

I. The Measure of Spiritual Growth

Last time we were together, we finished John chapter 3, and we are about to enter into John chapter 4 today. Last week, we saw what I think is probably the simplest reason why God's people really do not grow spiritually. You talk to people, and everybody has their perception on things and why this and why that. But the fact is that when we got saved, God gave us all of the Holy Spirit of God that there was. You were complete in Him; there is no question about that.

We saw last week how Jesus got the Spirit of God without measure. You and I got it the day we got saved without measure. The Bible says that He puts all things into our hands at that point in time. We have talked about it many, many times.

Philippians 1:6

God saved us for a purpose. It was not just to get us out of going to hell; I thank God for that, but there was much more to it than that. God needs us to fulfill the work which He started. Salvation comes with an obligation. Salvation comes with responsibility. It comes with accountability, and of course, to finish the work. In Philippians 1:6, He has a good work in you, performing it until the day of Jesus Christ.

We also learned last week that even though He gives us the Spirit of God without measure, when it comes to grace and faith, we get that by measure. We defined what that means last week because that can be hard for some people to grasp. It simply means that when you got saved, He just gave us enough grace and faith on our part to believe what the Bible said about salvation. It is not about having faith now to move a mountain or faith now to go do this or do that. No, no, no. He gave that to us by measure, just enough for us to find the Lord Jesus Christ as our own personal Savior.

Then, as we, through the Holy Spirit of God, the Word of God, and we talked about the importance of the New Testament local church as God's structure, we allow God to develop us, bringing us to the point where we really become what the Bible says: a full measure of the stature of Christ. I did not give you this verse last week because I purposely wanted to keep it for today, but after looking at last week, now you can see how this all works.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

We talked about last week how the Christian world today wants to tell you that you have one spiritual gift, and you define that and you develop it, and then maybe you have some secondary gifts. We talked about how heretical that is in its concept. Now this verse tells us very clearly that this is where it is at. This is our final goal of spiritual growth: growing up unto the measure of the stature of Christ. Whatever power Christ had, whatever ability He had, whatever gifts He had, you have.

Verse 14 talks about the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Then it says in verse 14, sound doctrine, that you are not blown about by every goofy thing that is out there today that the world and Christianity tries to put forth. Then, one of my favorite verses in the Bible, "But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him," not unto Him. You are to grow up into Him every day of your life, becoming more like the Lord Jesus Christ as you develop your grace and your faith, and one of these days come to the place of the full measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

II. The Role of the New Testament Local Church

In all my years in the ministry, it has always amazed me. I have had people at every aspect of my ministry over the years who always come to me, whining and complaining because they do not have anybody to work with. I have had people say, "Well, you give other people to disciple; why won't you give me somebody?" Well, I have some news for you: I have not given somebody to disciple for a long, long, long time. That is because when people come into this church, in most cases, the person that brought them in is the one whom they ask to disciple them.

I have seen that throughout my ministry, and it is always the same story: they make no real investment in the church. They do not really do anything here, and yet they want to, they think they deserve on a silver platter, somebody to work with. Everybody in my ministry, you work with me. This is the reason why I started the people ministry and the Bible Institute: to take a core of people who really wanted to get on baseline with me in ministry. Look what God has done with that. Anybody who works with me in that area, you have more people than you can deal with. I feel bad sometimes with the load that you carry.

That is just the way it is. Our people ministry was created for just that purpose, that you understand my mindset. I can teach you the finer points of dealing with people and then get out of the way. God takes you and uses you. When God does not use somebody, I hate to use the word "refuse," but when God will not use somebody, I have been in this business a long time. It is the same way with churches. When churches lose the Bible, when they lose God, they just have to make up stuff. They have to now reinvent ministry. Now they have to bring something else in other than the Bible to keep people coming.

The most dangerous position any Christian can be in is to be outside the structure of a New Testament local church, because when you have to decide and make up your mind what is your ministry and what is not, instead of the church telling you, you are in trouble. It is just that

simple. As you let God, through His structure, develop grace and faith to that full measure, you see this in Paul and Timothy's life. Those are two of the greatest examples in the New Testament. You actually get to see both of them from the beginning right up to pretty much the end. Certainly Paul; Timothy carries on after Paul. You do not hear much after the book of Acts closes out, but he obviously continues on.

You get to see the important part. You get to see that they are no different than you and me. They both got saved. They both were in a New Testament church, and that church developed them. That church said when they were ready to do the ministry; they did not decide for themselves, and that is a dangerous place to find yourself in. Whatever God calls you to do, once you put those things in your life, and you begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit, then God will give you the gifts of the Spirit and the power to do whatever job He calls for you to do.

The responsibility of any pastor, of any church, and it is the job, is to develop a process to develop you. Not leave you flapping in the wind out there, but developing a biblical process that gets you to the full measure of the stature of Christ. Along with that, the job of every Christian is to join a New Testament church and submit yourselves to that process that God can do it, because He will simply do it no other way. It does not get any clearer than that. It does not get any simpler than that.

III. Introduction to John Chapter 4 and the Concept of Wells

Today, we are going to enter into John chapter 4. What a chapter this is! In this chapter, we find another great study on salvation. Yet, in this chapter, there are so many other things to look at. I am not kidding you. This chapter is like when you go to your favorite restaurant and you get a loaded baked potato. This is it, man. You have those little brown things on this one. You have sour cream. You have butter. You have cheese. You have everything. You have anchovies. You have everything on it. I do not know if you have anchovies on a baked potato, but it is loaded, man. This chapter is loaded.

We will be here a while, I am just going to tell you. In fact, this is really, we saw the story of Nicodemus, and that kind of whetted our appetite because that was a great story. From this point on, you have John chapter 4, you have John chapter 5, John chapter 6, and off we go. This is some of the greatest material that you will ever get. The Gospel of John is filled with great stories that illustrate the great truths of the Bible.

We are going to take our time, and we are going to glean through this, and I am going to hopefully not miss any point of this that I think is important, and maybe even some that I do not think is important, just to give you it all. So let us read John chapter 4, verses 1 through 29. I know it is a lot to read, but let us go ahead and start into it.

When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.

And he must needs go through Samaria.

Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

Father, help us today to get into the Word of God. There is so much here today. Help me to be attentive to every point, every principle, every precept, Lord, that the Holy Spirit of God will just illuminate us this morning, illuminate me this morning, to be able to lay out. There is so much in this chapter. Help us, Lord, to glean. These are Your people. They are good people. They have come here today that they might receive something from the Word of God. Lord, I am not responsible for what they get; You are. I just know that I want to put myself in the place under the blood of Christ that You can use me as a vessel today to give them the truth of Your Word. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

This is an incredible story, one that is used many times to show people their need for salvation. This is why I had Danny sing the song this morning, "There is a River," because that song is built around the Book of Ezekiel, where the water comes out of the tabernacle and flows down to the rest of the world in the millennium. But it also deals with the story in John chapter 4. There was a woman, and she thirsted, and she needed salvation. So, over the next couple of weeks or months, or however long it takes, we are going to unlock all of this. This is just the beginning of what we are going to see in John.

I wanted to start today with the main concept that this story is built around, and I want to define it for you. I think it would be wrong to try to jump into this story and flesh out all the things that are here without you understanding a fundamental concept about this story. I want to talk to you today about verse 6, about Jacob's well, but in general, I want to talk to you about wells in the Bible. I think you need to understand how they are used in the Bible and how you can take a study of them, which would be an incredible study. It is a great study.

IV. The Symbolism of Water and Wells in Scripture

When you study wells in the Bible, we know this for sure:

Ephesians 5:26

Ephesians 5:26 tells us that the Word of God is likened to water. We know that. The Bible says, "by the washing of regeneration by the Word of God." We know that. Water in the Bible is a picture of the Word of God.

Back in Exodus, when they were out in the wilderness and they did not have anything to drink, a picture of the world system, and there was nothing to quench their thirst, Jesus smote the rock. That rock is a type of Christ. What came out? Water. The second time it happened, some 15 years later, they were again in a place where there was no water, and Christ is told to speak to the rock, and He disobeys when He smites it. But yet water comes out. That is a picture. That is a picture of Christ dying on the cross, being the rock of God that is smitten in the first one, and then brings forth the Word of God to us. In the second one, Moses messed up. He should have spoken to the rock because that one is a picture of after Christ is crucified in your life and my life. When you need water, you just come and speak to the rock, your prayer life. So we know that water is a picture of the Word of God.

Now, then we hear in the story, we want to talk about a well. A well will represent the depth of a man's relationship with the Word of God. There are some things I want you to get out of this today. A well will represent the depth of a man's relationship with the Word of God. You see in John 4:11 that a well is deep, and it has pure natural water that has been filtered up through the ground, the groundwater, and purified by the rocks.

Proverbs 20:5

In Proverbs 20:5, we are told that the heart of man is like deep water. Yet we are also told in Proverbs 10:11 that the mouth of a righteous man is a well of life. We also know the Bible says that once you have the Word of God in your heart and it becomes the water of life, the Bible says that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. A true Christian that has the true water and has a depth of the well or the water in his life, he solves problems. They do not cause problems. They do not gossip. They do not backbite. They do not cause all kinds of issues. Because the well in them is deep and the water is pure, then what comes out of their mouth is the purity of truth that only helps somebody.

Yet, in many cases, you will find a lot of God's people who are polluted wells. A saved man or a saved woman should be a deep well of water to people who are thirsty in this world.

Proverbs 25:25

As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

The water you and I have, if you are saved this morning, came out of the rock of God, and it needs to be a deep well in your life that you give others a drink because of the fact that it is something that you have. It is the good news that people need, and it did come from a far country; it came from heaven.

Last week, we said when you join a church and submit to its authority through the Word of God, then you have through that church, it will develop your faith and your grace. While you are doing all of that, you are basically, in our story today, digging a well. You are digging a well. The deeper you go, the sweeter the water. It is just that simple. The depth of God's people. Last week, we talked out of Hebrews chapter 5, where Paul said, "For what time you ought to be teachers." Somebody again has to teach you the fundamentals of the Bible. He is basically saying there are some of God's people who have been saved long enough that they should be taking somebody

else and teaching them the Word of God. But they are not. They do not get their water out of the rock.

Most of God's people do not really have a well. You know how you exist? You exist on drinking bottled water. You get it someplace else. Just like you go to Hy-Vee or you go to Walmart or you go to Sam's Club, and you store up on bottled water that they tell you is 100% pure and better than comes out of your drinking fountain. It may or may not be true. You are satisfied to drink that. God's people are the same way. They do not want to take the time to dig a well. It takes a lot of work to dig a well. It takes time to dig a well. But they want to do something for God. They want God to use them, so they foolishly do not have any depth to them in the Word of God. No well. They exist on bottled water. I am just telling you, the deeper you go in that book, I can tell you for a fact, the sweeter it gets. The depth of God's people.

Yet, the Bible tells us in 2 Peter 2:17 that some people, unsaved and saved people, they are wells without water. He tells us that. They are wells without water. These people are carried with a tempest. Everything in their life has a problem. They cannot do anything without an issue. They cannot do anything without some problem popping up. Their whole life is about drama of problems that they just cannot, and they can never figure it out. The reason is, you are a well without water. He says, "to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever." Now that is talking about an unsaved person; there is no question about that. But if you think there are God's people out there, that everything in their life, there is a conflict, there is a tempest, that every circumstance or situation, something bad has got to come out of it, they are wells without water. It is just that simple. Their well is a mud puddle. There is no purity to it.

Before we tackle Jacob's well in John chapter 4, I would like to lay out for you how the Bible takes the idea of a well and uses it throughout the Bible. I think you need to know this. I am just the kind of guy who just wants to jump into John 4 and mesmerize you with all the great things that are in there. If you do not understand why things are the way they are, if you do not understand why things are happening the way they are, I am going to tell you right now, then you are not going to get anything out of John chapter 4. You have got to get it, and before we tackle it, you need to understand.

V. Biblical Examples of Wells: Finding a Spouse

The first thing I want to look at, and these are just simple little things, and some of you know these. But allow me to put them into a working model for you. The first one very quickly is in Genesis chapter 24. You do not have to turn back there because to save time, I am not going to read all these lengthy passages. I am just going to talk about it and give you a basic understanding of how it works here. That is all we really need to do today.

In Genesis 24, if you do not know this, here is the story. You have Abraham, and he has a son, Isaac, and he wants a bride for his son. So he sends his eldest servant, whose name is Eliezer, out to find a bride for his son. When you come through that story in that chapter, it is a great story, and he is looking for, he has some parameters that he wants, he is looking for. He has some things that have some requirements that she has to follow. Then he finds who we all know and

love, Rebekah. He brings her back to Isaac, and obviously, they get married and live happily ever after.

Once you get past that historical story, which is absolutely true, we see how the Bible enlightens itself through the different applications that we can make through the typology. We now see that Abraham is a type of God the Father. We now see that Isaac is a type of Christ. We now see Eliezer as the type of the Holy Spirit of God. Lo and behold, when we see Rebekah, we find that Rebekah is not a Jew; she is a Gentile, so she pictures the Gentile. What you have here in a doctrinal sense is a picture of Christ, through the Holy Spirit of God, looking for a bride for His Son, sending out the Holy Spirit of God to find people who will come and be married to this man. It is a picture of you and me. You are Rebekah. There was a time in your life when the Holy Spirit of God came to you and said to you, "Will you go with this man?" If you are saved here this morning, you are saved because you simply said, "Yes, I will." It is a great story.

Now there is an inspirational side to this. The inspirational side will be within this story. Keep in mind now, you have God the Father sending out the Holy Spirit of God to find a bride for His Son. Within that story, there are 19 principles that Eliezer looks for. Nineteen of them. There were 19 things that had to be checked off his list for this Gentile bride to be the bride for Isaac. When we look at that, we find for you and for me, and there is a book on this back there, I think there is a book on this back there in the bookstore. We have taught it many, many times. You will find a great study for everybody here of the 19 principles you want to use to find a spouse, whether it is a husband or a wife. You are going to find that these 19 principles are what you go by. It is how you find a wife or a husband.

When you come down through this, and I am not going to go through all the 19 principles today, but when you come down through this, guess where he finds her? He finds her at the well. He did not find her down at the tool shed down here at the street. He did not find her on ChristianswithShingles.com. He did not find her at some other watering hole, some nightclub, some place that all the young people hang out. He found her at Jacob's well. He found her right there at the well where the water was. Not only did he find her at the well, but the next principle you want to find: she is good at working with the water that she gets out of the well.

You need to understand that when you look for a prospective husband or a wife, you have got to find them at the well. You do not find them in the back seat of a car. You do not find them in somebody's house. You do not even find them in church. You find them at the well, and you sit there, and you know what? When you look at that story, he just did not see the first lady that came up and run over her at the well. He watched her. He wanted to see what she could do with the animals that she had, and then he wanted to see what else she would do for his animals. This woman not only knows where the well is, she knows how to get the water out of the well and do something with it. That is what you are looking for.

If God's people would just follow that and leave their emotions out of it and put the Word of God and the principles in their world, there would not be any more Christians that get a divorce. There would not be any more bad marriages. There would not be any more breakups and issues and problems, but it has to start somewhere. This is why a well is such an incredible picture. It is

an incredible picture. I say that, and I have got to qualify what I say, because I am talking about in a perfect world. We have a lot of young kids here that are single that someday you are going to get married. So I have a responsibility, I feel, to not only help you, but to show you these things. I know many of you have spoken to me about it and you have followed us.

At the same time, you cannot preach a message like this and not find people who had never heard this, never knew this, and they got into a marriage or they got into a relationship. Now, it is like, "Boy, if I had known this 10 years ago, 15 years ago." I understand that. I am just going to tell you this. I am not going to get into all the ramifications, but I am going to tell you this: there is always something that you can do. God, even when we, through ignorance, get into a bad situation. Sometimes it is through ignorance; you did not know. I get that. Sometimes you did it anyhow. I get that. But even in that case, God never leaves you in a lurch. I do not care what you get into. I do not care what bad situation you find yourself in. I am going to tell you right now, God has a pathway out of it. It may not always be the easiest route, but it is a route.

VI. Biblical Examples of Wells: Digging Your Own Well

So then you have that one. What a picture of a well that is. Then our second one, and you are going to, I just love stories of wells in the Bible. Our second one, and the second thing I want you to understand, and then let me say this. I need to say this. Listen very carefully because this is very important: you have to dig your own well. In this church, I can give you the tools. I can show you how to use the tools. Depending on where you are at, you can either get a shovel or you can get a backhoe. But you have to, you have to, you have to dig it yourself.

Proverbs 5:15

Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

That is a great concept, and the key word there is "your own." A cistern is a stone container, which is not a rock, not like a pot, but a container. It is a place that you can store water that you get from the well. In other words, you cannot spiritually survive drinking out of other people's wells. It may work out for a short time once you get saved. Let us face it, when you get saved, you do not have much grace, you got it by measure, you do not have much faith. So you have to, and you do not know how to dig a well. So until we teach you how to do that, you have to basically drink out of somebody else's well. The discipleship one, discipleship two, bringing you through in a place along through here where you actually learn how to do that yourself.

It is a thing where you have to dig your own well, and then in time, you have to learn to store the water that you got out of that well. That is your Bible knowledge.

Psalms 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

You dig it out of the well, but then you have got to store it up someplace in a cistern, but it has to be your well, your own. You dig your own well, and then you store up the principles of what God has given you. Fresh water every day, stored up water that when drought comes. Boy, the drought will come. This is one of the greatest stories anywhere in the Bible. I like it. It is kind of

like a one-two punch. Last week, we saw the aspect of what it takes for you to grow spiritually. Now this week, we see about a well. Let us move into John chapter 4. Fresh water you get out of it every day, but then you have to store it up. Then of course, you saw in John chapter 4, not only do you store it up for when you have the drought in your own life, but you have to store it up so you can give it to others.

VII. Biblical Examples of Wells: Building a Family Through Wells

The next story I want you to see that will help you grasp the aspect and the concept of a well will just be a couple of chapters over in Genesis. Let us go to Genesis chapter 26. Genesis chapter 26 is a story about Isaac and God. He has grown up now, and God, he has a family, and God is sending him and his family into a strange land. He is told by God in Genesis 26:1-2 to get down into the land of the Philistines. People wonder sometimes when God told them to be separate from the other nations, why sometimes God sends them down into it. Well, it is a picture. This particular picture here is about me and my family, you and your family, being in the world but not part of this world, and God sending a family to a lost world. That is what you have as a picture here. Throughout this story, he digs a number of wells. Boy, this is where we want to look at some things now.

Here is the storyline. I do not want to get ahead of myself. Here is the storyline. Genesis 26:1-11. I did not read this either just to save some time. I will break the chapter down. You can listen to this again, or you can get the outline breakdown here and go back and do it yourself. Dig your own well. But here is the storyline. Verses 1 through 11, we are told that a famine hits the land, and God sends him and his family into the land of the Philistines. What follows in Genesis 26:12-14 is God blessing him and taking care of him in the land of the Philistines. The land of the Philistines for us is going to be a picture of the world system, just so you know that.

Now, He blesses him to the point. This is so important. You have got to see these things. There are things I want you to see here. He blesses him to the point in the land of the Philistines, which is a picture of the world. He blesses him to the point that the Bible says in Genesis 26:14 that the Philistines envied him. Let me just hold up here for a moment and just try to show you some things. That is what God wants in your life and my life. You and I are supposed to have the answers to life's issues. You and I are supposed to have the cold water for a thirsty soul. Wherever you work, wherever you go, the world, the Philistines, should look at your life, should look at your family, should look at your whole being as a Christian. They are empty. You are supposed to be full. They are empty. You are supposed to have everything that God has for you. The Bible already said that He put it all into your hand. You are supposed to have that.

Just like the Philistines looked at Isaac and his family and all the blessings of God that God did for them and envied him, that is what the world ought to want what you have as a child of God. Your life should be so blessed. Your life should be so full. Your life should be so unbelievable with God's blessings in it that the lost world, who has nothing, who is empty, who come to the

place that they are like that woman at the well, they envy what you have. Then, the Holy Spirit of God begins to get involved, and you get a chance to tell them what God has done for you.

The thing that makes me so upset with Christians today, and I have very little respect for them, is because I see a lot of Christians running around who will tell everybody out there who is lost, and I guess this is okay, it is not okay for me, but I guess it is better than nothing, but they are running around telling everybody out there that is lost what God will do for them. That is never what you want to say, not according to this. You know why you always tell people what God will do for them? Because you could never tell them what God has done for you. Because your family, your life, your whatever, it is no different than the world's. They are not going to envy your family, not going to envy what you have with God. They are not going to envy, they are not. That is what God will use. He wants you, the blessings in your life of somebody who has got everything put together as well as you can. He wants to showcase you. You are a family. You are married. He wants to showcase you. The people out there that do not have it get envious. Then the Holy Spirit of God will bring them to you. You have an opportunity not to tell them what God will do for them, but you will tell them what God did for you. Make it a personal thing. What a joke today. This is why God's people's lives for the most part are no different than the world's. God's people get divorced, they lose their kids, they all go to hell in a handbag just like the world does.

The next thing I want you to see here as they go down to this land, stay with me here. I may sidetrack a few minutes to give you a personal, a practical thing, but stay with our story. When they get down into this land, Genesis 26:15, we find out that there are no wells there. Here is the important part. There were wells there, but we are told in Genesis 26:15 that the Philistines have stopped up the wells. That is a great picture of the world cutting off the Word of God. The world system today hates the Word of God.

We buy our Bibles from Bearing Precious Seed in Milford, Ohio. I knew Dr. Keene way back in the day. I preached in that church several times and visited with him many times. He is a good guy. He is retired now, and another guy has taken it over, but Dr. Keene was a great preacher. Dr. Keene was a good guy. He and I were good friends. He started the Bearing Precious Seed ministry many, many years ago. The reason why he did it is because he believed, and rightly so, that it was the New Testament local church's responsibility to publish the Word of God, not the world system. If you have ever been to their facility, which we have been there many times, and I took a group there a couple of times just to see that massive facility that they print out Bibles in so many different languages. They are all King James Bibles.

I remember going there one time, and I heard him preach a message out of 1 Samuel 13 about Saul. It was one of the greatest messages I ever heard. I have used it myself many, many times. Saul, who is a picture of a pastor or religious leader, king of Israel, what he did was he put all of the blacksmiths out of business in Israel. The blacksmiths made swords for which Israel could defend themselves and fight. What he did was he put all the blacksmiths out of business, and then he turned the making of swords over to the Philistines. You know how that turned out. The Philistines attacked them, and when they attacked them, they had no swords to fight with. What a picture that is, is what Christianity has done, turning the Word of God over to people like

Zondervan, World, Thomas Nelson, all the worldly publishers who care nothing about the Word of God. In fact, I am going to tell you right now, you go to a Christian bookstore and buy any American publisher, you cannot buy a real King James Bible. Now you may get one that says King James Version, King James Edition, King James, but you will never, from one of the American publishing companies, you will never be able to buy a complete King James 1611, the way that you have it there in your hands with the Bibles that we got from Milford. It was a very subtle thing, but they took the Word of God right out of God's people's hands. That is why they just, they could not get them. This is the picture that you have here, and this is why.

The only Bibles we use, the only Bibles we sell, come out of a local New Testament church. Why? Because I believe the local New Testament church is God's program for everything. There were people who would say to that, "Amen, brother." Yeah, but you will not put it in your own life, see. You will say, "Oh, that is the job of the church." When the job of the church is for you to submit yourself to it to become everything God wants you to be. We like to pick and choose. I am telling you, this here is a picture in Genesis 26:15 of what the world system does: stopped up the well.

So Isaac and his family and his servants, they go down into a valley of Gerar, and there they dig more wells. The Bible says in Genesis 26:18-19, they now hit a spring of water in a well which they are digging. Now the next thing I want you to see here, and this is just like in John 4:14 with the woman at the well. Now finding of this spring well of water, which is now really a picture of the Word of God. The world tried to block it, keep in mind, stop it up, but they just moved on, and they dug a well, and wow, they found now a well of springing water.

I want you to notice in that passage, Genesis 26:20-22, that it brought conflict with the other herdsmen. I want to tell you, that is a picture of what you have today with the conflict between the Bible colleges and the great Bible theologians and minds out there and a common every man who really has the Word of God. A conflict has arisen today of where is your Bible? This thing is incredible.

Finally, they move on a little bit out, and they find a spot for him and his family, and they dig another well. The Bible is very clear in Genesis 26:23-24 to tell you with this well, there is no conflict. Now children, get what I am about to say. Please get it. You young couples, get this. There will always be conflict with the world and the Laodicean church over the Word of God. Amen? When they dug this well for his family, there is no conflict. You know why? Because you may have conflict with the world over the Word of God, but we should never have conflict within our own family over the Word of God. No amen on that one. That is an incredible story. All I have done is just break it down. We are only getting started yet, man. Are you kidding me? When he dug all these wells after the Philistines stopped it up, the other herdsmen said, "Nah, this is our well." "No, it is my well." "No, it is my well." Just what you find today. "No, the Greek and the Hebrew is the way to get the Bible." "No, no, no. The New Testament church is custom in the Bible." Same thing. There is always going to be a conflict with those people out there. But there should never be a conflict in your own family with the Word of God. Let me show you why. It only gets better from here. What should I say, deeper?

This is the great story, Genesis chapter 26, of what it takes when you dig a well in this story to build your family and how you do it. Remember, God only does His work, whether it be the Old Testament or the New Testament. We have harped on this a lot. He only does it through families. That was His mode of operation. Over and over again, I cannot tell you the importance of young couples to know this. Let us follow what God is doing here.

Now we have Isaac. Isaac has a son. He has a son, but forget Esau. He has Jacob. When Jacob comes to 12 tribes, from the 12 tribes come the nation of Israel. Those 12 tribes in the Old Testament, when they get out of Egypt and go into the Promised Land, are to take the Word of God in the Old Testament sense to the world through families. Because we are told in John 4:22, "salvation is of the Jews." This shows us in the New Testament, and I have preached on this many, many times. This is not new to you, but it is found within our story here, the importance of families staying true to the Word of God through the digging of wells from generation to generation.

There are three great principles in this chapter. I mean, there are a bunch of principles, but the first three anyhow, the first three great principles in this chapter for you to follow in understanding how God will work through your family if you are truly following and digging the well. There are three things. I read this chapter this week, and I never really saw these things before. I was focusing on the next three things, but they just popped out. I saw that when you read this chapter, there were three things that you just cannot miss out of your family.

1. Isaac and his family were providentially blessed by God.

God took care of them even though they were in the land of the Philistines. God took care of them even though they were in a godless pagan place. I am telling you something. When you follow what the Word of God says, you young couples, God is going to bless you. God is going to take care of you. I am just going to tell you, I do not know of any other blessing that is greater than the blessing in your life for you young couples that down the line someplace, and I watch you with your kids. I watch what you do. I watch how you, your dads, what you do, and what your moms do. I am telling you, for the most part, you are right on track with it.

Now, you are going to have some parents who are never going to get it. I mean, they just never are. I am sorry about that. But I cannot fix that. I cannot fix what is not mine to fix. But I am telling you right now, you are going to see the greatest blessing you could ever have in your family is 10, 15 years from now, your kids standing alongside of you in the ministry, whatever you are doing, they are doing it with you. It does not get any better than that. A family as a ministry team blessed by God. Tell me something that is better than that when it comes to what God is trying to do.

I say that knowing that some of you have struggled. I have watched some of you that are single parents. It is hard enough to do it when you have a husband and wife into it. It is really tough when you have the single parent mindset. I will just say this. I have seen some women and guys that were married, and they still were single parents as far as it came to the Word of God because one or the other did not do what is right with it. I have all the respect in the world for you. You know why? Because I have watched you. I have watched you double down here of what you had

to do. I have watched you get everything out of your life and out of your world. You know that you have got your back up against the wall, and you are going to make sure your girls or your boys or whatever the case may be, they are going to make it. I look at you and I marvel because I know you have got an uphill battle all the way. But what I am telling you is that God will bless you for that.

I am going to say this again. I know that some parents find themselves that late in life, and they came into church after the kids were teenagers or whatever. They were already into some issues and some problems and some of those things. I am all of that. I am not preaching this to castigate you or make you feel ashamed or bad. I am telling you this: this is what the Bible says. But I am telling you, no matter where you find yourself, there is something you can do. God has a plan for whatever situation you find yourself in. It may not be the easiest route. You think it is easy for a single parent to raise their kids without a husband or a husband that is a deadbeat that does not care about the things of God? You think that is easy? They do it. You see, sometimes our pride gets involved, and we do not want to admit what the real problem is. You know why? I will tell you why. Because it is easier to blame it on somebody else, is not it? Sure it is.

2. He was providentially provided for by God.

God gave him everything he needed. You see, once you get the blessings of God in your life as a parent, the providing of God in your life just comes natural, and then He starts to give you everything that you need. In a Christian sense, we can talk about not only the physical things, the job that you have, or if you lost your job, how He covered this or recovered that. I hear stories about it all the time, how God takes care and provides for you. You know why? Because the Bible says,

Philippians 4:19

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

That is what He does. But this is the value of having a New Testament local church that believes the Bible in a system in place to help you, because you do not ever have to deal with issues by yourself anymore unless you want to. I tell people who come in with problems and they have issues, and I say, and their issues are because they have made bad choices, okay? Hey, have we not all made bad choices? Sure we have. I always tell them this, "Look, you got where you are at because of the bad choices you have made, and that is okay because we have all made them. Now where you are going to go from here depends on you stopping making bad choices." So in this church, with what we have to help you and the tools we can give you, you never have to make a bad choice ever the rest of your life because you have everybody here to help you unless you just want to. I say that full knowing that there are some who just want to. I am sorry.

3. Isaac and his family were providentially preserved by God.

God took care of them in the midst of being in with the Philistines. The tragedy today of broken families, the tragedy today of Christian families that it just, it is terrible. There was never, if there was ever a time when families needed to stay close to the Word of God and together, because the family is under attack today. This country is out to destroy your children. I told you Thursday

night, they are putting legislation in place that they are going to completely wipe out of your children going to school about any history of their roots of who they are, where they came from. No Revolutionary War, no Civil War. They are going to erase. This is kind of like, what was that movie that Schwarzenegger was in? Total Recall. Thank you very much. This is going to be a total recall on your kids. They are going to do a lobotomy on them education-wise. They are going to take from them every sense of history. The only sense of roots they are going to have is they are going to get from you or not get from you. They are going to destroy every aspect of authority. They are going to destroy every aspect of taking away everything that you have. No history. They are going to take away the aspect of gender.

I told you Thursday night, there is a New York school that now has put into its curriculum that they are going to ban three words in school. One of them is going to be Christmas, which I am okay on that one. But the other two, mother and father. Because now in the world system, like everything else, a mother and father are two different things, so it is racist. I got a report last week, I told them Thursday night this, that there is a group up there in Washington state someplace or Oregon that they are meeting up there to decide because there are certain trees that are racist. Obviously an evergreen that is evergreen versus a tree that dies in the winter. That is racist. I mean, where does this end? Now it may be okay because we laugh at it, and I get it because it is stupid, but it is coming right down to your kids. Nothing will preserve your children, your family, like the water out of a well. I am telling you. All built around the wells that Isaac dug.

VIII. Three Pillars of Family Ministry: Altar, Tent, and Well

For you and for me in building your family for ministry, you need to see three more things here. This is what I really wanted to talk about. I just found the other stuff here as I was coming through it. Let us look at Genesis 26:25 in our study here. Here it is. Three things. Three things that Isaac did that got the blessing of God, the provision of God, and the preserving of God. Let us read it.

Genesis 26:25

And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

We know that water is now a picture of the Word of God, a well, a picture of your depth with the Word of God. Yet it is said in Genesis 26:19, and I have to touch on this, "a well of spring water." Of course, the word "spring water" has always, to me, always been, the study of words in the Bible and how they are used has always been an amazing thing for me. Here it is, spring water. Spring water. Because the water of the Word of God came forth when Jesus Christ was crucified at the Passover in spring. So it is your spring water. Then he talks about the fact that spring water springs forth. You see, once that spring water gets into you, it ought to spring forth to everybody else. You do not have to pay extra for that, I am just throwing that in. So he is a spring of water, John chapter 4.

Now the three areas that I want to focus on here in the time we have left, the time I want to talk about here is:

4. It says that Isaac built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord.

The first element you need to build into your family will be the altar. The altar in your family's life. That will be the fixed point that all in your family understand that you are God's family. You do not just demand that, you teach them that. You teach them that by example, by in-sample. You teach them that when they are young by being Christ in their life until they can understand Christ in their life. The Christian lifestyle to them, they need to understand, is not an option. You train them from birth, just like the nation of Israel was. It becomes a spiritual culture, just like the nation of Israel in the Old Testament was a physical culture. It is based on, first of all, our relationship with God, and then you build it into your family.

Last week, I showed you the complete breakdown of Christian parenting. Christian kids today are no different than the world's kids. It is a thing where, I talked about a different example. I knew a family years ago that had some boys, and those boys never got much Bible down, but they understood one verse in Genesis chapter 1: "be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth." They had illegitimate kid after illegitimate kid. It all went the same way. They never got married, and of course, after a while, the woman recognized what a jerk he was, and then he went to court, and they lost a baby. Over and over and over again. It is a disaster. I have seen Christian, quote unquote, kids do drugs and post their pictures on Facebook bragging about the drugs that they do. I have seen them come to the place where they get involved in alcohol and liquor. They get involved in everything. Their parents just think it is okay. I am telling you, there is no shame today. There are no regrets. There is no responsibility. There is no biblical action.

I have dealt with kids, boys or girls, getting in trouble almost my whole ministry. When something like that happens, it is a tragedy. It is nothing to post on Facebook, "Oh, I am going to be a grandma or granddaddy. Praise the Lord. Look how God is." No, no, no. Before you get the invitations, whether it is pink or blue, there are three or four strong biblical processes that you have to work through here because that is something the world does. That is not something that Christians should do. I have had people all the time, they will say, "Well, you know what? Look at that kid." No, no, no, do not look at the kid. Look at the parent. Illegitimate children will simply be the product of illegitimate parenting. You can write that down. In every case, without exception, when the kids are lost, when the family is fractured, when it becomes an absolute mess, and I can say that again, I understand some of you came in late, and you are doing everything you know how to do. So we are good. But I am telling you, in every case, without exception, when the kids are lost to the world, the number one issue: no altar, no commitment, no commitment that the kids understanding what the family is all about and that living with the world is not an option.

I am going to show you something. If you do not get anything else out of my message today, you better get this one. I am going to show you something out of this story. One of the greatest biblical principles you will ever get for your children and for your family. Look at Genesis 26:17. Look where Isaac built this altar. He is told to get up out of Beersheba, and when he builds this

altar, in time, where he winds up, it is not called this yet, but in time it becomes known as Bethel. Bethel means "the house of bread." Isaac has a son. His son's name is Jacob. Jacob gets out of fellowship with God. He gets into some problems. You see it in Genesis chapter 28. You see it in Genesis chapter 35. You see it in a lot of other places too. But you know what? Here is the key. Jacob, every time he gets out of fellowship and God deals with him and he knows he is wrong, you know where he goes? Back to Bethel. He goes back to the altar and the foundation that his dad built in his life. Right? Where his father built the altar?

Listen to me. Your kids are not always going to do what is right. You as parents are not always going to do what is right. It is not about perfect kids and perfect parenting. They are going to make mistakes. They are going to do dumb things, and they will be challenged by the world to get out of fellowship, and there will be times that they do. I am not standing up here and saying, "If you do this, your kid will never have any problems." Your kid is under attack, and they are going to have a problem. What they need is to be able to get back to Bethel, the altar that you built. They built an altar unto the Lord and gave them a fixed spot. When Jacob got out of fellowship, he had a point of reference to get back to God. He had a foundation that was established by his mom and his dad, or his father anyhow, where they built an altar. No altar, dad. No fixed point. They are not coming back. There will be God's people, moms and dads, who will watch their kids go through that terrible process and lose them, and they will actually scratch their heads and wonder what happened. No altar. No back to Bethel. I will tell you something else. The relationship with God will always bring about illegitimate results with God.

5. Then he pitched his tent there.

You see, once he built the altar, he pitched his tent. That is his family. He never moved off of that altar. It is a picture of building your house, your family, on the absolute principles of the Word of God based on the altar and staying consistent with it. Fix your position on the Bible and the Bible principles to your family, and then to them, you create with them a safe, loving, Bible-based, tender display of God's love to them in every way that the world can never touch them. Because when they do, they will always go back to Bethel. I like this. After the altar, he pitched his tent there at the altar. Give his family a fixed position, perspective, who they are as God's family, and the ministry they have together. Mom and dad setting the example for the children.

6. Then he digged a well.

A well of water for his family dug down deep out of the rock. A well of spring water. You see, you dig the well, your children drink from it, and in time, you teach them how to dig their own. But it all starts with an altar. It starts with a fixed point and a spiritual well by which they can get the water of life from. The hand of God will, through His love and faithfulness to your commitment to His Word, do the three things that we talked about a little bit earlier. You see, He will bless your family, Genesis 26:13. He will provide for your family, Genesis 26:18. He will preserve your family, Genesis 26:24. God has a plan of ministry for your family, and you need these three things in your family to fend off the attack that is coming because the devil knows it much better than we do.

IX. The Outflow of Living Water

My last piece of advice to you will be found in Proverbs 5:15 again. I did not finish all of the verse last time, so I will now.

Proverbs 5:15-16

Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

You see, Proverbs 5:15-16, what you have here is what Jesus told the woman in John chapter 4, we are going to get into in weeks to come. He said the water I give you to drink is going to spring into well water, living water, and then what does she do? She goes and tells somebody else about what He did. You see, what starts out with your family at your well, and when they develop their own well and faith and grace based on the water and the altar, then it goes to the ends of the earth. The living water starts with your well at home that you dig, the well that you teach them to dig, and then the well of water, river of water, runs into the streets, and everybody finds out about it. Your family forming the witness of God's good news for generations to come, all because of your well.

But I leave you with this: dig your wells before you get thirsty, and dig your well before a drought comes to your family. I know there is always something you can do, but the longer you wait, the harder it gets. The story of wells is one of the most important studies you are ever going to take anywhere in the Bible, and this is why I wanted to do it first here before we ever get into the meat of John chapter 4. You need to understand what this well really is a picture of. Oh, I could just give you the nice little salvation message like you get from every little dingbat out there that preaches it, but no, there is much more to it than that. Wells in the Bible will be one of the greatest personal studies you could ever take in the Bible, and as we develop John chapter 4 over the next weeks, you will see the absolute importance of digging a well for yourself and then for your family.

Before we ever get into that great story that Danny sang about this morning, I want you to see how God looks at wells in the Bible. Now we know that if you are going to find a husband and wife, find him at the well. Now we know that if you are going to go anywhere in life as a Christian, you are going to have to dig your own well, carve out your own cistern. You are going to have to get water out of the well, and then you are going to have to store it up when the drought comes in your life and in the life of your family. Then you are going to have to realize that you are going to have to do three things for your family. You are going to have to come to the point where you:

7. Build an altar and then you call upon the name of the Lord.
8. Pitch your tent there.
9. Dig a well.

After that happens, you will have the blessings of God, you will have the providing of God, and you will have the preservation of God in your life and the life of your family for generations to come.

We will hold up there. Let us have a word of prayer. I hope that meant something to you today. I know that some of you will take it and do something with it; others will not even do anything with it, but that is your choice too.