

Wellsprings of Revival

Part 2 – Helps to Revival

Text: Gen. 26:23-35

Introduction:

1. The name of Isaac is associated with ‘wells’ seven times in this chapter. “A well differs from a cistern, in that it is the place of running water. What a marvellous hint of the typical meaning of Isaac’s well that is found in Genesis 26:19 – “springing water”. Water is imperative for the maintenance of the natural life; so, too, is it with the spiritual. The first need of the believer is the “living water”, that is, the Spirit acting through the Word.” (Pink)
2. The well of springing water typifies the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. John 7:37-39 “In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** (But this spake he of **the Spirit**, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”
3. We are following the theme of wells as they relate to this period of Isaac’s life and the spiritual lessons and applications we can learn along the way. In our last lesson we covered the first point of the outline which we will review before studying the final two.
 - The Re-Digging of the Wells (Vs. 15-22)
 - The Revelation by the Well (Vs. 23-25)
 - The Reconciliation at the Well (Vs. 26-35)

I. THE RE-DIGGING OF THE WELLS (VS. 15-22)

A. The Coming back to the Wells (Vs. 15-18)

In this section we see Isaac going back – back to the wells of Abraham his father, back to Beersheba, the place of blessing, back to the tent and the altar and back to fellowship with God. In order to go forwards you have to go back to the basics and back to the place you should never have left in the first place. Some Christians stray from the Lord and seem to never fully recover. Both Abraham and Isaac recovered from their spiritual detours!

B. The Clogging up of the Wells (Vs. 15)

The problem was not that the water had gone. The supply of water was still there in those ancient wells. The obstacle that stood between Isaac and the life giving, refreshing springs of water was the dirt of the Philistines. In revival there must not only be a return back to the truth but also a removal of the **hindrances** and **blockages** to revival. Like Isaac of old, we need to seek to remove the dirt of the Philistines from our lives so that we can know a greater measure of the Spirit’s reviving work in our lives. The hindrances to revival must be removed! Let’s

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consider what this dirt of the Philistines might represent in our lives. There is:

1. The dirt of a Philistine world – we need to remove the devil's dirt from our lives.
2. The dirt of Philistine living – we need to remove the dirt of unconfessed sin in our lives as it is a major blockage and hindrance to true revival.
3. The dirt of a Philistine nature – The Philistine, Adamic nature can dump a lot of dirt in our lives if we do not keep it at the place of death with the help of the Holy Spirit.
4. The dirt of Philistine doctrine – how often the wellsprings of truth and blessing get buried beneath layers of false doctrine.

C. The Clearing out of the Wells (Vs. 18-19)

What is the solution to the dirt and rubbish of the Philistines? Very simple. It has to be cleared out by the believer. The Philistines would not remove it for Isaac nor would the dirt go away on its own. Isaac and his servants had to put time and effort into re-digging the wells. The water was still there and available but the hindrances had to be removed before they could know blessing. **True recovery from backslidden living takes time and effort as you deal with the layers of Philistine dirt that have been packed down in your life (personal testimony).** How can we clear out the dirt in our lives so that we can know revival blessings again?

1. Confession – 1 John 1:9 “If we **confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Humbling ourselves before God in brokenness over our sin is where the process starts. Psalm 51:16-17 “For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it*: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: **a broken and a contrite heart**, O God, thou wilt not despise.”
2. Cleansing – 2 Cor. 7:1 “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us **cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit**, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” What a striking command! God has made the provision for our cleansing but we must actively avail ourselves of it. We can avail ourselves of:
 - a. The cleansing of the Blood – 1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**”
 - b. The cleansing of the Word – Psalm 119:9 “BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man **cleanse his way?** by taking heed *thereto* **according to thy word.**” John 15:3 “Now ye are **clean through the word** which I have spoken unto you.” Eph. 5:26 “That he might **sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,**”
3. Change – 2 Chr. 7:14 “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and **turn from their wicked ways**; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” Prov. 28:13 “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso **confesseth and**

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forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.” True repentance results in a change of life by the power of God. Don’t just confess your sins, forsake them by God’s grace!

4. The Cross – Gal. 2:20 “**I am crucified with Christ**: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Only the cross is powerful enough to hold the corrupt self-life at the place of death. Romans 6:6 “**Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, **that henceforth we should not serve sin.**” The Holy Spirit is the One who makes this a practical reality in our lives – Romans 8:13 “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye **through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body**, ye shall live.”

D. The Conflict over the Wells (Vs. 20-22)

1. Isaac renames the wells the same names that his father Abraham had called them. The names of the wells give some insights into the conflict that raged over them.
 - a. Esek = means the Quarrel Well or “contention”.
 - b. Sitnah = means the Hatred Well.
 - c. Rehoboth = means the Well of Ample Room or “enlargement”.
2. There are some principles we can learn from these struggles over the wells.
 - a. **Firstly**, each generation must face and fight the same battles of the godly saints that have gone on before in order to maintain spiritual life and vitality. Abraham had faced conflict over these same wells with the Philistines (See Gen. 21:25). The time must come when the next generation speaks with the enemies in the gate (Psalm 127:5). Sadly, all too often the next generation surrenders their spiritual inheritance to the Philistines and is not willing to stand for the old wells of blessing.
 - b. **Secondly**, we are reminded that if we get serious about re-digging spiritual wells in our lives, we need to be prepared for a fight with the world, the flesh and the devil who will bitterly oppose you! The devil hates the victorious Christian life and will do all in his power to oppose you drawing on the wellsprings of the Spirit in your life.

II. THE REVELATION BY THE WELL (VS. 23-25)

Isaac now returns to Beersheba, presumably the place he left originally when he went into Philistia. As mentioned previously, in this section we see Isaac going back – back to the wells of Abraham his father, back to Beersheba, the place of blessing, back to the tent and the altar and back to fellowship with God.

A. The Place of Beersheba (Vs. 23)

1. Beersheba was an important place to the Patriarchs and was approximately 30 kilometres inland (southwest direction) from Gerar.

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2. The expression “from Dan to Beersheba” was used to describe the extent of the nation Israel north to south (Jug. 20:1; 1 Sa. 3:20; 2 Sa. 3:10; 24:2).
3. Summary of Beersheba by D. Cloud
 - a. Biblical History: It was named “well of the seven oath” by Abraham at his covenant with Abimelech (Ge. 21:28-31) Abraham and Isaac spent much time here (Ge. 21:33 - 22:1, 19; 26:31; 28:10). Abraham sent Hagar away from here (Ge. 21:14). Abraham planted a grove there and called on the name of the Lord (Ge. 21:33). Abraham travelled from there to Moriah to offer Isaac (Ge. 22:19). God appeared to Isaac here (Ge. 26:23-25). Jacob left here on his journey to Haran (Ge. 28:10). Jacob stopped here on his way to Egypt and offered sacrifices to God (Ge. 46:1). - It was allotted to the tribe of Simeon (Jos. 19:2). Simeon’s allotment was in the midst of Judah’s. - Elijah left his servant here when he went a day’s journey into the wilderness (1 Ki. 19:1-4).
 - b. Modern History: The Battle of Beersheba, October 31, 1917, was a major battle in the British war with the Turks in Palestine. A force of 800 Australian light horse made a frontal assault against roughly 4,000 Ottoman forces who were well dug in and led by German officers. The 4th Light Horse Brigade had already ridden 60 miles across the desert that day, but in the late afternoon they attacked, riding more than two miles across desert in the face of artillery, rifle, and machine gun fire. They rode their horses at a walk the first mile, cantered a short distance, then charged at a full gallop, supported by British artillery. The defenders hesitated in mounting an aggressive response, wrongly expecting them to dismount and attack with rifles, since that was the normal tactic of light horsemen. The city was captured before nightfall. The victory at Beersheba opened the road to Jerusalem and Damascus and led to the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the loss of Palestine to Muslim rule.

B. The Position of Beersheba – ‘up’ (Vs. 23)

1. Isaac is moving ‘up’ again in his walk of faith. He is going back to the tried and tested place of blessing and fellowship with God. Perhaps the Lord was allowing the conflict to move Isaac back to Beersheba, the place of blessing.
2. Don’t miss this vital principle of spiritual recovery. Before you can go upwards and forwards, you must first go backwards – not going backwards in the sense of backsliding but in the sense of returning to the place of consecrated fellowship with God. Back to the Lord and His Word!
3. Sadly, for so many, they drift aimlessly in Philistine territory for the rest of their Christian lives rather than going back to the place of wholehearted consecration to the Lord.

C. The Promise at Beersheba (Vs. 24)

Significantly, as soon as Isaac returns to Beersheba, the Lord appears unto him.

1. The moment of the appearance (Vs. 24a)

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- a. The LORD appeared to Isaac “the same night” of his arrival in Beersheba. This is a wonderful encouragement! No sooner had Isaac returned to Beersheba, the presence of the Lord was made manifest in His life in a fresh way, a confirmation that He was back where God wanted him to be.
 - b. While we should not expect a visible appearance of the Lord in our lives in this dispensation, we can expect to know God’s presence by the Spirit when we take steps to return to close fellowship with Him.
2. The message in the appearance (Vs. 24b)
There are several beautiful strands of truth in God’s words to Isaac.
- a. The Person of God – “I am the God of Abraham thy father”. God declares the truth of His Person to Isaac. He is the same God who Abraham had served, the One True God and Creator of all. What an amazing truth that God is a Personal God – One we can know and One with Whom we can have a relationship. We serve the same God today. He is the same God as He was all those years ago to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
 - b. The Presence of God – “fear not, for I am with thee”. God’s presence never leaves the genuine child of God but we lose the comfort and the experience of God’s presence when we grieve Him. When we take steps to clear out the spiritual blockages from our lives and return to close fellowship with God, we experience the Lord’s presence afresh in our lives.
 - c. The Promise of God – “and will bless thee and multiply thy seed”. God promises that His blessing would be upon Isaac and that a specific part of that would be the multiplication of his seed. It is interesting to note that this blessing upon Isaac is connected to the life of godly Abraham – “for my servant Abraham’s sake”. Abraham’s godly walk was still bearing fruit in his son’s life well after he had gone.

D. The Prayer at Beersheba (Vs. 25)

We now have reference to the altar and the tent, two objects that were prominent in Abraham’s walk of faith. If we are going to know spiritual revival in our lives, we need to get back to the truths these two objects represent.

1. The prayer filled life – the altar.
 - a. The altar in both Abraham and Isaac’s life represented prayer. Isaac followed Abraham’s godly example – “And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he **builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.**” (Gen. 12:8) The altar is mentioned in connection with Abraham at least 5 times (Gen. 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18).
 - b. Altars in the Old Testament are also associated with blood sacrifices. We are reminded that prayer is made possible through the work of the cross and the mediation of Christ our Saviour.
2. The pilgrim life – the tent.

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- a. The tent was a portable dwelling place that pictures the pilgrim life. The tent dweller does not have a permanent home and often moves from place to place.
- b. As believers, we are to maintain a pilgrim mindset in our approach to this world and the things of this life. Like Abraham, we are anticipating and traveling to “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).
- c. Wiersbe writes, “**A fugitive is fleeing from home; a vagabond has no home; a stranger is away from home; but a pilgrim is heading home.**” The body we live in is our “tent”; one day it will be taken down and we’ll go to the heavenly city (2 Cor. 5:1-8)

III. THE RECONCILIATION AT THE WELL (VS. 26-35)

A. The Request for a Treaty (Vs. 26-29)

1. The Testimony that inspired the Treaty (Vs. 26-28)
 - a. Now that Isaac is back in a place of spiritual victory and blessing, his godly testimony begins to have an impact. A good testimony that has an impact on the world around us does not, as some claim, mean compromising with the Philistines. On the contrary, it is the separated, Spirit-filled believer who will by God’s grace have an impact for God on his/her generation.
 - b. W.H. Griffith Thomas writes, “The importance of separation from the world is here seen – As long as Isaac was in or near Gerar he did not experience much happiness. He was envied, thwarted, and opposed by the jealous Philistines. He was wanting not only in happiness but also in power, for it was not until he returned to Beersheba that Abimelech came to him bearing testimony to his conviction that God was with Isaac and blessing him. Thus, for happiness, comfort and power with others, separation from the world is an absolute necessity. There is no greater mistake possible than to imagine that we can be one with the world and yet influence them for Christ...Separation from the world, paradoxical though it may seem, is the only true way of influencing the world for Christ.”
 - c. King Abimelech, Phicol, the chief captain of his army, and Abimelech’s friend Ahuzzath come seeking a peace treaty with Isaac. The reason stated by Abimelech is truly remarkable – “**We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee**”. In verse 29 he also acknowledges “**thou art now the blessed of the LORD**”.
 - d. It is a truly wonderful thing when we so walk with God that the unsaved around us recognize a difference in our lives. Can your unsaved family, friends and work contacts see that God is with you in all you do? Do you have the kind of testimony that would even prompt them to approach you to ask “you a reason of the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). We need to be a witness both by our **life** and with our **lips**.
2. The Terms of the Treaty (Vs. 29)

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- a. The request was for a non-aggression pact – “That thou wilt do us no hurt”.
- b. Isaac, unlike Abraham, did not rebuke Abimelech for the misconduct of his men regarding the wells (Compare Gen. 21:22-34). Abimelech’s claim was incredulous in light of what had actually transpired! (Vs. 29) While Isaac’s desire to be a peacemaker is commendable, he had a tendency to be too passive at times, putting personal peace ahead of principle.

B. The Ratifying of the Treaty (Vs. 30-33)

The treaty was ratified with:

1. The ceremonial meal (Vs. 30)
2. The covenant (Vs. 31)
 - a. Abimelech and his men depart from Isaac **“in peace”**. This event in Isaac’s life reminds us of the truth of Proverbs 16:7 “When a man’s ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”
 - b. Note: This says something of Isaac’s character. After all the bitter contention the Philistines had caused him over the wells of water, he was still prepared to make peace. Challenge – think of a scenario where the person who has caused the most hurt in your life showed up with a desire to make peace and reconcile. How would you respond? Would it be a feast or a fist?!
 - c. Romans 12:18 exhorts us, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”
 - d. “There was a real meekness and gentleness in Isaac’s life. Meekness means the self-sacrifice of our own desires and interests, and in this spirit of gentleness is the secret of truest character and finest victory over self and others. Egoism is always a cause of weakness, for constant consideration of ourselves is so absorbing that it tends to rob us of the very finest powers of our character. On the other hand, as we cease to regard self and concentrate attention upon others, we find our own character becoming stronger as it becomes more unselfish, and with that is quickly added influence over others, a beautiful recommendation of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (W.H. Griffith Thomas)
3. The contrast (Vs. 34-35)
 - a. Isaac was at peace with his neighbours, but he had war at home.
 - b. These concluding verses of the chapter give us an insight into Esau’s character and make us wonder how Isaac would consider giving him the blessing in the next chapter.

Conclusion: Will we seek with God’s help to clear out the blockages in our lives so we can know God’s blessing in a new and fresh way? Will you take steps to go back to the place of biblical blessing in your walk?