

Bow and Arrows

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[0:00] All right, well, like I said, it's good to be back. And I always appreciate an opportunity. I'm going to grab a stool.

I hope you don't mind. But I appreciate the opportunity to get up here and bring something forth. And, man, you guys had great services.

I listened to the messages. And Brother Gip, what more to say? Brother Gip, amen. And so sorry I wasn't able to partake of that, but I did do it vicariously, amen.

So this morning I want to take a few minutes and just go over some things. You know, Pastor has recently preached about Exodus 17 and how Moses, when his hands were raised, he had victory. And they prevailed. And when he dropped his hands, he started to lose. And that just got me thinking about a bunch of things. Amalek started to control the battle and how Joshua discomfited him with the edge of the sword.

[1:13] And as he was going through that, you know, I'm a guy, and I was thinking, yeah, sword and dagger and bows and arrows.

And I started thinking about all the weapons that we have to battle with. And, you know, the first things I'm sure you think about, why don't you turn over to Exodus chapter 6.

And this is all in the way of introduction. And as with me, my introductions sometimes go longer than the points that I'm preaching. But that's just the way it is.

So chapter 6, 14, you think of defensive instruments and you think of this, I thought of this verse immediately. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.

A breastplate is a defensive item, right? It's to fend off, being stabbed or shot. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. It's like having steel shoes at the workplace, right?

[2:18] Keep stuff from bouncing off your toes. And above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye stand, able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

Helmet of salvation, again, defensive, right? Everything on that list, with the exception of the sword, is a defensive item.

Then, of course, there's offensive weapons in the Bible. The offensive weapons in use at the time, I believe, can be divided into three categories.

Short-range weapons, number one, are those used in hand-to-hand combat, which would be the sword, the dagger, and a spear. Because you're keeping them there, that's where you're being defensive with those items.

[3:23] Then you have medium-range weapons, which are designed to be thrown a short distance. And you can throw a spear, but most spears were not really designed to be thrown.

They were designed to be thrust at. And then you had the javelin, which is a lighter, it's like a big arrow, if you will. And that was to be thrown far.

And in times, they actually made throwers for the javelin, or for the light spear, different things that it's been called. And it gives you leverage, so it has a handle, comes back like this, and a notch.

And you stick it in there, and as you throw it, you get the leverage of that whip to throw it further. But then the last item there that I thought of, and which has always been a, have a dear part in my heart, is the bow.

The bow. Bow and arrow. And we read about it all the time. And, you know, when I was a young boy growing up in Tujunga, I was always looking for a weapon.

[4:38] I mean, we lived in the hills. There were rabbits. There were snakes. There were birds. There were skunks. There was all kinds of stuff. And as a little kid, I just wanted them.

I wanted to get them. And I don't know. It's just the way I was raised. And, you know, when I went out hunting with my dad as a young man, he'd let me take along, you know, at first I could take along the BB gun.

And he taught me how to shoot it and where to shoot it and what I could shoot at. And we'd be out hunting and he'd see a big old jackrabbit. And he'd say, shoot that jackrabbit, son.

And I'm like, Dad, Dad, give me your gun. With your gun, I can kill it. Not with my BB gun. I was always trying to upgrade, right? And, you know, I'd shoot at it three times with the BB gun and miss every time.

But in my mind, if I just had my dad's gun, I was going to hit that rabbit and we were going to eat it for dinner. And so, you know, unfortunately, though, the guns were not allowed in the back 40.

[5:39] Well, the back five acres we had. And that was the hillside. And if my dad wasn't there, the guns didn't go out. And that was just a rule. So I was back to slingshots and sticks.

And we'd whittle up sticks and try to throw them and grab ground squirrels. I'm not talking about gray squirrels. I'm talking about ground squirrels, which are just long-tailed rats, right?

They just dig holes, break the horse's ankles. They're good for nothing. And big, fluffy, gray squirrels. Now, they're good for eating, but we weren't allowed to shoot them at my house because my mom loved them.

They were pretty. So anyway, one day I was in the back of the garage. My dad had a gun cabinet. And it was a plywood gun cabinet that he made in high school.

And it had a big old lock on it and stuff. And I'm roaming through there in the back, and the gun cabinet was unlocked. And I'm like, wow, what's going on?

[6:42] So I open it. Well, it was unlocked because Dad took all the guns and moved them into a gun safe where I couldn't get at them for sure. But in the back of that closet, there was a, that cabinet, there was a bow and a few arrows.

There was actually two bows and a couple arrows. And man, oh man, I thought, that's it right there. If I could get that bow. And I was, I don't know, eight.

And the bow was a long bow, and it was as tall as I am. But, you know, that's just a little obstacle to overcome, right? So I went to Dad, of course, and I said, Dad, Dad, Dad, Dad, there's an arrow back there in that unlocked cabinet that I can play with, right?

He's like, what are you talking about? And I said, you're bow and arrow back there. And man, Dad, if you could just let me get at that. I mean, I'm sure that my grades will improve because it's going to teach me concentration, and it's going to get me, and it's going to make me a better student.

And I'll be, you know, and on and on and on. And I think actually it's because I said, please, please, please, 10,000 times. He finally said, okay, let's go. So he went out and set up a bale of hay back in the draw and showed me how to string it, showed me how to shoot it.

[8:03] And, man, as they say, you know, things changed. I was going, and the rest is history. So from that day forward at about eight, I started using a bow and an arrow.

And today I'd just like to take a few minutes and talk about that bow arrow and mainly the archer that shoots it.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word, for the word of God. We thank you for the opportunity to meet here freely in this nation. I thank you for all the things you've done in my life and the things you've taught me.

And even before I knew you personally, Lord, the things that applied from your book that I could read and look back on my childhood and how they make so much sense.

And we appreciate, again, the opportunity to be here. I pray you'd bless this time, bless the words that come out of my mouth, help them to be pure, holy.

[9:04] And, God, that your people might just glean a little something from them. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Characteristics of the bow and the archer.

So the bow was practiced by Ishmael. So there's like 500 verses that I have on the bow and the arrow. So I'm not going to ask you to turn to them all.

I'll just kind of go through them. But in Genesis 21, 20, And God was with the lad, and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer. It was practiced by Esau.

And God was with the lad, and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness. And, well, that's what I just read. Wrong verse. First Samuel. And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, and as though I shot the mark.

That was practiced by Jonathan. And you remember the story. David was out there, and Jonathan got with him when Saul was, when, who was it?

[10:04] His dad. Yeah. Thank you. Saul. And so he went out there, and he said, listen, if I shoot an arrow, I'm going to go talk to Dad. And if they, you know, if he says good, then we'll shoot out there.

But if not, if the boy had, the lad comes back, that means you've got to leave because he's out to get you. So he shot two arrows out there, and the kid went out to find him, and then he shot one behind him, and he said, you need to turn around and come back.

And that was the signal that things aren't good. You're going to have to leave. And then not only that, it was practiced by the Israelites in 1 Samuel.

Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow. Behold, it is written in the book of Jasser. And then 2 Corinthians, the sons of Reuben and the Gadites and half of the tribe of Manasseh, valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword and to shoot with the bow.

And skillful in war were four in 40,703 score and went out to war. And we just go on and on and on on all these spots where we're talking about the bow and the archer.

[11:13] So it's definitely something that God used. But one thing I want to note before we get totally into this, a side light of this imagery of the bow was that it was used for God's judgment, God's judgment as well.

So not only was it a weapon of offense to use, but it was a weapon God used for judgment. Job complains, his archers surround me.

He pierces my heart and does not pity. He pours out all my gall on the ground. He breaks me with wound upon wound. And that's judgment coming back at him.

Psalm 11, 2, turn there if you will. Psalm 11, 2. Psalm 11, 2. Psalm 11, 2.

For lo, the wicked bend their bow. They make ready their arrow upon the string that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. And in 64, Psalm 64, 2 through 4, it says, Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked, from the instruction of the workers of iniquity, who wet their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the perfect.

[12:41] Suddenly do they shoot at him and fear not. Then it goes on in Jeremiah 9 and Ephesians 6, 16. It's above all, taking the shield of faith, which ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Right? So judgment comes from God sometimes. And from other times, it just comes from battle. As we're moving forward, the devil's always trying to stop us and to hold us back.

And sometimes it's not always face to face. It's not always with that sword or with that dagger right up in your face. Sometimes you ever just been moving along and you feel like God would have you to do something and you're out there.

And, man, you just can't get any momentum going. You can't get moving. It seems like something's struggling against you. Well, maybe that's that bow shot from afar, from atop the castle wall, or from the hillside.

You have no idea how far an arrow will fly. Okay? We always talk about rifles and, you know, a little .22 has a mile range.

[13:57] Now, I'm not talking about accuracy at a mile, but I'm talking about you shoot it at a 45-degree angle and that thing's going to go one mile.

Well, with a bow, it's not quite that far, but it's 500, 700 yards. That's a lot. Seven football fields. That's a long way. You can't just be walking along and all of a sudden you hear a whistle. And right next to you, here's one of those fiery darts.

So we have to be aware of that. We have to be aware that things come from afar, not only right in our face. So let's look at three things here.

And like I said, I'm over halfway through and I'm just getting to my points. But let's look at three things here about the bow and the archer.

[14:56] All right. So first of all, number one, you have to have a strong stance. Okay? I was going to bring some bows in here and, you know, I thought, I know, I'll get Gary to bring his fancy compound bow.

And all of that stuff. And, you know, there's a lot to bow shooting. Okay? The first thing I was taught. Now, my dad, I learned on a long bow. And the thing with the long bow is it doesn't have a left or a right hand.

All the new bows have a place for you to set the arrow on, an arrow rest. And most bows are right-handed. So later, as I got nicer recurves and stuff, I had to shoot right-handed.

And you see how I pull back like that? If you're just going, you don't have a chance, right? But with my dad's long bow, because I was short and it was long, I literally would hold it.

And I had to twist the bow to the side for the arrow to rest on my hand because that was the rest.

And you pull back. And as you learn, you have to be ready to go.

[16:03] But you have to have a strong sense, stance. You can't stand like this and shoot a bow. And it's not like the cartoons where you go out of your quiver and shoot and shoot.

And it's not like the cowboy and Indian movies where they're running on their horse and shooting. You have to have a stable, strong stance. Matthew 7, 24.

Turn if you will there. Matthew 7, verse 24.

Matthew 7, verse 24.

And the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell. And great was the fall of it. We have to have a firm foundation. And when you're shooting, you have to have a firm foundation.

[17:26] Occasionally in life, you'll not have the stance, the stand that you want, the stance. You'll not be able to actually get perfect. You might have to lean around something.

When you're hunting, you might have to lean around a tree because the doggone deer doesn't want to come right near. He's going to come right here, and that's where I'm going to shoot. And all of a sudden, he's right there, and there's branches and bushes.

So now you're kind of twisted. But the ideal shot is with a strong stance. 1 Corinthians says, Watch ye stand fast in faith, which you like men, be strong.

You have to have a strong stance. We need to have a strong biblical foundation, right?

That's where it all starts. We have to get in the book. We have to know what it says. And we have to have a foundation if we're going to fight. But when guys join the military, they go to basic training.

[18:35] And that basic training has to be our Bible. They don't know what they're doing. They think we're just going to go shoot and have fun.

That's not the case. They learn that they have to have a strong stance, that they have to be able to rely on the people around them, that they're trained that when you take a shot with a bow in the bow days, you right away take two steps back.

And as you take two steps back, the guy behind you takes a step forward because he already has his bow drawn. And that's the way battle was done. And you have to know that.

You have to be expecting that. You need to be reading your Bible. You need to be in prayer. And you've got to attend church. Amen. You have to have a strong foundation.

You cannot pour from a cup that's empty. Amen. Your cup's got to be full. You have to have that training. Second of all, you have to have a secure anchor point.

What do I mean by that? Okay, so first of all, you take the stance. And you get balanced, ready. Knees slightly bent. You're strong. Wind blows. People push you.

[19:55] You're not going to move. You pull up the bow. You pull it back. And you pull the bow to your cheek right here. And that's your anchor. So

every time your arm comes up, you pull the bow back, and you touch your cheek.

You know why? Because your cheek is that answer, your anchor. Believe it or not, ladies, when you're driving a car, and you turn your head, your hands turn too, and you swerve off to the side. Okay? Oh, I'm sorry. I meant everybody. So when you're driving, you've got to remember that. Okay? So the same thing goes with the bow.

So when you pull up, and you're anchored here, and you turn your head, look what happens. Okay? Okay? If you're doing this, nothing's happening.

And you have to secure that spot. You have to take that, and it has to be familiar. It can't be here, then here, then here, then here.

[21:03] When I first started shooting a bow, I wasn't even strong enough to pull my dad's bow back to that anchor point. So I used to do this, and I'd lock my elbow down here.

It wasn't ideal, but it was the same spot every time that I could repeat it. Okay? So we have to have a secure anchor point.

The anchor point will ensure that you're aiming at the right target. Right? You have to look at what you're aiming, and I just described that. As you turn your head, the rest of you is going to turn with it if you have a secure anchor point.

What is your target? What are you aiming for? What are your goals for yourself this year, for this day, for this week? What are your goals for your family members?

What's your goals for a church? You have to have a secure anchor point. Fixed. Fastened. That's the definition of anchor point and secure.

[22:10] Fixed and fastened. Philippians 3.13 says, Brother, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do. Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Paul was focused on his mark. Amen?

And he was focused on his target because he realized he has a high calling from God. Brethren, we have that same high calling.

Amen? And we have to have a strong stance. We have to have a secure anchor point. But last of all, number three, we have to have stamina.

And, I mean, quite frankly, I'm up here sitting down. You know why? Because I don't have the stamina to stand. And I'll tell you why.

[23:14] Because I beat my body as a kid. Because I thought I was invincible. When I was 40, I started getting some aches and pains.

And there was this wide HR director of mine that said, Russ, you pay for the things you do in your 20s through your 40s, you pay for in your 50s.

And I'm like, ah, yeah, right. He was a marathon runner. His time cut in half when he turned 50. He didn't run any less. He just got broke down.

We got old. So if you're a little older, you've got to rely on the stamina that you built a little older.

Not than me. Just, I mean, a little older. You have to rely on some of that stamina from your past. Because, quite frankly, I'm not getting on the leg machine anymore.

[24:15] It's just not going to happen. You know, my knees are blown up, all that stuff. All the things I did have kind of broken me down. But because I have a firm foundation, because I've studied, because I have an anchor point, when the time comes, my body automatically locks in, drops down, pulls back to here.

And I can go forth. Okay? Pulling the string back on a bow is difficult. So, my dad's long bow, I think, had a 45-pound rod.

Okay? So, a common hunting bow size is 65 pounds. That means that when you pull back, you're holding 65 pounds right here.

Now, Gary's bow probably is a 65-pound bow. But it's a compound bow. And it's got pulleys and levers. So, when you pull it back, those cams offset it.

So, it might only have an 18-pound hold, they call it. Because it goes, 65, 18, because of the cams. All right?

[25:27] So, it makes it easier. But I didn't have that growing up as a kid. So, like I said, I shot to here. And then I got a bow where I could pull it back, a 45-pound bow, and hold it, a recurve.

And I recently shot a compound bow, 65-pound bow. And I'm telling you, the guys were laughing. Because I was like, ugh, to get it to crack past that point where I could hold it.

Then I could hold it. You know what I mean? But it takes stamina. When you go out hunting or you're backpacking and you're carrying all that stuff to get to the point where the animals are there you're going to kill, you can't just drive up to them.

Generally speaking, you've got to hike to them. It takes stamina. You might hike six hours, a couple miles to get to the point where you see. And then you have to have patience.

You have to wait for them to come to you. You have to then get to the point where, okay, I think he's going to come from that tree or round over to this.

[26:47] So, you can't wait until he's in the clear to pull your bow back. So, you're holding there. And sometimes it might be 15, 20 seconds.

Sometimes it might be two or three minutes. You have to have the stamina. You can't start shaking. You have to have that anchor point. You have to be steadfast in what you're doing in order to get the shot you want.

And that's what it takes. Sometimes we're walking down life and you see that arrow, like I said, and go next to you and you're trying to figure out where it's coming.

First thing you do is you run for cover. You run for cover. Amen. And then you figure out where it's coming from.

Then you've got to be ready. And you don't know. You lost sight of them. So, you have to have your bow drawn. You have to have the stamina to get through that.

[27:46] And unless you utilize those three things, the odds of a good shot aren't great.

They're just not great. Now, I spoke to you about having that stand, the strong stance, the secure anchor point, and then having stamina.

But one thing that I did not mention today is the arrow. The arrow. I could teach a, I don't know, eight-hour class on making arrows.

Remember I told you my dad had two arrows? Yeah. He had two bows and two arrows. You know why? Because he used to shoot, and as he lost the arrows, he didn't replace them.

And that's what happens. Sometimes we take shots, and the arrows go away. Well, you know, when I was a kid, there was no big five. You didn't just run down to big five and buy arrows.

[28:50] You know, you had to go to Shawnee Sporting Goods across from Sunland Park, and he had racks of arrows, and you'd touch it. And my dad would say, son, don't touch that arrow. And I'm like, what's up, dad?

He's like, that arrow's 12 bucks. Hoo, 12 bucks. That was a lot of money back then. You know what I mean? So my dad said, you need practice arrows.

You need the dog. But, dad, how can I kill a deer with a practice arrow? Well, you better save money from your paper route. And I just couldn't do that. I didn't have the patience.

So I started making my arrows. So we'd go track down the trees. I'd read all about it. Not on YouTube at the library, right? Because that's what we needed to do.

And I got the books, and I read, and I found out that arrows, in order to make an arrow, you had to pass them over a flame to be tempered. You ever heard that before anywhere in the Bible?

[29:47] And you had to straighten them. You had to scrape them. You had to get them ready. You had to fix the knock. You had to do all the things. You had to put a tip on them. But one thing you had to do is you had to make sure the arrow was good.

You had to do a quality control check. So when you're out there, and you're ready to pull your bow out, and you have your stance, and you're getting ready for your fixed point, you have to take that arrow and look at it.

Make sure it's not cracked, nicked. Make sure one of the flights isn't misaligned. Make sure the tip is secure. You have to do a quality control check. Because when you pull an arrow, and I'm telling

you this from experience, from arrows I made, ah, that's good enough.

It will work. And you pull it back and let it go, and it breaks into a million pieces. Because it wasn't quality enough to be shot downrange.

We need to get in our Bibles. We need to have enough of this to know that we're 100% sure that when we pull that arrow, it's going to go downrange.

[30:58] 100% sure that when we have that anchor point and we aim at what we're going to hit to, when we let it fly, it's going to hit. And so just a couple items about the archer and the bow.

Amen. And characteristics of the archer. I hope this helped. Like I said, my mind runs 1,000 miles a minute. And, but the Bible's good.

Like I said, I was eight years old when I was taught this stuff. And I went on because of that to shoot in competition and do very well.

Because I started young. I started young. Amen. Some of us didn't get the chance at a young age to be able to get in the Bible and understand what it is.

So that means you have to work extra hard to catch up with guys like me that started shooting when I was a little boy. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for the opportunity this morning.

[32:01] We think about the bow and about weapons of defense. And, God, you used them throughout your word. And I just pray that the folks this morning would take a minute and think about the items we spoke about this morning.

And, God, that they might have a secure stance, a strong stance, a secure anchor point. And, God, that they might get in the book and study it so that they can have the stamina, the hold back, the string when the time comes.

Bless this time and the time to come. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.