

# Genesis

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

[ 0 : 0 0 ] I direct your thoughts to a word found in the book of Genesis, 49th chapter of the book of Genesis, and words found in the 24th chapter of the book of Genesis, 24th verse of the 49th chapter. But his bow abode in strength. The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.

Now, we have here before us perhaps something in the same line of teaching that we had this morning in respect to David's conflict and the many attacks made upon him in that particular phase of his life through which he passed, and indeed through which all God's people in some measure or other have to pass. We now turn to one of the great characters in the word of God. And these are the words of his father Jacob, that dear man now coming to the very close of his life. And expressing the last words of that long life that he had lived.

And the words that he expresses are concerning his son Joseph. He tells us what he was. He tells us also where he was. But in the words of our text, he gives us what his experience was. And that is indeed the most precious and important thing. He says his bow abode in strength.

Now, when we look at the word of Jacob and his description of his son Joseph, and the very fact that he brings out here in this word that he was the subject and the attack of many enemies, others who sought to overthrow him and slay him and destroy him, Jacob no doubt had to come home and look into his own heart and to recognize and realize that in some measure, at least, he was responsible for the plight into which his son Joseph had had to pass. When I say that, I refer, of course, to the indulgence of Jacob towards his son Joseph. He singled him out among all his sons as a special favorite. He, as you remember, he made special signs of that favoritism.

And in this, Jacob was unwise. We have to acknowledge this. The word of God clearly shows and demonstrates the un wisdom of favoritism, whatever it might be. One thing we need to avoid at all costs, whatever department it may be that we are. We need to avoid all kinds of favoritism. We are very liable and very subject to it. Here was a son, Jacob's son, the eldest son of his wife, Rachel, whom he loved so much, and who had been long before she was able to bring forth. And when she brought him forth, his name had a very peculiar and a very striking significance. His name, Joseph, means adding. And she therefore had faith to believe that she would bring forth yet another son to Jacob that he dearly desired and longed to see.

[ 5 : 3 5 ] But his name and all about him had a special attraction for the heart and mind of Jacob. And he indulged him unwisely because the very fact that he showed so much favoritism to the son, Joseph, made Joseph the target of attack.

His brethren began to hate him. They saw that he had taken, to a large extent, a place in their father's heart that they ought to have and to share.

And when people seem to be especially going out of their way to favor others, it is almost bound to stir up enmity of some kind or other.

And this may well cause those who are quite innocent, it may well cause them grievous pain, suffering, and sorrow in the way that they take, as it did with Joseph.

And I cannot but feel that when Jacob uttered these words, which he does just previous to our text, and he says the archers sorely tried him, grieved him, and shot at him.

[ 7 : 04 ] Why did these archers shoot at Joseph? Why did they take him out and select him as a target for their attacks? Well, it was undoubtedly the folly, the unwisdom of Jacob in his undue indulgence of his son Joseph in his early days.

But then again, on the other hand, one would suggest that there was no father that had greater joy and more real pleasure to be able to say what he did about his son Joseph.

I want us just to look at that as we come to our text. Because Jacob tells us here very clearly what he was.

He says in the previous verse, he says, He was a fruitful bough. Oh, what a declaration to be able to make.

He was a fruitful bough. He was not a useless creature. His life was not an empty one. He had not been a man to serve himself or to wrap himself up in his own way, life, and purpose.

[ 8 : 38 ] He was a fruitful bough. And that means he was a living bough. Dead boughs are never fruitful. You may have trees and there are abundance of trees about in these days, since the plague came on the trees in recent times.

Go around the country, you see here and there the places are studied with dead trees. And it's an awful sight, really. It's an appalling spectacle. You know that there's no likelihood ever again to be any leaf on those trees.

And if they're fruitful trees, no fruit. They're dead, dead at the roots. But there's one thing about the children of God, the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

They may be very poor and insignificant, but they're living. They're living their fruitful boughs. They may not have much fruit, but if they have any fruit, it's a proof that they are living things indeed.

And this is what Jacob says. And I cannot but feel the gratification of this dear old man just before he died. For be able, able to, be able to testify.

[ 10 : 04 ] And don't forget this. This is inspired testimony. It's not something that Jacob thought out. It's not something that Jacob concocted or wished to plaster, we might say, upon his son Joseph.

A lot of that sort of thing among men go out. Men go out simply to pat people on their backs and to say things they don't really mean and are probably not at all true.

But this, this is what I would have you know, is the inspired testimony of this man Jacob. Therefore it is God's testimony.

Not only Jacob's. It is God's testimony about Joseph. He was a fruitful bough. And then he tells us where he was.

He was a fruitful bough by a well. You cannot see a well in a vineyard. The vineyard, the wall that we shall speak of in a moment, would hide all such a thing as a well.

[ 11 : 18 ] But this well was the secret of the life, the strength, and the fruitfulness of this vine, of which Jacob says Joseph was a fruitful bough.

He was a fruitful bough by a well. You may wonder sometimes how a Christian can really endure. I sometimes think of these Russian believers, and there are some wonderful people in Russia being persecuted at this very time, put into prison, shut up in cells, only about nine feet by six or something like that.

Hardly capable of lying down and finding real rest. And they're kept like this on short commons, food that will never nourish them really, for weeks and weeks and weeks.

And why? Because they will hold on to their faith in Christ. They could throw it all away.

They could have their liberty. They could have all that other people in that land might receive. But no, there's something that they hold on to, and it's more dear, more precious to them, than life and its comforts and its liberties, and that is their love for Christ.

[ 12 : 54 ] Now we might say, how is it that these people can endure these things? Could we do it if we were in the same position? Would we do it?

Would our faith stand if we were subjected to these kind of conditions? That's a question. We ought to ask ourselves very seriously whether, if we were put into these positions of having been deprived of so much that is of real value to our comfort and life, would we hold our faith?

Why was it then that Joseph was a fruitful bough, in spite of all the infirmities and afflictions and oppositions, all the tormenting trials that came over his life, wave after wave of them?

Why was it? He was a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well. There's the secret. The well cannot be seen.

People pass by this vineyard. They look and see this beautiful vine, and it's creeping over the wall, full of fruit. They cannot see the cause, the root cause of it all.

[ 14 : 20 ] They cannot see that well deep down in the soil, but it's there, constantly flowing, never changing, ever producing, that life that keeps the vine alive and the fruit being born.

He was there then, a fruitful bough by a well. Now what does this bring before our minds? Well really it is the very thing that every Christian must experience and will experience.

What is it that really keeps a real believer going, maintains their life and their faith, enables them to put on a profession and to walk in accordance with it?

What is it that enables them to meet all kinds of opposition and difficulties, unique and strange and mysterious?

It's the secret of having a well. In other words, to have our roots well founded and embedded in Christ, in his love and in his atoning blood.

[ 15 : 45 ] Oh, that precious well, the well of the love of Christ, deep, sweet well of love it is, and it is unfathomable, it is unquenchable, it is without any degree of failing whatsoever, it is the deep, sweet well of love.

And every real believer, they may not always recognize it, they may not always experience it, but their roots are deep down in that secret well of divine love and divine grace.

A fruitful bow by a well. Then again, Jacob says about Joseph, whose branches run over the wall.

I think this is a very beautiful figure when we think of it. You see what the suggestion is. Here is a vine, it's been enclosed in a wall, wall built up all around it, the vine dresser, planted the vine within, well within the confines of this vineyard, but it was that wonderful well that was there.

Whether the vineyard, the vine dresser, knew of the existence of the well, we know not, but he built the vineyard, he planted his vine, he intended it to be for his own use and his own benefit, but what happens?

[ 17 : 26 ] It's such a vigorous growth, this vine, that it goes out and goes over the wall and there are some of the best fruits that the vine bears hanging over the wall and a hungry thirsty passerby may well be able to refresh themselves, partake of the sweet, precious fruits of the vine because this vine is a vine that reaches over the wall.

My dear friends, this does give a most wonderful illustration of what we ought to be and by God's grace what we must be and I no doubt whatever by the same grace you desire to be if you belong to the Lord and know anything of him and if he has dealt with you by his wonderful grace you want that your life might be such, so filled with his fullness, so animated by his spirit, so regulated by his teaching and directed by his holy word that you become fruitful, beneficial to those around you.

You see, we sometimes keep ourselves to ourselves almost exclusively. I'm not advocating great widespread departures and breaking down of all kinds of barriers which some people might do but what I am advocating is this, let us seek and pray most earnestly that we may not live in vain, we may not live empty lives, that we may not just serve ourselves but that we might live for the glory of Christ and that we might live to honour him and to serve him and to be beneficial to those who need him.

There are multitudes of people around us who need the Saviour and it may be appointments among the appointments of God that you and I might be the instruments to bring knowledge of that blessed Saviour to these people.

Who can tell? Wonderful things have taken place among us as we know full well. Wonderful incidents have happened in this way.

[ 20 : 12 ] People being strangely moved and drawn out of their darkness and the way they have taken, drawn out and brought to the Lord Jesus by the instrumentality of those who love him and fear him and serve him.

Jacob said then something very wonderful about Joseph. He was a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well, a well of infinite grace and love, so deep, so blessed, so unailing and also he was like a branch that went over the wall.

When I was a boy I used to have a master, headmaster of the school where I attended at one time. He was a clergyman and as far as I know he was a good sort of man, very severe, quite a disciplinarian, but I believe he was a good man.

He used to say this, he used to take some parts of the scripture and explain them and I remember him expounding this particular part one day and he said this, now boys, I hope you will be over the wall boys in your lives.

I've never forgotten it. I thought it was a very striking thing to say and it seemed to enter into my mind and I've never forgotten it because it was more than 70 years ago now when that was uttered.

[ 21 : 58 ] I want you boys, he said, to seek to be over the wall boys. Now, this is what Jacob says then and another thing he goes on to say now that the archers have shot at Joseph.

You see, he had arrows shot at him. These archers, sad to say, were his own brethren first of all.

Nothing can be more painful than when brethren hit at one another or seek to injure one of their own. It's one of the saddest accounts in the whole of the word of God, I think, when we read of how these brethren, sons of Jacob, took this man, this one, whom Jacob had so highly favoured and sold him to the Egyptians, put him into a slavery, not knowing whatever his life might become.

They shot at him. Here is this dreamer, they said, here he comes, let us kill him. Only by God's great hand of providence where they preserve from taking the life of Joseph.

And again, when he comes to Potiphar, house of Potiphar, the one of the very man he serves and the wife he serves to betrays him and succeeds in through a spite and hatred of Joseph to secure his imprisonment and there he is in prison.

[ 23 : 53 ] Where is God? where is his faith? Long time, years, he lies there and then there comes one little inkling, some little turn of events that seems to have portent of liberty in it.

Two men come, both of them servants of Pharaoh, one the baker and the other the butler. they both have dreams in one night and they wake with great anxious and trembling fear because they cannot understand the meaning of the dreams and this Hebrew man comes in, this poor prisoner that's been dragging his life along around this prison.

He comes in and they tell him their dream and he interprets it. Three days he says to the baker Pharaoh will lift your head up and take away your life.

The other man three days and Pharaoh will elevate you again to the old position you once occupied and give you all the honors. You'll be restored and you'll be back again where you were before.

Everything will be all right and both those dreams came true. but as Joseph trying to seize the opportunity and you know we have to leave God to do all this.

[ 25 : 35 ] This is one of the instances in life that we see how wise it is to leave everything in the hands of God. Because Joseph he comes and he tries to get the butler to advocate his cause.

Soon as he gets back into Pharaoh's service again. Be sure and do one thing says Joseph in payment of what I've done for you.

Ask Pharaoh or tell Pharaoh about my case. Here am I in prison unjustly. Tell Pharaoh and ask him to do justice to me.

Now you know if Joseph's request had succeeded we should heard nothing more of Joseph on the annals and pages of the word of God because it was not God's time.

Two years had to come along and pass by before this was fulfilled. world. You see there was to be a famine and it hadn't been appointed yet.

[ 26 : 50 ] God hadn't designed it as yet. It was to come and begin in two years time. So it must be two years hence that Joseph gets his freedom from prison.

Not now. Now let us learn something from this. You get into trouble. you see oh you find you think there's some little way out.

You can see a beam of light here. You can see a hope there. Perhaps a word comes to you. You say this is it. Now let us now is the time. And you go to work.

You put every effort in it. You say this is the way. This is what I'm going and then God shuts it all down and you can't understand it. Two years has God forgotten to be gracious?

the butler forgot Joseph and then Pharaoh has a dream and the butler remembers the man that interpreted his dream.

[ 27 : 55 ] He's sent for. He hardly has time to wash and shave and appear before Pharaoh before night was closing in.

He was the prime minister of all Egypt. Prime minister of all Egypt. This is how God works.

But now I must come to my text. I leave a lot I'm afraid on the circumference but here we come. Now Joseph tells us what his experience was here.

He tells us what happened to him. Where he was and what he was. Now he tells us what his experience was.

He says to us here his bow abode in strength. Well now I think we can see this very clearly that the archers were shooting at Joseph.

[ 29 : 04 ] Joseph. Joseph had an arrow and he had bow and he had arrows but his arrows were not being shot at his enemies.

They were not being shot at the archers that were shooting at him. the arrows that Joseph had were going upward.

He was shooting all his arrows upward to heaven. His bow abode in strength.

You see if he'd been shooting at his enemies he would have soon expended all his arrows. But he kept shooting his arrows up to heaven and there was no diminishment of those arrows.

They kept as soon as he needed one there was one in his sheath ready to go upward toward heaven. His bow abode in strength. And as Jacob says the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.

[ 30 : 20 ] My friends it's a wonderful thing when God strengthens us to pray to him at the throne of grace. To give us a little strength.

We feel it when we have it. We feel we've got something and we're getting somewhere when we have that strength put into us to cry to God to call upon him.

To send our arrows of prayer upward to the God of all grace. we feel if we get strength to do this. We feel we've got something.

We've aimed at something. And we've struck in the right direction. We haven't these poor enemies, these archers all around us. There's some can shoot well and some cannot.

But it doesn't matter. Their arrows do not count. They mean nothing. Whatever men may do to you, they cannot hurt your soul. they cannot deprive you of your real faith and your love for Christ.

[ 31 : 26 ] These things are beyond their reach. Therefore, there's no point whatever in a Christian shooting back. I think we saw that this morning with David.

David had these arrows, David had these archers all around him. David had to see him. He never knew hardly wherever he went, who was a friend and who was a foe.

He goes to the house of the high priest and there's Doeg there, the Edomite. And as sure as anything, he's the informer that tells Saul where David is.

You see, sometimes a person may hardly know where to walk and hardly know who their friends are. They can hardly distinguish the difference between their friends and their enemies, but it's no value at all to any believer to be shooting, level shooting, may I say, at the enemies that may be surrounding.

The great wisdom is to shoot upward to God. the hands were made strong, and my word, we do need an archer does need his hands to be made strong.

[ 32 : 57 ] The constant pulling upon the string of the bow will soon make the hand, as it were, cleave to itself.

But if there is a secret strength being added, if someone comes along and lays their mighty hands upon the arms of the archer that is shooting upwards, then there's a mighty refreshing, renewing, invigorating of strength and power, and upward go the arrows.

perhaps it's a word of encouragement, perhaps it's a word of counsel, perhaps it's a direction to us tonight, to know what we have to do, if we are among these people who are the subject of attacks from the archers.

And if whatever it may be, some may think they attack with the just claws behind it, others attack simply because of the hatred of our religion, others attack because they feel they've got something that they haven't.

all these things come into play with the child of God, but in no instance does the word of God tell the believer to fight back or to aim their arrows at their enemies, but to shoot upwards.

[ 34 : 37 ] The bow abode in strength. look at poor dear Hezekiah. He turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord.

The Lord came and sent Isaiah to send him an answer and to tell him that he had heard his prayers. What a wonderful thing when he heard that. I have heard thy prayers.

You would like God to come or send somebody to you and to say this, I have heard your prayers. You may say, what, my prayers? Yes.

But my prayers are so poor. Yes, your prayers, I have heard them and I will add to thy days 15 years.

But what does he say? He says, I am oppressed, undertaken for me. My eyes fail. with looking upward.

[ 35 : 36 ] You see, he was one who was looking upward. He wasn't looking at his enemies. He wasn't looking at the facts. He was being surrounded with enemies at that time, but he was looking outside, not at them, he was looking above them.

He was looking upward and yet he says, my eyes fail. With looking upward, you may feel you are in the same position. You've prayed and prayed over things that seem never to move or change or turn in your favor.

You go on praying and then you say, is it any real point in continuing to pray? They seem to be stronger than I am.

They seem to be in a better position than I am. But God says to his people, go on, pray on. God, thy strength will be in the looking upward and in the shooting upward of those arrows of desire and prayer to the God of heaven, God of all grace.

So his bow abode in strength, not his own strength, strength, the strength of the mighty God of Jacob.

[ 37 : 03 ] And so it will be with you and with me, dear friends. We shall need strength, there's no doubt about it, we need it, we shall need it tomorrow.

I know not what your position may be or what your experience or where you may be yourselves tomorrow, but I can say this, guarantee this, you will need strength, a strength that you cannot give to yourself.

You need it to come from God. Then lift up your heart, lift up your eyes, send those arrows of prayer upward to heaven and your bow will abide in strength.

Amen. Amen. they sent them 40.

140. When I was around with grief, my heart would end the guidance. Outless and far more relief, to heaven I lift my eyes.

[ 38 : 28 ] The woman's voice of Jesus for death. The woman's voice of Jesus for death.

The woman's voice of Jesus for death.

The woman's voice of Jesus for death.

The woman's voice of Jesus for death. The woman's voice of Jesus for death. The woman's voice of Jesus for death.

The woman's voice of Jesus for death. The woman's voice of Jesus for death.

[ 40 : 45 ] The woman's voice of Jesus for death. The woman's voice of Jesus for death.

The woman's voice of Jesus for death. The woman's voice of Jesus for death. The woman's voice of Jesus for death.

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The woman's voice of Jesus for death. The woman's voice of Jesus for death.

[ 42 : 01 ] The woman's voice of Jesus for death. Oh Lord, we would thank thee for death. Oh Lord, we would thank thee for thy word.

And for the wonderful counsel that is therein. we ask that we may have grace to follow that and to send up our prayers to thee and put our trust in thee and prove that thou art our defence.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God and the fellowship of the Spirit be with us now and evermore.

Amen. Amen.