Visit any cemetery and you will see gravestones standing at attention like soldiers on a parade ground. Each of these stone sentries endures the heat of the sun, the beating of the rain, and the frigid blast of winter’s cold. Yet, these mute bands of soldiers continue to tell the stories of those they represent in the graves beneath them. They proudly bear on their broad chests the epitaphs of individuals long gone; inscriptions ranging from the trite to the tragic, from the flippant to the faithful.

If the patriarch Abraham had a headstone, it probably would have read: “Abraham – The Father of Faith: All the nations of the earth are blessed because of you.”

Abraham’s son Isaac desired to follow in the heritage of his father’s faith, being challenged by God not to trust in his own initiatives but in God’s unending promises.

**THE CHALLENGE TO ISAAC**

Isaac was now head of the family; he had a wife, servants, flocks and herds. Many depended on him. The land he was living in had entered into a devastating drought. It seemed that the most sensible and practical thing to do was to go to Egypt with its ample supply of fresh water and fertile lands. Why would he put the well-being of his family at risk by staying in a barren and fruitless land when they were his first responsibility?

“The Lord appeared unto him [Isaac], and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:2–5).

By directing him away from Egypt during the lean years, God was teaching Isaac to rely on Him and not look to the world for his security. God had something much deeper for him if he would trust Him with his life and family. Against popular opinion, Isaac chose to believe God and stay where he was, in spite of the hardships. You will find that when you choose to obey God,
difficulties do not cease immediately. As a matter of fact, you may at times have to contend with adverse circumstances, but God will give you the victory over and over again.

No sooner had Isaac made the decision to remain in the land than the presiding king came to him and requested that he remove himself from the area. “Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us: for thou art much mightier than we. And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there”  

(Genesis 26:16–17).

■ THE OLD WELLS OF ABRAHAM
One of the great truths God teaches all believers is wherever He leads, He will also provide. This principle has been proven many times throughout Old Testament history. We see this when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. God took more than three million people into a barren wilderness and there supplied them with an abundance of water and manna from heaven. In order for Isaac to know the blessing of God’s provision, God used King Abimelech to redirect him back to the old wells of Abraham.

“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”  

(Genesis 26:18).

When Isaac arrived at the place where the wells had been dug, he found the Philistines had been in the area and had filled them with dirt. Although the outlook of his immediate security was extremely bleak, God would use these unfavorable circumstances to speak to Isaac.

In a land where water is always at a premium, you would have to ask yourself, “Who would be crazy enough to fill wells with dirt when there was such a scarcity of water? Why would they do that when there could have been enough for everyone?” But this is a picture of a darker and more subtle attack of Satan. This is what the devil wants to do in the life of the believer; he wants to stop the flow of water until nothing is left. Then he covers over the places where others once found their strength and sustenance in God. This makes it almost impossible for those coming afterwards to know and understand how God had sustained them in difficult times. For example, simply look at the thousands of monolithic cathedrals left to us today which dot the landscape with their peaked towers and crosses. Architecturally these buildings are beautiful, but inside they have become empty relics of a past revival. No longer do they brim with people or are filled with the praises of God; they only stand as stone edifices and outer shells called churches.

This is why God took Isaac back to the old wells and caused him to dig in the same places Abraham had dug. In his time of trial, Abraham went down deep into the bedrock and had found water to live by. Here Isaac, representing the next generation, could also find the same source of strength his father had found. If we want our lives to make a difference in our generation, I believe we have to go to the old wells of truth where others previously found their hope in God. We must learn what it means again to trust completely in God’s direction. His ways are always right and though He does not expect us to always understand, He does expect us to believe Him and obey.

■ THE INVALUABLE LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM
“And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar”  

(Genesis 20:1).

Isaac in his own walk with God was living in the same place where his father had dwelt years earlier. God was about to show Himself mighty on Isaac’s behalf. In this place where Abraham had faced tremendous trials and had overcome, so Isaac would experience the same victories with God’s help. When Abraham lived there, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, had wronged him. Abraham had every right to become bitter and hold grievances towards this king. Instead, he chose to pray and ask God to bless and restore this man, as well as his whole household.

Today many Christians are feeble, and their prayers ineffective. They weep and ask God, “Why am I so weak and my prayers powerless?” Yet, if these same believers would respond like Abraham did and forgive those who have unjustly hurt them, they would experience incredible freedom and see miraculous things happen. It is interesting to note in the very next chapter of Genesis, Abraham’s barren wife Sarah, supernaturally becomes pregnant with Isaac when Abraham was 100 years old. When you choose to go God’s way and do what He says, the miraculous power of God begins to be released in your life.

■ LAY ASIDE HUMAN REASONING
After Isaac was born, Sarah said to Abraham, “Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son [Ishmael] of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac”  

(Genesis 21:10). In essence, she was exhorting him to put away the works and reasoning of human endeavor. “And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba”  

(Genesis 21:14). Abraham revealed true character by having the courage to do what was right. Every Christian
who wants to live a victorious life in Christ reaches a point where he says, “God, I give up trying to figure out things in my own strength. I lay aside all my own thinking and trust explicitly in your ability to keep me.”

Not only does God ask you to lay aside fleshly thinking but He wants you to give to Him those things you treasure most. Testing comes to us all and we must decide if we are willing to trust God with those things that are closest to our heart. In Genesis 22, Abraham demonstrated his own willingness to give up all that he cherished, if God required it. Nothing was dearer to him than his own son, Isaac, who was his heart and life. Isaac represented the very essence of everything God had promised Abraham, and now He was asking him to give Isaac back as a sacrifice to God. In total obedience, Abraham prepared to offer him to God. You know the story well how as he was about to kill Isaac, the angel of the Lord stayed his hand and said, “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (James 3:16). James understood that when the door of contention is opened, it will lead to hurtful and destructive conditions. In Isaac’s situation this was proven to be true, for when they attempted to dig another well, even greater strife arose.

In the life of the Christian the devil does not want you to find living water, so he will immediately attempt to stop its flow by bringing you into contention with someone. James, the Lord’s half brother, wrote about strife, saying, “And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac’s herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him” (Genesis 26:20). Isaac named the well Esek, which means strife or contention.

Wells of Contention and Hatred

No sooner had Isaac’s herdsmen dug out one of the wells than the people of the land began to strive with them saying the water was theirs. “And they digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Sitnah” (Genesis 26:22). Isaac and his herdsmen dug yet another well and called it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land” (Genesis 26:21). When you study the names of both these wells, you see that Esek literally means contention, while Sitnah means hostility or, even stronger, hatred. When you combine the two, you get a deadly combination. If contention is not dealt with in the early stages, it can easily turn into hatred. The apostle John wrote in 1 John 4:20 that if a man hates his brother, he’s a murderer and does not have eternal life abiding in him. What a tragedy when people have served the Lord for years and then totally walk away from God because their hearts become hardened. If you allow hatred to develop towards others God has no alternative but to declare you to be a murderer. Just think about it! These are the only two things the devil needs to begin stopping the supply of life which God has given you in Christ. This is exactly what this message is about; exposing Satan before you are embittered by contention that turns into hatred. By God’s grace, we will move away from these wells, we will move away from strife and contention, and allow the Lord to heal every wounded heart.

There is room for all people at the cross no matter what age, race, or nationality.

Rehoboth – There is Room

“And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land” (Genesis 26:22). Isaac and his herdsmen dug yet another well and called it Rehoboth, which means room. They did not allow the strife they experienced to turn their focus away from the wells of Abraham.

In the same way you need to believe there is room for all of us in God’s kingdom! His covenant with His Son has opened the way for everyone who believes on Christ to have a place in this kingdom. There is room for all people at the cross no matter what age, race, or nationality. And when you become His child, He...
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