

It has become a common thing nowadays for the television industry to spend huge amounts of money to produce a film from a popular novel. I don't like for them to change it very much. But many directors think that they know better, and infuse their own ideas into the film. In a way, that's what I want to discuss for a minute or two.

A man named Stanislaw J. Lec once said something that I think is very thought provoking, if we will just think about it carefully. He said, 'In the beginning was the word -- at the end just a cliché.' What I hear him saying is that God gave us his word: sparkling pure and clean, but somehow we have distorted it so that it has become dull and tiring. What have we done to the gospel? Have we bent it out of shape to suit our own purposes? Each of us receives the gospel and transmits it to others, whether we do it intentionally or not. The world is watching us. Has someone turned 'religion' because of their association with us?

In Romans 2.24, Paul repeats the idea of Isaiah 52:5: 'the name of God is blasphemed because of you'. What a sobering thought! I wonder if any one despises the name of Christ because they have known us? Paul is speaking to Jews who once boasted of their being the chosen of God, who acted like they were so holy and 'religious', but did not practice what they taught at all. It was difficult for them to persuade others to join in their worship.

Then in Acts 13.10, Paul said to Elymas, the sorcerer, 'Will you not stop making crooked the straight ways of God?' So many times we take the pure word of the gospel and distort it with our own interpretations and desires of the way we want it to be. It is like we have left the main trail, but dare marking the trail as we go to make it appear that we are on the right track. We must let the path speak for itself.

Now I would like to read another thought-provoking scripture in this regard. In Ez 34.18-19, we read, 'Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet? He seems to be asking us the question, 'How does God's word appear to others after we have used it, after we have filtered out what we didn't like and added what we did?' I'll never forget at Lipscomb one quarter, some guy that I really didn't know asked if he could borrow a New American Standard Version of the Bible for use in his class on Kings. I let him, but when I got the Bible back, he had marked all through the book of Kings with an ink pen! It looked terrible! Does someone see the gospel according tthe same way? Is the message that we have left behind us clear, or have we just muddied the waters? The scripture from Ezekiel warns against a non-ecological carelessness with the pure, living water we have been called upon the distribute. We must submit our wills to God complete ly so that we don't poison the water hole for others.