

Part III – *Dig Another Well*

Digging Through Adversity

Part III- (Issac realizes it is time to dig his third and eventually his fourth wells)

By now Issac is thinking, if I just give away the last well we dug, the one I named Esek because of the dispute with the Philistine herdsmen, I'm sure they will leave us alone, after all they got what they wanted. But no, that didn't work either, after we dug another well and found fresh water, once again the herdsmen picked a fight with us and that led me to name it Sitnah which means opposition. How can it be that I go from Gerar where God blessed me more than I could have imagined in my wildest dreams to where I can't even find a place to water my flocks. But I won't give up, I'll get the men together and give them a pep talk. Remind them of God's goodness and his protection and his eternal promises. The pep talk was a piece of art. Here I am with 50 people whose very existence rests on my decisions and I hit a motivational homerun. Just to give you a taste of management 101, let me share with you the gist of the pep talk.

“Gentlemen, we were brought here for a purpose and we were brought here by the living God. The God of my Father Abraham, the God of Isaac and one day, the God of my son Jacob. We cannot succumb to these wretched Philistine Shepherds, we have as much right as they to care for our flocks and herds. We are the people of the living God. He is on our side and he will go before us. March on over-comers and into His marvelous light.”

As a matter of fact, everyone was so pumped up that they hoisted me on their shoulders and started to sing and dance. Needless to say, digging another well with this much *esprit de corps*, was not going to be too hard to accomplish. And away we went over to a good looking place that was close by, but rather isolated, where no one seemed to be grazing or for that matter, any signs of civilization event existed. In other words, it was the perfect spot. And the men began to dig. I thought it prudent to stay with them and spur them onward. We made a game of it. I offered two ewe for the one who could dig the longest and an entire ram for the first shovel to hit water. We dug all day, then we dug through most of the night under the bright lantern lights. We started digging all over again the next morning. We dug and dug and then we dug some more. Even I dug some, just to share camaraderie with the men. It was hard work but we were excited to see God work on our behalf. By the end of the third day we hit pay dirt. Oh what a beautiful sight it was. Water gushing, gurgling and bubbling out of the hot desert sand. Water, the elixir of life. We drank deep, we played in it and we splashed each other. Then we carefully watered the flocks and herds. Everyone was satisfied. We had finally done the hard work of digging our new well.

So you ask, “how did I know this was the right well?” Easy, no one fought with us over it. Matter of fact, I named it Rheoboth, for the Lord had made room for us. That very night, God came to me in a dream and reaffirmed his presence, protection and blessing in my life. The least I could do was build an alter and worship the living God.

Reader Takeaway -

Whereas non-Christians are motivated to take risks and move in different directions, Christians tend to be somewhat fearful of losing a blessing, or frustrating God's will, or taking a wrong step thereby going against the leading of the Holy Spirit. Christians tend to see God's will in a linear manner. Meaning once God plants them somewhere, potted they will stay. Some Christians feel that faith is demonstrated by consistency and its reverse is instability. Thus, in the workaday world, if I hold my job for 25 years I am a faithful worker, and if I hold a job for only 2-3 years I'm unstable. That flies in the face of everything we experience in life as a Christian. Who of us can say I know exactly what

my family, my life my living situation 2 years from now let alone 20 years from now. Digging another well is completely counterintuitive to the mainstream Christian who misinterprets the purpose of strife. Isaac shows us that strife was used by God to tell him to go a different way in order to find the peace of God. His faith in a loving God drove him to persist in continuing to dig another well even as each new well he dug up was fought over. Isaac shows the reader that the battle of faith is the persistent pursuit of God in the face of adversity. Adversity is like the sand that Isaac had to dig through to get to the well water, going through adversity deepens faith. The muscle we use to dig with is represented by persistent pursuit, the well represents a metaphorical conduit to God's will. Sand is adversity to our faith, the shovel is the tool of persistence. When you persistently peruse God's will through the sands of adversity you will dig a conduit to the will of God.

It could be argued that our entire life as a Christian believer is a means by which God deepens our faith through life experiences. His intention is not for us to reach complacent boredom or stagnation (for example, finding a job that we can hold for life) but rather to give us a dynamic adventure. The end result is a life spent hearing God's voice, responding to His will, persistently following Him and knowing He was faithful throughout each step in the journey of our faith. With the expectation that as we cross the great divide and are ushered into Heaven, we will hear from the Lord "well done, my good and faithful servant". But this life of adventure in faith, of persisting in the face of adversity and of trusting God to be a faithful Heavenly father is not the "simple Christian life". Unless we become familiar with the exercise of faith and recognize God's patterns, many of life's changes will appear as punishments, provocations and causes of despair – that's too bad.

The allegory of *Dig Another Well* shows us that life should be an adventure of pursuit. Isaac faithfully pursued God until God led him to himself. Life is a process of dynamic change and change does not define God as capricious. God remains the same but his believers need to adapt. Most people fear change and resist it whole heartedly. That's also too bad. Because change is used by God to deepen our faith, bring out or enhance our gifts and talents as well as to bring us to Himself. I believe that God is saying "Don't be afraid, I will never leave you nor forsake you." "I go to prepare a place for you".

Obviously when I speak of change, it is implied that your decisions need to be covered in prayer and should be confirmed in the counsel of spiritual leaders. We can frustrate the will of God by saying "I made this career decision, because it is God's will" when in reality we did little or nothing to confirm whether it was or was not really God's will.

When Isaac finally reached the last well (which he called Rehoboth), the place without strife, God met him there personally. We Christians need to keep digging our well, until we reach a point where God gives us peace. Because, as we see with Isaac's repeated efforts to dig another well, the end result is finding God's next step on your journey of faith. Which is the place where God meets us and abundantly provides for us.

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