

Wells of the Philistines stopped

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[0 : 00] Now let us turn this morning and consider for a short time as we are enabled words that we have read in Genesis 26. We take verse 18 for our consideration.

Genesis 26 and verse 18. And Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father. For the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham.

And he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley and found there a well of springing water.

A well of living water as it is or as it can be translated. Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father.

It's serious indeed when we are deprived of the essentials of life. Supposing that the resources that we depend upon today by way of food or by way of shelter were denied us.

[1 : 16] Then very soon we would all perish. When our forebears sought out settlements. They made sure that these settlements were near water.

Because water is something that you cannot do without. And so we read here that wherever Abraham went in his nomadic wanderings.

He made sure that he found water to provide for his own needs. For the needs of his servants. And for the needs of his cattle. And his story, the story of Abraham is well enough known.

God blessed this great man. And God made him exceedingly prosperous. But remember this. You cannot be the object of God's favour for very long. Without exciting the opposition and the hatred of the devil.

[2 : 24] And of those who are alien to God. And Isaac, Abraham's son, discovered this to his cost. The wells that Abraham had dug for his personal needs were stopped, it tells us, by the Philistines.

After the patriarch's death. Now in desert warfare. The stopping of wells was resorted to in order to impoverish.

And in order to destroy your opponent. And so the Philistines attempted to prevent this precious water from reaching Isaac.

In order to bring the prosperity of Isaac to an end. And thereby to destroy him. Now why? Because Isaac was a good man.

He was Abraham's divinely appointed or promised son. Here was a young man who was instructed.

[3 : 33] And you can be sure of this. That he was well instructed by his father Abraham. And by his mother Sarah. Well instructed in the ways of God.

And if you read carefully the story of Isaac. You will discover that he was a man who humbly submitted. To the will of God. Whatever that will for him was.

And not only that. But he was a man who was fervent in prayer. Do you remember when his father sent his servant away. To his own homeland.

To find for his son Isaac a wife. It tells us that Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide.

Now if you study that text. You will discover that that word meditate means pray. And here was this man.

[4 : 35] And a momentous decision was being made for him in his life. He himself had no control over the decision. But this momentous decision was being made for him in life.

And so he went to the field and he prayed. Prayed to almighty God that this decision which was going to affect him. And going to affect his offspring.

If God should give him an offspring. And so he prayed that it might be the right decision. And of course it was the right decision.

Rebecca was presented to him. But we are not concerned at the moment with Isaac's romance. We are concerned with this attempt to deprive him of his very existence.

We are concerned with this.

[6 : 01] For his monstrous iniquity. And so these Philistines were descended from Ham. And as the descendants of Ham they were opposed to God.

And consequently they were opposed to Abraham who was the friend of God. And therefore they were opposed to Isaac. Abraham's son. And to express their enmity.

They attempted to withhold from Isaac. What was vital to him. And what was vital to him was water. And for Isaac to survive meant that he had to re-dig.

The wells of his father. And that was going to cost him effort. And it was going to cost him energy. And I want us to consider this from a spiritual point of view.

In our land today at present. The spiritual resources have been blocked by the Philistines.

[7 : 14] Our spiritual resources today. Our spiritual resources today are blocked by the enemies of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And just as water is imperative for natural life. So spiritual water is imperative for spiritual life.

And that is not a spiritual purpose. And that is not a spiritual purpose. But what has happened is this. That over the years. Ungodly men have gained control. Over the important areas of influence. And they have stopped the wells that had been dug by our forebears. Let us just think of some of the wells that have been stopped.

There are certain parliamentarians. And oh they have succeeded. And they have succeeded well.

[8 : 17] In reversing the good laws. Good laws that had been based upon Christian principles. And these parliamentarians have reversed these good laws.

The Philistines have blocked the wells. Or it may be certain educationists.

Who have altered what was good and wholesome in education. What was orientated to biblical truth. And these present day educationists have said.

Oh these things are old fashioned. We no longer live according to the old Victorian ethic. And so they have blocked the wells. It's when you sit down.

And you ask your son or your daughter. Who is in fourth, fifth or sixth year at school. And you say to your son or daughter. Let me see your textbook in English. And he hands you over. Maybe one of the books that he has been given in English.

[9 : 25] And you read it. Sometimes you are appalled. Is this the literature that they are being given? It might be the story called Billy Lyall.

One of the prescribed textbooks. Maybe you don't take an interest in what they are reading. But if you do. You are profoundly disturbed. Is this what our children are being taught?

You see the educationists. The Philistines. They have blocked the wells. Or then there are those who are in control of the media.

It might be print journalism. It might be radio. It might be television. And they have set aside Christian morality.

And they have set it aside in favour of what is unwholesome. And what is degrading. Oh I say the Philistines have had their field day.

[10 : 31] They have stopped the wells of unsullied life giving water. Which had been opened by former generations. And like Isaac we have got to dig again.

The wells of water that they digged in the days of Abraham. Let's consider what we have lost. And what we have got to try and recover by the grace of God.

Well what we have lost first and foremost is the authority of the Bible. That has been lost. You see in the past.

Authority in philosophy. Lay in human reason. Authority in Roman Catholicism.

Lay in the church. Authority in Protestantism. Lay in the Bible.

[11 : 40] But today authority in Protestantism. No longer lies in the Bible. And the Bible no longer holds the supreme place in the hearts of the majority of Protestants.

Protestants today couldn't care less about the Bible. They are not interested in the Bible. Or what the Bible is saying to them. And the tragic fact is this.

That in many of the churches up and down our land. So called Christian people. People who are supposed to be the people of the book.

Have discarded the Bible. The Bible has been under attack for over a century.

And the fiercest form of attack has so very often come from within the church itself. Biblical scholars of the modernistic school.

[12 : 49] And there are still plenty of them around. Biblical scholars of the modernistic school have openly and avowedly set out to discredit and to call in question the reliability of the scriptures.

euchrealey Un■ And what has happened is this.

The well of scripture has been fouled by the philistines. It means that you are denying to countless numbers, to millions, the truth of God.

And today, countless numbers in the world are perishing. Because the water of life is being denied. Do you sometimes pass a modernistic church?

And we know where the modernistic churches are. At least we know some of them. I've often passed them. Crowds of people going there. And I say to myself, oh, if only that man could preach the gospel.

[14 : 09] If only that man could present to these people Christ. The authority of Christ and the authority of the scriptures. What a different township we would be living in.

And what a different country our country would become. You see, we must open up this well. We must allow the pure truth of God to flow once more.

The authority of the Bible must be reestablished. So that men and women will be able to hear God speaking to them. God speaking to them either by way of commandment.

By way of exhortation. By way of warning. By way of comfort. By way of guidance. By way of guidance. The thus saith the Lord of the Bible must be proclaimed.

Isaac digged again. The wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father.

[15 : 17] We have lost the authority of the Bible. And the battle for the Bible is joined.

And this is one of the major tasks of the church today. To recover the authority of God's scriptures. And with the loss of the authority of the scriptures.

We have lost the teaching of the Bible. To our cost. And it's imperative that we recover that teaching.

Now in a comprehensive survey like this. We don't have the time to go over all the teaching of the Bible. That would take us weeks, months, years.

But what we can do in a short survey like this. Is consider the basic doctrines that are being withheld from men and women. There is first of all the doctrine of God.

[16 : 25] And I suggest to you that the doctrine of God has been clogged. By the fanciful theories of men.

Until God is presented as a vague idea. You ask people today. Who is God? What do you think God is? They haven't a clue.

God is something vague. Or even the idea is entertained by many.

That God is just a useless non-entity. And the sooner we get rid of God the better. So that respect and reverence for God have gone.

Isn't that true? Respect and reverence for God have gone. God's holy name is taken upon profane lips and blasphemed.

[17 : 32] And you know God's name today is used as a concert hall joke. Or as an expletive by men.

We must dig this well again. And make men realize that God's name is not for banding about.

In the form of fun. We must bring it to the attention of men that God's name is for real.

That God is true. That God is holy. And you dare not trifle with God. God is the supreme being.

God is the creator. God is the one who can destroy us. Whenever he wills. And God is the one to whom we are accountable at the end of our lives.

[18 : 47] And when you hear men today making fun of God. And when you hear today men making God's word just an expletive.

You say to yourself. I wouldn't like to be in their shoes. And your heart's sorry for them. The Philistines.

Have clogged the well. Then there is the doctrine of men. Or as it is called in theology.

Anthropology. Man is regarded today as a creature who has evolved. And he is regarded as superior in every way.

And man is regarded by in present day thought as decent. Basically a decent character.

[19 : 51] And another thing that is given credence about men. And that is that he is pivotal. That everything else is subservient to him.

The result is that man doesn't feel that he is lost. Isn't that the thinking of the majority of people in Inver?

They don't think that they are lost. They don't think that they need a saviour. And the idea. And if you suggest this idea to them.

They are rather angry with you. The idea that you should call them a condemned sinner. Oh that has been dismissed. They won't have that.

That won't wear at all. And because God has been dismissed. From the thinking of men.

[20 : 49] And because men think that what they are and what they are. That they are what they are. What has happened. Man has become brutal.

Man has become bestial. Man has given over to horrific violence. And man has given over to degrading immorality.

Indeed a man will do what even the beasts of the field won't do. In the way of immorality. We have got to dig this well.

That the Philistines have choked. We have got to allow the truth of God to flow. Which asserts that man is a creature of moral dignity.

But he has fallen. And that what man needs today more than anything else. Is the saving grace of God. That man can only be renewed.

[22 : 02] And refined. When he recognises the claims of almighty God upon him. Do you know that one of the things that we lack in this age.

Is refinement. Let me repeat the word. Refinement. Refinement. And men and women today.

Have really become boorish. And in spite of all our education. The old way of manners.

Has gone. Refinement. And we become a most unmannerly people. We allow the well to get choked.

We have allowed the Philistines to clog up this well. It's time it was opened. It's time that we listen to God's truth.

[23 : 03] Which can refine a man. And make him into a creature of refinement. You get. And I don't mean to belittle any person at all.

But you get a person who's come from a very poor background. A very tinkerish background. I'm not meaning to belittle anyone. I'm only taking this as an example. Take that man that comes from a tinkerish background.

Or that woman. He's converted by the grace of God. My. What a change. What refinement of character. When Christian principles begin to dictate the man's life.

He becomes decent. Mannerly. Courteous. And that's what we need today. Isn't it? In our society. It's such a boorish society.

What about the teaching of redemption or soteriology. As it is called in theology. The fact that God has provided a savior for lost men in the person of his own son.

[24 : 17] But you see in our day Christ Jesus has been dismissed. On the one hand as a mythical figure. While on the other he is merely regarded as a superior man.

Who has set before us an unparalleled example of goodness. Oh the Philistines have succeeded in blinding the eyes of men and women so that they cannot see Christ.

As God's only begotten son. The savior of the world. The savior of the world. The savior of the world. This well must be unstopped. And men must be told that Christ.

And Christ alone is the way, the truth and the life. Men must be told that their only hope lies in Jesus. That Jesus is the living one.

Who came down from heaven and who gives life to the spiritually dead. He and only he has the water of life to give.

[25 : 30] Just as Jesus reminded the woman at Syker's well of her basic need which was spiritual life. So it is with us today. The well of salvation has to be unstopped.

Christ Jesus has to be presented to men and women as the savior whom they desperately need. Or we could go on and speak about the doctrine of the church, ecclesiology.

Or the doctrine of the last things, eschatology. But we haven't got the time. Suffice it to say that the church must be given her rightful place in society as the custodian of God's truth.

But, and this is the but, the church must earn that place by her returning to faithfulness.

The church must return to faithfulness to her God. The church must return to faithfulness to her only head, Jesus Christ.

[26 : 49] And until the church does that, she will have the kind of place that she deserves in society. And that is on the perimeter.

And the teaching too, the eschatological teaching, the teaching of Christ's return in glory. The coming again of Jesus.

the teaching of Christ's return in glory. The teaching of Christ's return in glory. The teaching of a new heaven and a new earth that's going to be created, wherein dwells righteousness. Something for men and women to look forward to.

The wells that have been for so long stopped by the enemies of the gospel, must be opened. And Isaac digged again the wells of water, or the life-giving water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father.

Time is going on, but I don't want to finish there. One or two things I want to say. How do we recover what has been lost?

[28 : 09] We must do what Isaac did. Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they digged in the days of Abraham his father.

In other words, we must return to God, the original source of life. We must go back to the old truths, the old ways.

You know, some think that what we have to do in the light of prevailing godlessness is to turn to the experts in new methods in order to introduce novelty of one kind or another into the life of the church.

We must change everything in favor of what is new, that is what is being said. Now, we don't suggest that we retain dead and lifeless orthodoxy just for the sake of remaining the same.

That's to die. We mustn't stagnate as a church.

[29 : 34] We must stagnate as a church. Where we can improve without compromise of principle, we must improve. But what we must do more than anything else is get back to the basics.

That's what we've got to do, get back to the basics. Get back to God. Get back to his word.

Get back to his doctrines. Get back to his word. Get back to his word. Get back to his word. We must dig again the wells of Abraham by going back to the God of Abraham and by going back to the faith of Abraham.

And we have to apply ourselves to this task of recovery with energy and effort. It wasn't an easy thing for Isaac and his men to re-dig these wells.

The rubbish had to be got rid of. Had to be thrown aside. And that meant that hours of toil had to be given to the task and sweat had to be expended.

[30 : 56] And our task of recovering what has been clogged through the work of atheists, through the work of agnostics, through the work of heretics, through the work of cultists, through the work of modernists, will be costly and it won't be easy.

But we must apply ourselves by exposing error when it has to be exposed and by witnessing for Christ however and whenever we can and by praying for revival without abatement.

I speak to you, Christian friend, you've got a task. And your task is not easy.

For years you've been longing perhaps for a revival to come, for a quickening, for power. I've been longing for it. But it's going to cost us effort.

It's going to cost us toil. It's going to cost us sweat. And there are days when you feel like giving up and when you feel like, when you say to yourself, what's the good of carrying on?

[32 : 29] Sometimes the devil comes and he says, put the key in the door of the free north, lock the door, shut it and leave it. It's a museum piece. And that's when you've got to get up and shake yourself by the grace of God and apply yourself once more and give yourself no rest.

But by the grace of God, put effort into it until we reach the streams, until we've got rid of the dross and the dirt, until we've got rid of the rubbish and until once more the streams begin to flow.

No difficulty must prevent us from opening the life-giving wells of salvation that have been blocked by evil and misguided men. Let us do all that we can.

1981 has become, what has come. I was coming to the New Year's Day service and the Reverend John MacLeod, the retired minister from Gerlach, was coming along too.

He said, maybe he said, this will be the year of the Jubilee. Wouldn't it be wonderful if it was the year of the Jubilee? The trumpet sounding, the grace of God abounding, the joy, the happiness, the power of God.

[34 : 20] Let us dig again the wells of Abraham. Let's unstop these wells. Let us believe in God and work for the glory of God.

Even if it means we've got to die for it, it's worth it. It's worth it. It's worth spending a lifetime. And it's worth dying for that the wells might be opened.

Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we pray that thou was give to us the grace and the determination and the zeal and the energy, all that we need in order that we might unstop the wells that have been clogged up for so long, in order that the life-giving streams of thy river of grace might flow to the world of men.

Gracious God, may we not be weary in well-doing, but may we remember that we shall reap if we faint not in due time.

Graciously be pleased to give to us the spirit of application to the work that lies before us as a congregation. Give to us, we pray thee, a united spirit together that we may wrestle at the throne of grace, that we may pray earnestly and fervently without abatement until the day comes when the blessing descends.

[36 : 08] Take away our sins and take us to our homes in safety. For Jesus' sake we ask it. Amen.