

Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

At the public library in Wilmer, Texas, books were checked out not with the beeps of bar code readers but with the scratches of pen on notebook paper.

Out on the street, police officers were literally writing tickets — by hand.

When the entire computer network that keeps the small town’s bureaucracy afloat was recently hacked, Wilmer was thrown into the digital Dark Ages.

Wilmer — a town of almost 5,000 people just south of Dallas — is one of 22 cities across Texas that are simultaneously being held hostage for millions of dollars after a sophisticated hacker infiltrated their computer systems and encrypted their data.

The technology is new, but the deep fault line in the human soul goes back to the Fall. Someone is willing the risk the lives of many people, bring municipalities to their knees, so that he can claim a fortune in bitcoins from his home.

C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man.

Is there enough food so that people don’t have to go hungry? Yes.

How can we even consider the possibility of running out of water when we live on a planet that is 2/3 covered by it?

Why do we currently have 51 armed conflicts in the world?

Why is the best country and government ever tried by mankind split right down the middle with red hating blue?

Why are we talking about going to Mars when we still have human trafficking and slavery and abortion and drug abuse and the majority of the people living under oppressive regimes?

You can’t fix... human nature.

Matthew 24:4–14

And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake.

And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another.

And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

“You can’t fix...” Psalm 95 3/15/2020

The only answer, the only hope is to turn back from worshipping and serving self, kneel before the Lord our maker and receive the mercy that Christ offers freely to all.

Even with Christ in our hearts, even with the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, we still fall short of the perfection demanded by the law. We will still, in some ways, be stupid or foolish or stubborn.

With Christ in our hearts we can turn back to the right road, stay on the right road, avoid many of the pitfalls of a perverse and sinful human nature and live lives of grace and light.

Through faith we can feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, be welcoming and encouraging as we represent Christ to a world that desperately needs him.

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