

Empty Clouds  
Proverbs 25:14  
Charlie Brackett

Long ago, the poet Longfellow wrote these words:

Nothing that is can pause or stay;  
The moon will wax, the moon will wane,  
The mist and cloud will turn to rain,  
The rain to mist and cloud again,  
Tomorrow be today.

When clouds turn thick and dark and the wind begins to whip, we expect the rain to come in a moment. But sometimes the clouds prove to be empty. Their appearance boasts of the promised rain and when rain doesn't come it is like a promise unfulfilled. Sometimes men are like empty clouds. They boast of gifts they will give or of deeds they will do, but the promised rain never comes.

Proverbs 25:14 helps us understand the folly of such a practice:

Like clouds and wind without rain  
Is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely.

Speak honestly about yourself. Make promises judiciously. And do what you say you will do. It is not difficult, even among Christians, to find those who easily boast of what they will do or what they will give only to later learn that their words were empty, their boasting was hollow. It is basic to Christian faith that we speak honestly in all things. Our Lord said in Matthew 5:37, "Let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no';.." As the old saying goes, we should "say what we mean and mean what we say." A Christian's word is his bond.

God's people are described in Psalm 15 as those who honor their word. Notice the last part of verse four. "He swears to his own hurt, and does not change;.." Those who dwell with God are those who, when they make a promise, stick to it regardless of the cost. Even though they may later realize the promise made will work to their detriment if fulfilled, God's people will not change. Their words are not empty clouds.