

Reopening of Croftlands Church Services!

God willing, we are working and making plans to begin meeting again, although this obviously is subject to change should government legislation change.

A more detailed news sheet will come out next week, but the first 2 dates for your diary are

Thursday 1st October - 6.30 –8pm

Croftlands Community Centre

Prayer meeting and communion



Sunday 4th October - time to be confirmed

Croftlands Community Centre

Sunflower Harvest Service

competition results to be announced!



Please be reassured that all government rules and guidelines will be in place, and exceeded to ensure that our gatherings are safe. You can return with confidence, knowing that safety is being taken very seriously. We aim to visit as many of you as possible in the next week with further details in a newsletter, so please feel free to put forward any questions & concerns.

Father God, we ask for your protection and blessing over us as we hope to meet again to worship and praise you as a church family. You are greater and stronger than any situation we face, and we can face the future in confidence with you. Amen



God bless
you Angela!
(18th Sept)

**Birthday Greetings
Angela & Michael**



God bless you Michael
(24th Sept)

and all who ride with you!

There is a river of life flowing out through me
Makes the lame to walk and the blind to see
Opens prison doors sets the captives free
There is a river of life flowing out through me

Spring up oh well within my soul
Spring up oh well and make me whole
Spring up oh well and give to me
that life, abundantly



Whilst returning from a summer break a couple of weeks ago, I spent the morning at one of my favourite places. It's a very spiritually significant place for me, a place that holds many years of memories and is for me one of those locations described as a 'thin' place. In other words, a place where the barrier between me and God feels very thin and God's presence seems very near.



Some of you may have been there. It's the beautiful city of Wells in Somerset and in particular the gardens within the moated Bishops Palace in which are found the natural wells of crystal clean water bubbling up from an underground river flowing down from the Mendip Hills. You can see the cathedral, and in the foreground the wells which spring up and overflow from here into the moat around the bishops palace, through the city to the river beyond. As with all good wells, they are a vital source of life around which the city became established and an environment where people, wildlife and vegetation have lived, flourished and prospered for many centuries!

As I spent time alone with God beside these wells, I began to sense him speak to me about wells and in particular about the spiritual well within us, so today's talk is very personal and an on-going place of grappling with God to deal with some issues that have been affecting my spiritual life. My prayer is that God will work in our lives this morning, maybe opening up spiritual wells deep within our hearts and releasing us from things that are blocking that spiritual flow.

Isaiah 12:2-3 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation." With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

In the Bible, wells were very significant places and represented a number of things which we may not fully understand, particularly when all we have to do is turn on a tap. Wherever we live, there is a network of pipes bringing fresh water right into our house, not just our house, but every individual room that water is needed.



In the hot, dry climate of Israel, wells were literally about life. Without them the animals couldn't thrive, vegetation couldn't grow, people would die of thirst and life could not be sustained. Herds, flocks and crops brought wealth and prosperity, so having ownership, or the independence of a well was symbolic of blessing and establishment. Without water, all you have is desert. The well is a symbol of healthy community!



Well water comes from sources below the earth's surface known as ground water, as well as underground springs. The task of digging a well by hand to access fresh water was a huge undertaking and an essential life source.

A few weeks ago, we read the story in John 4 where Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman at a well known as Sychar's Well which had been dug by Jacob many generations previously. During that encounter, Jesus made an incredible statement.

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

When you believed and received Jesus, you were restored to your Heavenly Father in full relationship and he made himself your only life-source.

He connected himself to you spiritually and you came alive spiritually. Spiritually, he is your only life source.



Just like a baby in the womb who will die without that connection to the mother, it's life source. Just like your fridge/freezer that will not function if that cable is dis-connected from the power source. Jesus tells us that He is the vine and if we, the branches are cut off from him we will die.

Your only life source now is God, He's your well, the river of living water that bubbles up inside you and flows out of you in love and blessing to others. When Adam disconnected from God, he died spiritually. Jesus came to renew that life source and when we connect with him, we come alive again spiritually. As soon as we dis-connect, we start to die.

Reading - Genesis 26: 12 - 33



¹² Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. ¹³ The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. ¹⁴ He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵ So all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth.

¹⁶ Then Abimelek said to Isaac, "Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us." ¹⁷ So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar, where he settled. ¹⁸ Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.

¹⁹ Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. ²⁰ But the herders of Gerar quarrelled with those of Isaac and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek,^l because they disputed with him. ²¹ Then they dug another well, but they quarrelled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. ²² He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarrelled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, "Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land."

²³ From there he went up to Beersheba. ²⁴ That night the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham."

²⁵ Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well. ²⁶ Meanwhile, Abimelek had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces. ²⁷ Isaac asked them, "Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?"

²⁸ They answered, "We saw clearly that the LORD was with you; so we said, 'There ought to be a sworn agreement between us'—between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you ²⁹ that you will do us no harm, just as we did not harm you but always treated you well and sent you away peacefully. And now you are blessed by the LORD."

³⁰ Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. ³¹ Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they went away peacefully. ³² That day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, "We've found water!" ³³ He called it Shibah, and to this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.^l

Previously in chapter 15, God had made an everlasting covenant to Isaacs Father, Abraham promising that he would be blessed with a son, his descendants would be numerous like the stars in the sky and he would be the father of many nations. God also told Abraham that he had brought him up from the land where he had been living in order for his descendants to eventually take possession of this new land.

By the time we get to chapter 26, we find that Abrahams son Isaac is living in the land and God has blessed him. Isaac's yield on the crops he had planted was a hundredfold, he was rich and growing wealthier as God continued to bless him. So much so that the Philistines were jealous; v 14 says that the Philistines envied him! That envy had caused them to go to all the wells that Abraham had dug in his day and block them up with earth. They knew that wells equal prosperity!

Then Isaac was ordered by Abimilech, the King of the Philistines to go and find another spot to live , so Isaac peacefully went and camped in another valley and found the wells blocked, so he re-opened them naming each one as he did so by their original names. Isaacs servants dug in the valley and discovered another source of fresh water, but there was a dispute with the local herdsman over that one, so Isaac named that well and peacefully moved on and dug another well which resulted in another quarrel and so that one was named in like manner.

Eventually, they dug another well over which there was no quarrel and they settled. After all that stress and instability, **God spoke to Isaac, reassuring him of the promise, of his presence and his blessing. He tells Isaac, 'Do not be afraid.'**

Has your journey in life seemed unsettled recently? Places where you felt secure and established are being uprooted, maybe through unpleasant circumstances and the landscape keeps changing, maybe physically, emotionally or spiritually, and you desperately need to find a fresh source or supply. God offers you the same reassurance!



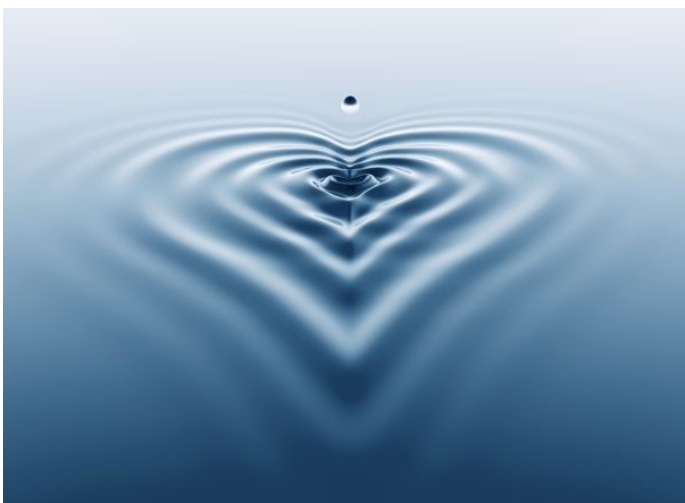
I love the concept of unblocking wells that have been corrupted, naming them appropriately and as each situation occurs pressing ahead to find new sources of fresh water.

Lets return to the spiritual picture Jesus gives when he likens our hearts to a well out of which living water springs up and overflows from our lives. Why is it that so often our spiritual wells become blocked and we find ourselves dis-connecting from Jesus, our life source, and we sense our spirits begin to slowly wither and die.

God wants us to belong to him 100%. That is the only way we experience this abundant flow of life from the very depths of us. We are creatures of habit and we can so easily begin to unplug from our source. One minute we can be praising God with all our hearts, committed to living only for him, full of faith - just like Abraham's descendants further down the line after they had crossed The Red Sea, but give us a few days in the wilderness with a few problems, and like them we begin to moan and doubt and complain.

When problems come along, we don't usually turn our backs on God completely there and then. We are much more subtle; we just start to incorporate some of our own plans and dreams, our own ideas and thoughts. We stop listening to his personal plans for us and that's when we begin to cut ourselves off from our life source.

The spiritual well in your life is where you access God, through spending time in his presence and his word - not just a 2 minute 'Word for today' as we rush out of the door - but listening to him, speaking to him, asking him how to do life and what his plans are. In August, one of our services talked about journaling which is a great way to connect with Jesus, our source of life. Blocked wells happen when the access point isn't working and you're not getting what you need.



'We cannot attain the presence of God because we're already in the presence of God. What's absent is awareness.'

Notice from our Bible passage that it was wrong attitudes that caused the wells to become blocked. The Philistines were envious of Isaac's prosperity and the blessing of God on his life. ¹⁴ **But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.** ¹⁵ **Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.** ¹⁶ **For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. James 3**

Our hearts are the pipeline through which the Living Water is flowing. If our hearts are corrupted, then what flows out of us is not going to be a blessing to us or to others. The source can be the purest water, but mixed with contamination, none of it is life-giving.

Grievances and unforgiveness, anger, resentment, bitterness and envy are all cancers of the heart that block our spiritual life. It's really important that we confess by name those blockages, so that the Holy Spirit of God can work with us to remove them and reconnect us to our source of living water.

Our hearts can be clogged with numerous fears, discouragements, worries and anxieties, particularly if there are massive mountains in our lives that we just can't see ever being removed or we can't get over. Maybe it's a mountain that's been there for years in your marriage, your family, your health or your finances.

I invite you to join with me to remind ourselves again that He wears the Victors Crown and that he wears it for us! Our mountains can be removed, but it's not by might or by power, but by his spirit. He wears the victors crown for the provision we need, the deliverance we need, the healing we need, the breakthrough we need. We can let go of that burden, that fear, that rejection, even if it's held us back for years.



He will do what we cannot do, when we do the things we can do.

We can bless others as a channel of life-giving water, because we spent time in his word, because we listened to God and spent time soaking in his presence. It will overflow, bringing the presence of God and his Kingdom Power into situations that need his love, his healing and his authority.

The river of life that flows out from Jesus can flow out of us as we spend time with our Father, our life-source, allowing his life to deeply fill that spiritual well within us that he has made alive. Let's be people who are overflowing with the life and power of the kingdom of God, so that wherever we go, lives are changed and healed, and prisoners are set free.

As we close this service, there are a couple of important questions that we need to ask ourselves.

- ♦ **Are you connected to God, your spiritual life source?**
- ♦ **Have you believed that Jesus is the Son of God and came in the flesh to bring his kingdom to earth?**
- ♦ **Have you received him into your life as your King and, experienced your spirit being made alive as his kingdom comes into your life and begins to establish itself?**

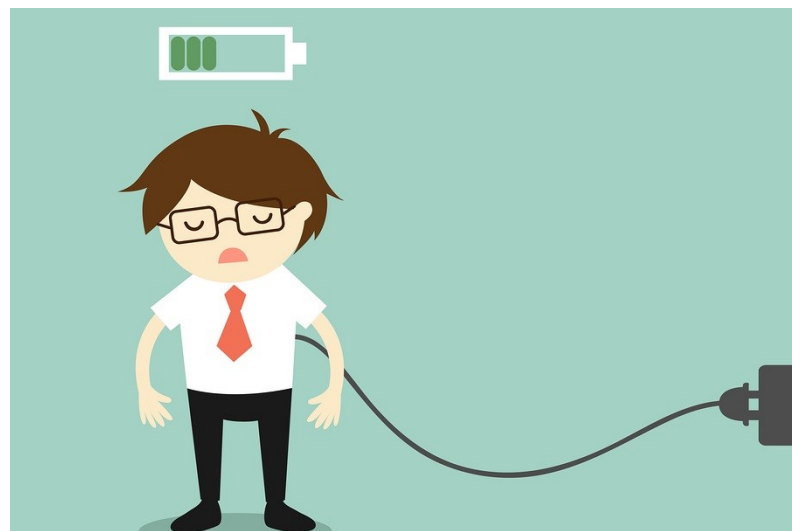
Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1: 12

If so, you are now a child of God and part of his family. You are now submitted to a new order - the order of heaven versus the chaos of the world. That's why Jesus taught us to pray, **'your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven'**

Know that He is God! If you ask him sincerely for living water, he will give it to you. We read that in John 4; it's the same promise he made to the woman at the well.

- ♦ **Are there blocked wells in your life?**
- ♦ **Are there attitudes in your heart that are preventing that deep well of living water from flowing?**

I encourage you to be honest with God; ask him to help you identify, name and confess those blockages and ask him to re-connect you to himself in order that you might experience that well of salvation springing up deep inside your heart, and overflowing out of you as you participate with Jesus in his kingdom ministry, and bring his kingdom order into the chaos around you.



Prayer

Holy Spirit, would you open my ears to hear you speaking to me, soften my heart to receive you, and bring down any opposition to your kingship in my life. Connect my heart to you, be my life source, and establish a spiritual well of living water in me. May the overflow that results from your work in my life bring heaven's order into the chaos of the world around me. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.