

Good morning! When I came to Christ, I had the sense that God was doing something new. He was certainly doing new things in my life and in the lives of the people around me! We felt that we were part of a great movement; that what God was saying to us was powerful and world-changing. I still believe that! In understanding my experience with God that way, however, I made some people very uncomfortable. People who were not Christians may have been uncomfortable because I challenged them to believe something they didn't believe. People who were already Christians (like my own parents) were occasionally uncomfortable because I challenged them to re-think what they believed and suggested that I knew more than they did about God or that their experience with God was not valid. I say this to my discredit. This morning, let's read the first part of a passage in light of that experience and ask God to help us to understand Him a little differently:

So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar, where he settled. 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.

Gen. 26:17-18

In today's passage we read about Isaac. He had gone out on his own and had become very successful. From the previous verses, it is clear that it wasn't just that Isaac had a good head for business---it tells us that God had prospered him. Interestingly, that success made the people around Isaac uncomfortable. Isaac wasn't trying to use his prosperity against his neighbors; they just were overwhelmed by his expansion. So, as a good neighbor, he sought to accommodate them by moving away and giving them some room. Today's passage tells us that he reopened the wells that his father Abraham had dug and he gave them the same names that Abraham had given them. The Philistines had filled these wells with rocks so that they were unusable but Isaac knew that there was water there and, as a man with a lot of sheep, he knew that water was an important resource. He didn't need to invent something new---he just needed to get to the water. Isaac had respect for his heritage. Not only did he reopen the wells that were already there, he gave them the same names. I have discovered that I don't need to reinvent Christianity. As I read the scriptures and I read the works of past writers, fresh water of understanding comes bubbling up out of the wells they have already dug. We can learn a lot from people who have gone before us. This morning, thank God for those pioneers of faith who have gone before you. They dug wells of understanding... wells from which you are drinking today!