

# Bearing fruit while under attack

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**Bible Text:** Genesis 49:22-24

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Come by here, my Lord,  
Come by here.  
Come by here, my Lord,  
Please come by here.  
Come by here, my Lord,  
Come by here.  
O Lord, come by here.

Somebody needs you, Lord,  
Come by here.  
Somebody needs you, Lord,  
Please come by here.  
Somebody needs you, Lord,  
Come by here.  
O Lord, come by here.

Somebody's praying, Lord,  
Come by here.  
Somebody's praying, Lord,  
Please come by here.  
Somebody's praying, Lord,  
Come by here.  
O Lord, come by here.

O Lord, come by here.  
O Lord, please come by here.

Let's all stand and we'll read from Genesis 49, just three verses and this is basically where we're going to stay at and we're going to see what God has for us this morning. It's good to see a good crowd of folks here to worship this morning. Amen. Look at what the Bible says in Genesis 49:22, the Bible says this, this is Jacob as he's speaking to all of his sons. He's about to take his journey but he's now blessing his children and Jacob says here in this verse,

“22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: 23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: 24 But his bow abode in strength, and 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).”

The Bible says in verse 22 that Joseph is a fruitful bough. The word “fruitful” means “to bear fruit” or “to increase.” That word “bough” means “son” or “grandson” and the Bible says that Joseph is somebody that is fruitful or somebody that's increasing or somebody that is growing. As I thought about that as I read these verses, I came to this conclusion: that Joseph was bearing fruit while under attack. That's what I want to talk about this morning: bearing fruit while under attack.

*Father, help us. I have no doubt that if there is any person here this morning that has enlisted in the army of the Lord Jesus Christ that they are either under attack or just came out of an attack or about to go into an attack. But I pray, God, this morning as we look very briefly at Joseph and his response while under attack, I pray, God, that each of us will also still continue to bear fruit, continue to be fruitful, continue to increase as we travel down this journey and with that, Father, we'll thank you. I pray, God, we'll leave this morning much on our souls, much encouraged, uplifted. I pray, God, we leave this morning rising above the darkness that is beneath us and I pray, God, that we grab a hold of that truth that lies before us, the truth of your precious word. I pray, God, we leave here ready to face the attacks that we will face. Then, God, my mind shifts to that one who might be here this morning that's not saved, they have not truly received Christ as Savior. Yes, they can spell his name. Yes, they can pronounce his name but yet his name has not been tattooed in their hearts but let that take place today and we'll praise you. Let someone have a spiritual birthday today that only has one and we'll shout your praises. Help me to rightly divide the word of truth filled with the Holy Spirit. Guide my tongue, my speech and my actions. Help me. We'll stop there, Lord. Do your work for it's in your Son's name that we pray, Jesus. Amen.*

You may be seated.

Bearing fruit while under attack and if you are a soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, if you have enlisted into this army, not only are you a son in Christ, not only are you a servant of Christ but you're also a soldier and a soldier at some point in time will find themselves under attack or they will be attacked but the question is: how are you and I going to respond when we are attacked? Also, are we going to continue to grow in the midst of our attacks? This word “under attack” means “subjected to the enemy's attack or censure.” When someone tries to censure you, they're trying to stop you or they're trying to silence you. We have an enemy that wants to silence us. We have an enemy that wants to impeded our testimony, hinder our testimony, stop our testimony, cause our testimony to fall down.

But even though we've got an enemy, we've also got a helper. We've got a helper and I want us to see very briefly how we are able to bear fruit while under attack. The Bible

says again in verse 22, “Joseph is a fruitful bough.” He bears fruit. He is increasing where “bough” means a “son” or a “grandson.” I like that. Jacob was saying, “Where’s my grandson?” In this case it’s a son, “This is my boy. This is my son and you know what? Even though my son has had a lot of attacks, he has still been fruitful.” If you recall, the whole story of Joseph, how he had that dream and he told his brothers and they didn’t like it and they sold him into slavery. They thought about killing him and then they sold him into slavery and while he was in slavery, my dear friends, he winds up at Potiphar’s house and while he’s at Potiphar’s house, he’s growing, he’s developing. Then Potiphar’s wife comes by and she accuses him and all that kind of stuff. He finds himself in prison and then he finds himself in a palace, then he meets his brothers and then we see how he responds to them. We see a life, my dear friends, that is continuously growing.

My question to us as Christians: are we continuously growing? Or have we hit a place in our life where our growth has been hindered? And often, if our growth has been hindered, there must be something, my friends, that’s holding it so that it’s not able to spring up and most of the time it has something to do with an attack, whether that attack is from within or whether that attack is from without, it’s something that tries to stop us from increasing or growing.

The first thing we want to look at here in this verse – before I pass 22, Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well. I like that. That well is a fountain. That’s where water is at and water causes things to grow. Amen. And the Bible says this, my friends, “whose branches,” talking about Joseph’s branches that “run over the wall.” In spite of his attacks, in spite of the things trying to hinder him, my dear friends, he is growing all over the place, all over the wall. You can’t stop him. It’s almost like you think about weeds, do you ever try to cut the weeds down and I don’t care how much you trim, cut and all that stuff, because of that root they just grow all over the place. But I tell you what, my friends: if we’re rooted and grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter how much the enemy tries to cut us down, we continue to grow and spread out and be exactly what God would have us to be. Hallelujah!

Now watch this, three things and we’re done: the first thing we see is the unjustly attack in verse 23. The Bible says, “The archers have sorely grieved him.” That word “archers” means “an arrow.” It also means “a hunting and military missile shot from a bow.” Now, if you’re like me, my first thought when I see “missile,” I think bombs but that’s not what the word “missile” means. The word “missile” means this: it means “an object or weapon for throwing; something that is airborne.” That’s why they call missiles missiles because they’re airborne. But also an arrow, it’s also a missile. Or a rock is also a missile. Something, my dear friends, that you throw, that flies through the air and the Bible says right here, there are some folks that were after Joseph, of course, he was with his brothers and others too, “The archers have sorely grieved him.” The word “sorely grieved” means “bitter.” We aren’t talking about Joseph, they were the ones who were bitter. Not only were they bitter, the Bible says that they also “shot at him.” The Bible says, “and hated him.”

So first of all, my dear friends, we find that they were bitter towards Joseph. Why were they bitter toward Joseph? Because Joseph had a dream and sometimes you have to keep dreams to yourself. He had that dream about the stars and all that kind of stuff. The bottom line was: it was like, "I'm going to be up here and you're all going to be looking up to me." Now, can you imagine your baby brother or your baby sister and they say that they'll be in charge of you and you'll be under them? You say, "That little knuckleheaded rascal. I'm your big brother. What do you mean?" But he tells them about that dream, my friends, and all of a sudden they begin to be bitter towards Joseph.

Watch here, my friends, not only were they bitter but they also shot arrows at him. They shot at him, my friends, and I'm going to tell you what: the enemy is going to shoot at you and I. They're going to shoot at you and I. One of the ways that they shot at him, the brothers lied about him. What lie did they tell? He's dead. When Daddy says, "Where's Joseph?" "He's dead. We found stuff bloodied all up. Here is his coat of many colors. He's dead." Well, you know what? There are a lot of folks that think you and I are dead too. There are a lot of folks, my dear friends, that may lie about us and say all kinds of things about us but not only did they lie about him but also guess who else lied about him? Somebody guess. Wild guess. Potiphar's wife. Here this man is at work, doing his job and she sees him, "Oh, he looks good. Is he married?" She was like, "Hey, big boy," and Joseph was like, "Leave me alone. I've got work to do. I'm in charge of everything here. The only thing I'm not supposed to touch is you. Just leave me be," and the Bible says day after day after day, she kept on after Joseph but Joseph would not give in and then when she caught him by himself, she grabbed a hold of him and he came out of his clothes. His clothes got him in trouble a lot of times, didn't they? The coat of many colors? Then here? He took off running. Her husband gets home and she said, "That Joseph, he came in here and he tried to attack me." She's lying to him and then what happens? He is thrown in prison.

Do you know one of the arrows that people shoot at us is the Bible. They get so insulted or, I know why they're doing that, I know their motives. I know they want to sing in the choir; I know why they want to play instruments; I know why they want to teach Sunday School. They just want to be out front. They want everybody to see them. You're like, "What are you talking about? I'm just trying to serve Jesus." Listen, we live in the computer age, you put something on Facebook, "The Lord is good," then they say, "They're talking about me." Why is that about you? The Lord is good. You're trying to say because the other day I was like, "Man, I ain't got this ??? the Lord is good. They're talking about me." What in the world? Where did that come from. All I said was, "The Lord is good." But things can be misconstrued, they can be taken out of context and all of a sudden, my friends, you'll be accused of things. Now, this is my question: when you are falsely accused in whatever area of life, are you going to continue to grow? Joseph continued to grow. "What are you talking about, Preacher?" Not one time when Joseph was under attack did Joseph attack back. When Joseph had the opportunity to get even with his brothers, when he was second in command in Pharaoh's kingdom, he could have gotten even, he could've gotten revenge but Joseph still did not attack back. They were shooting arrows at Joseph but Joseph, my friends, was not sitting over here and shooting arrows back.

But lots of time, our flesh wants to get even. You say something about me, I'm going to say something about you. You try to trip me up? I'm going to trip you up. You try to get me fired? I'm going to get you fired. You think I'm a punk? I'm not a punk. I'm going to let you know that right now. Do you know what? Joseph wasn't a punk either. By the way, Jesus wasn't a punk either. They lied about him, falsely accused him and how did Jesus respond? He didn't say anything. That's crazy. I'm going to say something. They're just running all over me, they're going to treat me all kinds of way and trample all over me. I'm not anyone's doormat. Are you going to grow in the midst of your attack? Or are you going to wither and fade? Instead, Joseph was growing. He was blossoming. He started off, my friends, in that pit, he wound up in that prison but you know, my friends, he ended up in Pharaoh's court and he's in charge of everything and he's not seeking revenge. But you let not us but other folks, all of a sudden they're the supervisor, I know what kind of schedule I'm going to get now. "Let's see, we're going to get you working from 12 pm to 8 pm. You're not going to have any time to do anything. As a matter of face, I'm going to put him on this job right here. I know he hates that job. I'm going to give him that assignment." When you do become in charge, how are you going to treat others? "Well, I was treated this way," it's almost like siblings. You're like, "Well, my big brother, he's always doing this to me so now this one is under me so I'm going to do him that way too. It's his turn." What manual was that in? What book is that in? It's that hidden book you can't see.

Wait a minute, my dear friends, that's no way to grow. That's no way, my friends, for us to respond but at the same time because we have that old nature, the old nature wants to respond that way but hold on a second, you don't have to. "That Jesus, he had all that power," but Joseph was just and so was Jesus but just for argument's sake, Joseph was just like you and I. He had no supernatural abilities except for the power of the living God, the same power that you and I have and that's available to each of us. "Well, I can't help it. Folks say stuff to me and I say stuff to them. When you don't start treating me right, you watch, you watch what I do to her. I'm going to tip out the door. That's what I'm going to do." Yeah, that's a good Christian. While you're doing that, you've got your Bible leaving out of the restaurant. It's amazing how we're at restaurants, we'll treat the waitresses and waiters like they're slaves. They're people like you. "Well, they're working their job." I don't care if it's their job or not, it isn't your job to be ugly. We act like we're the only ones in the restaurant. "They haven't got any other table but me." They can have ten other tables. What's wrong with us?

We let that flesh get in the way. I'm going to tell you what happens: that's a hindrance to growth. But Joseph, in spite of those who were bitter towards him, in spite of those that were shooting at him, in spite of those who hated him... "hate" here also means "to bear a grudge." They bore a grudge against Joseph. Why? You know. Who was Joseph's Momma? Rachel and you all remember Rachel. Well, he went down there and he talked to Laban and he said, "She's fine. I want her." "Work for me seven years." He worked seven long years and then, my friends, when the morning comes and he looks over in the bed across from him and it isn't Rachel, it's Leah. What in the world? What happened here? And then Laban said, "She's got to get married first and then you can marry Rachel

too.” He loved Rachel. He worked another seven years for Rachel and you know what happened: all of a sudden Leah was bearing kids, Rachel couldn't have any. Leah bore four kids first and then finally Rachel, besides using her handmaid, her handmaid began to bear her children and then Leah stopped bearing kids and she said, “Wait a minute, let me get my handmaid.” That sounds like today, doesn't it? That's Jerry Springer stuff. All of a sudden, my friends, they go through all this rigamarole as my grandmother would say and then finally Rachel bears children herself and the first one she bears is Joseph and, of course, Benjamin would come later so you know there's probably some jealousy going on. “Who does Joseph think he is? Daddy loves Rachel more than he likes our Momma. That little knuckleheaded kid. Boy, we'll bust him up.” They had a grudge against Joseph. They had bitterness against Joseph. They shot arrows against Joseph. He was under attack, unjustly attacked.

Not only that, my friends, he was also a forgotten person. Who forgot about him? The one who was the butler. When he was in prison, the butler and baker, he told them what was going to happen to them and then when the butler gets out, he says, “Don't forget about me down here in prison.” He goes back and forgets about him. He's there for another how long? Two years. Forgotten about. But even then, he still grows. He's the one who winds up being in charge of the prison too, you know. He still grows. And in all this, my friends, Joseph didn't shoot back. He didn't say, “Well now that I'm second in command, where is that butler at? Where is he? Throw his behind in jail for two years and I'll get even.” That's not what he did.

So we see, my friends, that even though he was unjustly attacked, that he still was bearing fruit so first of all we see the unjustly attack and then secondly we see the unbroken soldier. I don't know about you but I want to be an unbroken soldier. Look at what the Bible says next in verse 24, “his bow,” now we're talking about Joseph, “and his bow,” that word “bow” means “arrow” in the sense of bending. “His bow abode in strength.” That word “strength” means “hard,” it was rough. Do you know what? He may have bent but he did not break. Listen my dear friends, you might bend but you haven't got to break. The Bible says that his bow, it remained in strength and his arms, “the arms of his hands were made,” what? “Strong.” That's the power. That word “strong” there means “to solidify.” It's solid. Ron, he lifts weights and pumps iron. If you happen to bump into him you say, “He's like a rock. It's kind of hard to break him, isn't it?”

Well, you know what? As a Christian we can be as hard as a rock too. We might bend but we don't have to break but the question is why? That's the last thing. We see the unjust attack, the unbroken soldier but then we see the unconcealed strength, his strength was not hidden, it was unconcealed. Look at what the Bible says here, “But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong,” why? “By the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.” The reason why he was still bearing fruit even though he was under attack is because God gave him the strength that he needed to have. “Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. He has not given me the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” You see all these Scriptures and they all talk about strength. He was able to do more than he could ask or think because of what's on the inside of him.

What happens is this: when you and I rely on his strength, his power, then we don't have to worry about bending and breaking. We can continue to bear fruit. You say, "There's too much pressure. There's too much stuff. I've got peer-pressure." We've got teenagers that have peer-pressure but they aren't the only ones. Old folks have peer-pressure too. And he'll do everything he can to pressure us to give in, to quit but God says, "You haven't got to quit." Why? Because first of all, he's our Shepherd. Look at what the Bible says, "By the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd.)" God is our Shepherd. That Shepherd, talking about the Shepherd, what does he do? The Shepherd has love, he has compassion, he feeds etc. He feeds the sheep. He loves the sheep. He has compassion for sheep and the Bible says that he is our Shepherd. So what that means is this: when you find nobody loves you, nobody cares about you, there is one, the Shepherd. He loves you and he cares for you and when you realize that the Shepherd loves you and that he cares for you that in itself will give you a lot of strength.

Do you know love is a great motivator? You want to motivate your spouse? Love them. "I do this and I do that." No, love him. "Well, how do I do that?" What do they love? "I don't know." Well, you know what? If you want to show somebody that you love them, you have to find out what makes them feel loved. I didn't say what makes you feel loved, what makes them feel loved. And when you and I know what makes them feel loved and we do that, my friends, they feel that love and I'm going to tell you what: there's going to be a response from that. Do you know what? A woman can break a man. I'm talking about break him down. If Jolene was to tell me, "You sorry, lowdown, pitiful, no good rascal you," day after day, do you know what? I'd be walking around like, "I'm a pitiful, lowdown, no good rascal." That isn't going to uplift me but if she says, "Ooo, did you just come from the gym?" I'm like, "No, I haven't been to the gym." "Ooo, looks like you did. Can I touch you?" I'm like, "Yeah, go ahead." All of a sudden I'm like, "Yeah."

By the same token, I would encourage her. I came home last night and I got to the bus place and I didn't get home actually to the house until 11:30, something like that, almost a quarter to 12 last night. I came in the house and on my side of the bed there is a little table and I have stuff on it and so I came home and all that stuff was gone. It was cleaned up in that corner, I mean, everything was straight, not just on top. She's got her night stand and I've got mine and I'm just saying, it was immaculate. So I came home and I put my suitcases down and so she said it in a joking way, "You know those can't stay there." I'm like, "I know they can't stay there. I'm not going to pick them up tonight, I'm going to do it tomorrow." She's like, "What? I cleaned up that whole area and this is how you're going to do?" I'm like, "No, I'm sorry but, man, you made it seem like you came at me." I said, "I'm sorry." As a male, you know how we are, you say you're sorry and go off and play ball. So I want her to be like me, I want her to say, "Okay, it's okay," and just go on about it. I said, "I'm sorry. Everything is good. I love you and stuff." So she went and did her little thing and she came back in the room and so I went over there and I hug on her and stuff and I said, "I love you, you know," and I tried to kiss her and she was didn't like it and I said, "I'm sorry. It looks good over there."

So then later, I'm over there and I really realize just how much work she did. I said, "Where's my cologne?" because once you clean up you can't find anything. I said, "Where is my cologne?" She said, "It's under the night stand." So I opened the night stand and I'm like... you don't understand. I'm not normally able to see the back of the night stand on my side. I could see all the way to the back. Everything was nice and neat and good. I was like, "Oh man." I said, "Babe," I was really serious, I realized just how much work she had done and I said, "Jolene, I'm so sorry." I had planned on just throwing a match into it and letting it burn but it was so clean. She had cleaned that thing up and I said, "I'm sorry," and I hugged her and stuff and then she was responded back and I'm like, if I had done that at first, if I had come home first, seen how nice it was and said, "Ooo, man, baby, you're the bomb!" But be serious about it, I'm going to tell you what: that made her feel like her world was not in vain. It was not all for nothing.

But sometimes, my dear friends, instead of seeing what somebody has greatly done for us and then try to encourage them, uplift them, we'll see what problems like, "I can't find my cologne." Wait a minute, she just cleaned all that stuff up and it's nice and neat, everything is in the place that it's supposed to be in. I asked her, there's a light that's on the night stand too, I said, "Does that light work?" It had been a long time but then it was clear and I could see that sure enough it had two lightbulbs on there. I was able to read my Bible by the bedside last night. I

What are you saying? That's the kind of Shepherd that we have. He shows us he loves us not just with his words but also with his actions and when you feel that love from God, my friends, that itself should motivate us and cause us not to bend, not to break. But when we are under attack, realize that we have a Shepherd that will provide, we have a Shepherd that will take care of us. I don't care what those numbskull folks say. I don't care about the gas, the light, the water bill. I don't care, I go to my God and he will provide for his children.

Not only that, watch this one, the Bible says here, "for this is the shepherd," watch this, "the stone of Israel." That word "stone" means "to build." He's a builder of Israel but also that could represent strength, stability and security and that's what God does for his children. And when you begin to look at that, my friends, how we may be unjustly attacked but if we're going to be an unbroken soldier, then we've got the unconcealed strength that comes from God himself that will help us to overcome the attacks and then, thereby, you will have to continue to grow and to increase.

Here's my question for us, first question is this: have you been under attack lately? Have you been under attack lately? Secondly is this: are you still bearing fruit? You've been under attack, you are under attack but are you bearing fruit? The last one is this: do you want to bear fruit while under attack? If you want to still bear fruit while you're under attack, all you have to do is come to that person that would give you that supply of strength that you and I need to have in order to continue to increase, to continue to grow in spite of attacks that we will face because you're going to face them. You're going to face them on your job. You're going to face them in your home. By the way, you're going



to face them even in your own self and yourself is the biggest enemy you and I have got but we've got somebody who's greater than ourselves and that's our Savior.

*Father, thank you for your wonderful blessings. I've tried my best to give the message you gave to me, Lord, to give to the precious souls that have gathered here this morning. And Father, we may be attacked, we may have arrows shot in our direction, missiles thrown at us, Father, but at the same time we can continue to bear fruit, we can continue to grow, we can continue to increase in spite of all that when we rely and depend on the God of the heavens and that's what Joseph did. He relied upon you, Father. He trusted you. He leaned upon you and his faith was increased but also, God, his work for Christ was increased as well. Father, this is my prayer this morning that somebody here will come and talk to you and say, "You know, I've been under so much heavy attack, I mean these attacks have just worn me down but in spite of these attacks, I want to still grow. I want to still increase. I want to still bear fruit. Father, please help me to still bear fruit even while under attack." I pray, God, they'd come and talk to you for a few moments. Then perhaps, God, there are some folks who want to come and simply say this, "Thank you, Lord, thank you that even under attack, I've been growing and I can sense that I'm still growing, I'm still bearing fruit." I pray, God, they come and thank you. Then perhaps, God, there is somebody here this morning who says, "You know what? I don't even know what it means to be a part of the family of God but I want to." I pray, God, that they would come, Father, whatever their needs are. Help us to respond and we'll thank you for it's in your Son's name we pray, Jesus. Amen.*