

ESF, Lord's day service message
7/28/2019

Digging the Wells of Blessings

Genesis 26:12-25

¹² Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. ¹³ The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. ¹⁴ He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵ So all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth.

¹⁶ Then Abimelek said to Isaac, "Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us."

¹⁷ So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar, where he settled. ¹⁸ Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.

¹⁹ Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. ²⁰ But the herders of Gerar quarreled with those of Isaac and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him. ²¹ Then they dug another well, but they quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. ²² He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, "Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land."

²³ From there he went up to Beersheba. ²⁴ That night the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham."

²⁵ Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.

In today's story God graciously blessed Isaac, when he was digging wells. Through this story God shows us how we can receive His gracious blessings and take care of them well.

Find God's grace in what you have

When God blessed Isaac, he became a rich man. We can see that in verses 12-13: *Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy.*

So was everything going well? No. He got into trouble because people got jealous of him: *"...the Philistines envied him. So all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth"* (verses 14-15).

In those days, the major business of every household was sheep. The wells were an essential source of water for every household to take care of their flocks. Without wells there could be no sheep business. In today's world, the wells may be equivalent to financial capital which is essential for all businesses. So everybody was striving to get more wells and better wells.

When Isaac's business was going well, his neighbors got jealous of him and blocked the wells to ruin his business. Isaac did not do anything wrong in becoming a wealthy man. He just worked hard as anybody else did to build up his business. He became wealthy by God's blessing. But the wealth brought trouble to his life.

We may think that financial blessing will solve the majority of our problems. But that is not true. Financial abundance may bring additional troubles into our lives. We may face serious conflicts caused by our possessions.

Also when we receive God's blessings, there are always some people who get jealous of us, and make trouble for us.

How did Isaac solve this trouble? How did he get one well after another when the jealous people blocked his wells?

First of all, Isaac solved the problem by reopening the old wells. Before he started digging a new well, he reopened the old wells of his father. He just utilized and made the best of what he had inherited from his father. Then the old wells which had been covered by dirt turned into useful wells. It helped him to save time, money and resources.

Isaac neither invested a lot nor worked hard to get the wells he needed. That is God's gracious blessing given to Isaac through his father's investment and hard work.

God blessed Isaac through something old. God may dispense precious blessings to us through something old. Old things are worn out. They look outdated and useless. But there may be something valuable in them. Before you start a new project or task try to gain something good or useful from the old. Before you search something new to improve your life, to solve your troubles, try finding something valuable in what God has given you already.

God may also dispense precious blessings to us through resources which other people worked for. God often helps us to gain wonderful fortune of which we haven't worked for. That is God's grace. Regarding this matter, Jesus says in John 4:36-37, "*Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true.*"

Paul's missionary work accomplished great things with God's gracious help through sacrifices and hard works of many believers.

Although Paul did not follow Jesus while He was still alive, he received many spiritual blessings which the other apostles had labored for. The Lord gave him all the blessings he had given to His original apostles, who sacrificed so much to follow Him ahead of Paul. So Paul always humbled himself and gave glory to God for his blessings in his life: *“I planted seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow”* (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

Nobody came into this world by his or her own effort. Everybody owes thanks to his or her parents for coming into this world. Everything we have in our lives has come to us through labors of many other people. God uses somebody in our family, in our church, even people we have not known to bring some blessings to us. Be thankful for what the Lord has given you already. Try to make the best of it.

Fight the battles in your life with meekness

When Isaac’s neighbors blocked all his wells to ruin his sheep business. he could have quarreled and fought with them. He had the right to do so because his father Abraham dug the wells and he legitimately inherited the wells from his father.

But, instead of fighting with them, he constantly reopened other old wells which had been covered by dirt. Why did he not fight with them, or even argue with them to claim his ownership of the wells? Was he a coward? Was he too weak to fight? By responding to his enemies like that was he defeated, and did he become a loser?

No! It was not a sign of cowardice or weakness. He was not defeated by them. On the contrary, it was evidence of strength and courage. By doing so, he became a victor and received God’s gracious blessing.

How?

In such a situation, quarreling with those people was easy to do. But Isaac dealt with them gently and peacefully. He tackled conflict between him and others through meekness. It gave peace in his heart.

Meekness is power under control. It produces power to overcome the evil in our lives without damaging the good. Have you ever used some chemical liquid, like Drano, to clear up clogged drains? When we pour the chemical liquid in a clogged drain pipe, it penetrates into the clogged stuff and dissolves it without damaging the pipe itself. Meekness produces such a power in our lives.

How can we be meek? True meekness comes from believing in God's vindication and justice. When you believe that God is ultimately just and judges everything and everyone without partiality, and believe that revenge belongs to God, you can be in peace when others treat you unjustly.

Romans 12:19 says, *Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

Revenge belongs to God. God promises us that if we deal with our enemies in meekness, He will let us inherit the earth. Jesus says in Matthew 5:5, *"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."*

When you believe that revenge is not your job but God's job, you can put the matter of revenge into God's hands and you can treat your enemy gently. Peter explains the meekness of the Lord in that sense in 1 Peter 2:23: *When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.*

A meek person can bear injustice patiently and without bitterness (Titus 3:1-7). A meek person can humbly yield his or her right to other people and overcome conflicts peacefully.

Meekness gives peace in the heart and tranquility. Because meekness produces inner strength that can absorb traumas (impingement, shock) or provocations caused by harsh circumstances or people. Meekness controls anger and frustration peacefully.

Meekness leads us to deal with other people patiently without quarreling, people who may disagree with us or attack us. Meekness produces strength to control our tongues and enables us not to use harsh words but to use gentle and graceful words. That is God's gracious blessing given to us when we treat others, especially our enemies with meekness.

Keep doing your task with perseverance

Isaac faced continued opposition and adversity. Wells were difficult to dig through hard earth and rock. Even reopening the old wells was not an easy job. While he was digging new wells, he might not find enough water to water all his flocks. So, in a conflict he could have sat around and complained about the people who made trouble for him. He could have complained about the hard rocks under the ground. And he could have thrown his shovel down and quit.

But he did not do that. He did not give up. He continued digging and digging. He persevered. Isaac solved opposition and adversity by perseverance. He refused to get discouraged by the trouble caused by the jealous people.

And God helped him overcome all those troubles and to get the wells that he needed.

Through Isaac's example God shows us how we can receive His gracious blessing in adversity.

If you want to be victorious in spite of adversity, you have to persevere with faith in God's promise. James 1:2-4 says, *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*

There was a man who had to live under constant adversities. When he was seven years old, his family was forced out of their home on a legal technicality, and he had to work to help support them. At age nine, his mother died. At 22, he lost his job as a store clerk. He wanted to go to law school, but his education wasn't good enough. At 23, he went into debt to become a partner in a small store. At 26, his business partner died, leaving him a huge debt that took years to repay. At 28, after courting a girl for four years, he asked her to marry him. She said no. At 37, on his third try he was elected to Congress, but two years later, he failed to be reelected. At 41, his four-year-old son died. At 45, he ran for the Senate and lost. At 47, he failed as the vice-presidential candidate. At 49, he ran for the Senate again, and lost. At 51, he was elected president of the United States. His name was Abraham Lincoln, a man many consider the greatest leader the country ever had.

There is no life without adversities. Even if we believe in God, God does not get rid of adversities from our lives. But God enables us to persevere and overcome all adversities. Persevere all trials with faith in God's goodness and keep doing your task. And God will enable you to pass through all adversities until you receive His gracious blessing.