

2 - Living Water

Pastor Joe Oakley - GFC – 8/11/24

We are in a sermon series called Putting Down Roots. After our series where we taught how to lay the ax to bad roots – we are now teaching how to get rooted and grounded in the right things. That's important because fruit in our lives is determined by the roots in our lives. That's why we need to be rooted and grounded in Christ. Colossians 2:6-7 says:

Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him. Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built up on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

We enter the Christian life by grace through faith and we live out the Christian life by grace through faith.

We saw last week from Ephesians 2 that to be rooted and grounded in Christ requires being rooted and grounded in His love. The Bible says that God is love. We need to be rooted and grounded in God's love for us that never fails.

We also saw from Jeremiah 17 that the result of being rooted in Christ is that you will not fear hot times or dry times, your leaves will stay green and you will always produce fruit in Jesus' name!

I told you last week about the tree Deb and I planted in our front yard. It has been stabilized by ropes since we planted it because the roots were not deep enough to stand against a strong wind. We cut those ropes this week because the tree experts told us that there has been sufficient time for the roots to grow deep. I want you to understand that developing deep spiritual roots is not an instantaneous event – it is a lifelong process.

And developing deep roots requires several things. For a tree to grow it requires 3 main things – water, sunlight and nutrients. I thought about that and realized we need the same 3 things to grow: water, light and nutrition. So we will be teaching on that for the next 3 weeks. Today I am preaching a message entitled Living Water.

Last week we saw that in the parable of the sower, Jesus talked about those who fall away because they have no root. In Luke 8:6 – Jesus talked about sowing seed and said:

Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture.

Water is essential to life.

You won't live long without water – physically or spiritually. Water represents several things in the Bible. The 2 main things are the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Both of these are essential to being rooted in Christ.

Water is needed throughout our Christian walk. Jesus said in John 4:14

Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Here water represents salvation and eternal life. We see that also in Titus 3:5-7

He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been justified by His grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

After we are born again, we are commanded to be water baptized. Colossians 2:11-12 says:

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

The Old Testament sign of covenant with God was circumcision. The New Testament sign of covenant is water baptism which represents us dying with Christ, being buried with Christ and raised to new life. If you've never been water baptized – I urge you to sign up for our next baptism. It is not optional in the Christian life!

So, we see the symbolism of water in salvation and water baptism, but it is also an ongoing part of our Christian life. Ephesians 5:25-26 says:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.

Once we are saved we begin a lifelong process of sanctification where we are set apart to God, made holy and conformed to the image of Christ. The word of God is a big part of that process. In His high priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus said in verse 17: ***Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.***

For us to be rooted and grounded in Jesus, we need to be rooted and grounded in the word and continually washed by the word of God.

The word of God convicts us of sin and shows us how to live like Christ. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that His people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The word of God shows us the ways of God, rebukes us when we go our own way instead of His way, shows us how to get back on track and trains us to stay on track. Obviously the water of the word is vitally important to our lives! But so is the water of the Holy Spirit! John 7:37-39 says:

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The Holy Spirit is the life-giving water that we need to bring life to the seed of God's Word planted in our heart. So – we must plant the seed of the Word of God and then water the word with the Spirit of God. In 1 Corinthians 3:6 – the Apostle Paul said:

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

Spiritual growth requires seed and water. The Word and the Spirit. One without the other is insufficient. That's why Jesus said in Mark 12:24

Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?

You get into error if you have all Spirit and no Word.

You get into error if you have all Word and no Spirit.

Emphasis on truth without spirit can cause legalism.

Emphasis on spirit without truth can lead to deception.

A true worshipper worships in spirit and truth.

You need the word of truth in your life and you need the Spirit of Truth.

John 16:13 says:

When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.

You see – when it comes to truth - without the Spirit, you will not hear it!

Without God's leading, you won't know what you're reading.

1 Corinthians 2:9-14 says:

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has

prepared for those who love Him - but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. ...no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ...The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Without the Spirit of God, you will not really understand the Word of God. That's why we have so many cults and misguided religious people who think they are based on the Bible. If you have the Word without the Spirit, you will get into error.

That's why you must be born again and receive the Spirit of God and live a Spirit-filled life where you are led by the Spirit of God. That's the Living Water. That's what gives you life. But we have an enemy who wants to stop that life flow. He wants to stop up the well of living water. That's what happened to Isaac in a physical sense in Genesis 26:14-15.

He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. 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.

The enemy knows we need water, so he tries to plug up our wells. He wants to keep us from getting saved, but when we do get saved, he wants us to backslide. He wants to keep us from growing in the things of God.

What does the enemy use to clog up our wells? We're going to look at the 4 wells Isaac dug. The names of 2 of the wells show us what the enemy does to try to steal our living water. The names of the other 2 wells show us how to overcome the enemy and keep the living water flowing. Genesis 26:18-20 says:

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. Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him.

Esek means contention or strife or arguing. Satan wants to contend with the truth of God's Word. He wants to argue you out of your faith. This goes all the way back to the beginning in the Garden of Eden when Satan first tempted Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:1.

He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

Whenever you get a Word from God, Satan wants to steal it. If he can't steal it, he'll try to twist it to say something other than what God said.

If he can't twist it, he'll try to bring up man-made arguments to try to get you to doubt the Word of God. How do you overcome this? Genesis 26:22 says:

He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, "Now the Lord has given us room and we will be fruitful in the land."

Rehoboth means a wide place – a place with lots of room. Mathew Henry's Commentary says it means enlargement and peace.

The way to overcome the arguments of the enemy is to keep your peace. The way to keep the living water flowing is to stay in peace. Once the enemy steals your peace, he's won! Dr. Martin Luther King understood this when he said:

"Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him. Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal."

In other words – to make peace with others you must first keep your own peace. So – how do you keep your peace when the enemy attacks? 2 Peter 1:2 says:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Peace comes from knowing God. I'm not saying knowing about God, but knowing God – His word, His ways, His character. You see – I know my wife. I know her character. If you come to me and say, "Pastor Deb said so and so" – I'm going to know her enough to know if what you heard her say is what she really meant. I have no problem saying back, "That does not sound like Deb at all. I know her and that's not how she thinks. But I'll check it out with her." I don't get all upset and immediately lose my peace. Why? I know her. It's the same with God. When the enemy comes to you trying to cast doubt on God – don't believe him and don't lose your peace.

If the enemy tries to clog up your well by saying, "God must not love you if He allowed this to happen," – don't lose your peace. You just say to the devil – "I know God and God is love. Nothing can separate me from the love of God. So be gone in Jesus name!"

If the enemy tries to clog up your well by saying, "How can God be good and allow this to happen to you" – don't lose your peace. You just say to the devil – "I know God and God is good all the time. What you mean for harm, God works for good. In fact, God always works everything together for my good. So be gone in Jesus name!"

Anytime the enemy is able to steal your peace is an indication that you need to get to know God better!

So keep the living water flowing by the peace that comes from knowing God.

We see a second way the enemy tries to clog our wells and keep up from living water in Genesis 26:21.

Then they dug another well, but they quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah.

Sitnah means opposition or accusation. According to Revelation 12:10 Satan is ***the accuser of our brothers...***

Remember – all Satan really has to attack us is words.

Think of what he does. He:

Deceives – that's twisting God's word

Condemns – that's using words to put us down

Tempts – that's using words to get us to sin

Accuses – that's using words to slander us.

To accuse means to bring a charge against, to blame, to find fault with.

If Satan can't clog up your well the first way by blaming God, he will start blaming you, accusing you, condemning you. And here's the thing – he knows you. He knows how to push your buttons. He knows your past. He knows what he can bring up to bring you down! He knows what to bring up to cause you to give up! How do you overcome that? Genesis 26:32-33 says:

That day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, "We've found water!" He called it Shibah, and to this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.

Beersheba means the well of the oath – or the covenant. So, the way you overcome the accuser is by the new covenant in the blood of Jesus.

Revelation 12:11 says:

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

You overcome Satan by the blood of Jesus and the Word of God. How do you overcome Satan by the blood of Jesus? You understand the power of the blood and you remind the enemy that Jesus defeated and disarmed him by the cross. The shed blood of Jesus forgives all sin.

So when Satan brings up your sin, you bring up the blood.

When Satan speaks his lies, you speak the Word.

When Satan reminds you of your past, you remind him of his future.

The Bible promises us that if we resist the enemy He must flee!

So – keep the living water flowing freely.

Are your wells clogged or flowing freely? Is the living water of God flowing into you and through you? Flowing in is not enough – there must be outlets and well as inlets. There must be flow through.

A way to picture this is to think of the two major lakes in Israel – the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Both of these lakes are fed by the same Jordan River, but one is alive and one is dead. Why is that? The answer is the fact that the Jordan River flows into the north side of the Sea of Galilee and then out the south side. It then flows down to the Dead Sea where it has no outlet. It stops there and because there is no outlet, the water in the Dead Sea is stagnant and cannot sustain life.

What we learn from that is this: Inlet + No Outlet = A Dead Sea
Apply that to Christians and you get this: Inlet + No Outlet = Dead Christians.
I don't mean physically dead, but spiritually dead.

This explains why many believers are not growing and lack spiritual life. You see, it's possible to attend church, listen to sermons, and read the Bible - and still not have a growing spiritual life. These Christians are like the Dead Sea. They have several "inlets" but no "outlets."

To be vibrant and useful believers, we must not only "take in" all we can, but we must also "give out" in service to others! We need to be rivers, not reservoirs. God's living water should flow to us and through us! As Jesus said in Matthew 10:8 ***Freely you have received, freely give.***

So many people think like this: I'm feeling spiritually stagnant – so I must need to read more Scripture or hear more sermons or go to another seminar or church. Well – all those things are good – but I want you to know that what you probably need is not another sermon or seminar.

You probably don't need more input - You need more output!

You probably don't need to take in more – you need to give out more!

You need to unstop the wells.

Let the Living Water flow.

Begin to give out to others. Look for needs and meet them.

Be a channel of blessing.

That's what keeps the wells unclogged and the water fresh.

Water must flow to stay fresh! Jesus said in John 7:37-38

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.

Too many Christians do the first part right, they go to Jesus with their spiritual thirst. They know that only He can satisfy the deepest needs of their hearts. So – we go to Him and drink deeply.

But if we want to grow and stay green and growing – we must do the second part of that verse and let the living water that is in us flow out!

I want to close today by asking you – Do you have living water?
Jesus said in John 4:14

Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

When you place your faith in Jesus Christ – He quenches your thirst with living water and He gives you eternal life.

Are you trying to quench your thirst with everything in the world?

None of that will satisfy you for long. Only Jesus will.

I encourage you today to draw water from the well of salvation.

You've tried everything else and it's not worked – try Jesus!

Let His shed blood do its work of unclogging your well and giving you the Living Water of eternal life.