

## Working Well

Since I've been helping Mom build her house in Montana, I've been thinking a lot lately about digging wells. Hers has been quite the project, from hitting a boulder under the ground and starting a second well that hasn't produced much water.

But with all the thoughts about wells, I started to think about another well story from John 4. As Jesus sat with a Samaritan woman, we saw him expertly developing a well of his own — deep within her heart. What can we learn from the Master Teacher about digging-in and teaching the lost around us?

**Big Idea:** Developing strong and productive believers starts by developing ourselves as productive workers in the field of the lost.

### Pick a Spot

How do you know where to start digging? What's down below the surface ready waiting to be uncovered?

*"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest." (John 4:35).*

Jesus also said that *"the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few"* (Luke 10:2), and in Paul's journeys in Acts, that's exactly what we see as thousands come to know the Lord with only a few eager preachers traveling around (at first). Find inspiration from their willingness to search anywhere and everywhere for lost souls ready to be found! Set aside prejudice and assumption and get to work. See beyond their sin. It's not within your control to know how someone will respond, but that shouldn't stop you from trying.

### Know Your Equipment

How are you going to dig a well if you don't have the right gear or know how to use it?

*"A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' ... Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"" (John 4:7, 29)*

When you see the deft hand of someone like Philip who can start from Isaiah 53 and work to the waters of baptism, you realize how important Bible study is in our work (Acts 8:26-39). Get to know your Bible. Understand how to use God's word to address people's real-life issues — focusing on leading them out of darkness. Know how people see you — your sincerity and love — following the Lord and realize your example speaks volumes as well.

### Develop the Small Trickles

As you dig deeper, you might notice small pockets of water along the way. Maybe some of those trickles of water can be developed into a much bigger one. It's called *perforation* when they poke holes into the ground at different levels.

*"Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet'" (John 4:16-19).*

Paul used people's sins — particularly idolatry — as a gateway to reach them (Acts 17:22-23). But notice how deftly he approaches people's sins. Like Jesus, he's not shocked, offended, or violently angry that lost people are lost — he respectfully cared and wanted to lead them away from that condition! When we talk to our friends and neighbors in the world, let's not mistake open doors for closed ones. You might assume someone's sins would close their ears, but often it's someone's sins that will lead them to see their need!

### **Be Patient, to a Point**

Water may not be hiding just below the surface. In most cases you're going to have to dig deep. But don't keep going forever! And watch out for boulders along the way.

*"Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you seek?' or, 'Why are you talking with her?' ... Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples said to one another, 'Has anyone brought him something to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.'" (John 4:27, 31-34)*

Wouldn't it be nice if every interaction was as effective as Philip's in Acts 8? But most people are more than a chariot ride away from the waters of baptism. So we put in the work, and patiently wait for God to do the work. But when we see the lack of a response, don't forget to shake the dust off our feet and move on (Matt. 10:14; Acts 13:51).

### **Conclusion**

May God bless us all toward working well in the field of the lost! Let's commit ourselves to reaching as many as we're able, using God's Word skillfully as we patiently develop others into faithful disciples of Christ.