

FAITH CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

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"From Sheri Leming's Desk..."

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MUDDIED SPRINGS AND POLLUTED WELLS

Proverbs 25:26 NIV, "*Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked.*" This Scripture was quoted by Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma at a church service that Gary and I were privileged to attend last year. I call it one of those "pinch me" moments in life. You see, the service took place in the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. It's called The Jefferson Gathering, which is a weekly church service for members of Congress and their staff. Senator Lankford went on to say, "Washington doesn't change the country – the country changes Washington – district by district, block by block. It is not as if God has not left light and salt in our nation, but **if it [truth] gets muddied – those seeking righteousness cannot find it.** The local church has a greater impact than any vote here – it has a generational impact." We also heard from Congressman Thompson, of Pennsylvania, who attends The Jefferson Gathering every week. "Revival starts in our churches but we have too many fallen churches. Too many have lost the Word." Congressman Randy Weber of Texas encouraged us by advising, "Don't get muzzled by political correctness."

As I study this Scripture in Proverbs 25:26, it's telling us not to give way to the wicked. We are commanded not to set aside our standards of what is right and wrong. No one is ever going to be influenced for the Kingdom of God by someone who makes concessions with the world. A good man is like a fountain of pure and living water. The world we are living in is in deep need of this spiritually thirst quenching water. And if they come to the place where they *should* find ample supply, and yet all that is there is '**muddied or corrupt**' – what an incredible tragedy!

Our family grew up going to Yosemite on vacation. We loved to spend time skipping rocks across the Merced River. We occasionally took a raft and floated down the Merced in the middle of a sun-scorched day. Ask my dad about the sunburn he got one year. It was a doozy! I've heard about people who spend a lot of time in the hot sun on this river, who mistakenly believe that they can drink from it. After all, it looks inviting, especially so in light of their thirst! So they stop and scoop up some of the water. As their thirst is quenched they don't realize that they have also scooped up parasites, and a possible infection, which then can be transmitted through person-to-person contact.

You see, like people taking a gulp of the Merced River, who do not realize the ramifications, are folks who "*fall down before the wicked.*" And just like the poison in the water may not kill, but only lower the standard of health in those who ingest it, so compromise with the ungodly in a righteous man may not lead other men to open abandonment from the right path, but it surely will make the walk of many **unsteady**. In fact, in the KJV, "falling down or gives way" – the verb means "to totter, or to slip".

Jesus warns us -

Matthew 5:13

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men."

In other words, the righteous are the guardians of the moral purity of the world, and if any one among them compromises this character he is not only losing out himself but **he becomes a source of loss to others.**

Proverbs 25:26 has been called by a few Biblical scholars, “one of the most profound statements in Proverbs, since the writer deals not with misfortune but with the sin of a righteous man.”

Matthew Henry – “For those who have been in reputation for wisdom and honor to fall from their excellency, this troubles the fountains by grieving some, and corrupts the springs by *infecting others* and **emboldening them to do likewise**. For the righteous to be cowardly, to truckle [kowitz] to the wicked, to be afraid of opposing his wickedness and basely to yield to him, this is a reflection upon religion, a discouragement to good men, and strengthens the hands of sinners in their sins, and so is like a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring.”

As I have spent time reflecting on this Scripture, I can't help but also reflect on the water crisis in my father's hometown of Flint, Michigan. This crisis has been tied to the lead poisoning of children and the deaths of at least twelve people from Legionnaires' disease. Government officials who were in charge of the city's drinking water, in an effort to save money changed the source of the city's drinking water and did not enact proper corrosion control, causing lead to infiltrate into the water supply. Recently two managers were charged with felonies in connection with their role in the crisis.

Sadly we are living in a day of widespread corruption involving those who are supposed to be watching over us. Unfortunately this doesn't just happen in government, or on Wall Street. It is happening in too many of our pulpits as well, which will have grave eternal consequences. Scriptures that have always been plainly understood have suddenly become '*muddied*' in minds and hearts.

The book of **Ezekiel** has a **strong exhortation** for us about this –

Ezekiel 3:18-19

"When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die'; and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, *but his blood I will require at your hand*. [19] "Yet if you have warned the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; *but you have delivered yourself*."

Lee Strobel illustrates the following example to highlight the moral rebellion that makes clear truths of Scripture ambiguous when they are not. Imagine a daughter and her boyfriend are going out for a Coke on a school night and the father says to her, “You must be home before eleven.” It gets to be 10:45 p.m. and the two of them are having such a great time, and they don't want it to end. So suddenly they begin to have difficulty interpreting the father's instructions: What did he really mean when he said, “You must be home before eleven”? Did he literally mean us, or was he talking about you in a general sense, like people in general? Or was he just making the observation that “Generally, people are in their homes before eleven”? I mean, he wasn't very clear was he? And what did he mean by, “You must be home before eleven”? Would a loving father be so adamant and inflexible? He probably means it as a suggestion. I know he loves me, so isn't it implicit that he wants me to have a good time? And if I'm having fun, then he wouldn't want me to end the evening so soon. Also – he didn't really specify if he was talking about Central Standard Time of Eastern Standard Time. In Hawaii, it's still only quarter to seven. So with all of these ambiguities, we can't really be sure what he meant at all. If he can't make himself more clear, we certainly can't be held responsible.

What our nation is desperately thirsting for is the water that only Jesus can supply -

John 4:14

“...but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”