THE TARGET: A Love Story



I was praying one day not truly knowing what to pray for. I was stuck for sure. "Help me, help me, help me" I prayed over and over in my mind. But "help me _____ what?" It made me sad. I didn't even know what to pray for.

Suddenly it was as if Jesus was standing before me. I knew it was Him. We just gazed at each other for a few moments.

"Want some help?" He asked.

"Yes, please." I humbly replied – all "boldness" gone from me. Although I didn't really know what I wanted help with.

"Come with Me, I want to show you something."

"Where are we going?" I asked. This wasn't what I expected at all, a "field trip" with Jesus.

"Let's go do some archery" He replied.

"I don't know how to do it."

"Yes, you do. You do it most days already."

Now I was really confused. But I shrugged and figured He knew me better than I know myself, so I went with Him. Suddenly we were in an open field with a target already set up not far from us and a small bow and arrow were in my hand. They fit me perfectly. Now, that's weird, I thought.

"Go ahead" He urged, "see if you can hit the target."

I lifted the bow and placed the arrow on the string. I had to admit It felt strangely familiar. I drew back the bow, released it and woosh it was off. Now what? I wondered.

"Let's go see how you did." We walked the few feet to the target. I began to grin. I hadn't hit the bullseye, but I was close. I looked over at Him. He wasn't smiling at all.

"I did pretty good, didn't I? I didn't hit the bullseye, but I got close!"

"Look more closely" He urged.

That's when I noticed there were words written all over the target. The biggest word, LOVE, was in the bullseye.

"What does this mean?" I asked Him.

"You shoot at this target all the time. Your 'goal' is LOVE. And you want to hit it, don't you?"

“Isn’t that what You want me to do? Isn’t that Your command – to LOVE?”

“You are correct. But look more closely at this target. There are several problems with the target that aren’t always apparent.”

As I move closer to the target to get a better look, He continued “And there are problems with your technique as well. You are well intended, but that’s not enough.”

My eyes widen when I see what the target looks like up close. The bullseye actually says “ME ME ME” in the shape of a big red circle. Written all over the target behind the word LOVE it says: selfishness, pride, arrogance, ego, control – all kinds of “unsavory” words are splashed all over the face of the target behind the word LOVE.

What was He saying – that I regularly “practice” these things under the guise of LOVE? I feel shame and sorrow. He knows what I am thinking and feeling but is quiet for a few minutes, allowing this to sink in.

“What do you want to do now?” He asks.

“Give up” was all I could think to say. “I’m doing the best I can, I don’t know how to LOVE any other way” I admitted.

“Excellent!” He beamed! “You are on your way! Turn around …”

I turned around and saw an open meadow with a grove of trees in the distance.

“Can you see it?” He asks.

“What am looking at?”

“THE target – the true LOVE target.”

I had to admit that I didn’t see it at all. He seemed pleased with my answer and said, “You have answered correctly. It is so far from you that you can’t even see it. If you had said you could see it, I would know that you weren’t being honest with Me or yourself.”
Suddenly the most beautiful bow and arrow appeared in His hands. It was like none I had ever seen before, I could not take my eyes off of it. He smiled broadly.

“Beautiful, isn’t it? Want to use it?” He asks?

“For what? I asked as I began to turn back toward the “old target” that now looked ugly and grotesque.

“No, no – don’t turn back – look ahead!” He said rather forcefully.

My confusion is growing by the minute. He knows that.

Suddenly He steps behind me putting the beautiful bow and arrow in my hands as He does. I almost drop it – it weighs much more than I thought given its delicate appearance.

“I can’t even hold this much less shoot it!” I shout!
“But I can” He whispers, folding His beautiful scar-marred hands around mine. It feels as if He is melding into me. I feel His power and His strength overcoming mine. I know it’s not my power or strength but yet, for this moment, it feels totally at my disposal; my choice to use it or not.

“We” draw back the bow and woosh off it goes so far I can’t even see where it lands.

“Did we hit it?” I meekly ask, wondering if it was arrogant or presumptuous using “we” in my question.

“I always hit the bullseye. And, yes, ‘we did’” He says with pure joy in His voice and on His face.

“Let’s go take a look, shall we?” Together, arm in arm, we walk the direction the arrow flew.

All at once I see the target. It is as beautiful as the bow and arrow. I am speechless.

Just like the other target, the word LOVE is at the center, but this looks and feels so different. The words behind it are joy, peace, compassion, mercy, grace, patience, kindness, meekness – everything Jesus is. The center word LOVE actually says, “Father, Son, Holy Spirit” over and over forming the beautiful bright red circle at the center.

Suddenly I notice that the grove of trees isn’t trees at all! It’s people!

“Wow!” I exclaim “That was dangerous! I didn’t know people were standing here! Someone could have been hurt!”

He chuckles, “My arrows never hurt anyone – ever!”

“Look more closely – do you recognize any of these people?”

It was as if I knew these people even though I’d never met any of them. John the Baptist was there, Abraham, Sarah, Rahab, the Old Testament Prophets and so many more. They were all there!

“The cloud of witnesses You promised! They are here cheering me on!”

He smiles as they all begin to shout and cheer in sheer delight.

What a feeling! What an experience!

“What have you learned today, my friend?”

I pondered it a bit.

“I was shooting at the wrong target, with the wrong equipment and all in my own power and strength. I could mostly achieve my goal because it was shallow and easy at best, and I was doing it for the wrong reason – to gain something for myself. I wanted others to love me in return. I expected them to and was often disappointed or even angry when they didn’t, which leads to more problems.

I trusted myself – and deceived myself into thinking I was obeying your command. And I was proud that I was doing that. Oh my, I don’t suppose it gets much worse that that – does it?” He let my question lie unanswered.

“But then?” He said.
His question made me think of all the times in the Bible the words “But God” come up over and over.

“You intervened. You came to me when I asked you to. You showed me the truth about myself, but You didn’t stop there. You showed me the truth about you as well. And you didn’t condemn me either.

"You showed me the true target. You showed me how beautiful it is. You showed me that You and Father and the Holy Spirit ARE the center of that target - not me - and how everything good flows out of that center. You showed me that I don't have the vision or the strength to come even close to that target – that I can't even hold the bow and arrow in my own strength. And to try is pride and arrogance on my part.

"But then you didn't just come alongside me and give me "lessons" or instructions – you folded yourself into me. You became my strength – the power I needed to obey was You within me. It was like you said, 'Apart from Me you can do nothing.' Your LOVE is not better - it's different.

"I want this to continue. It's the most incredible thing I have ever known; the power of God inside me! The power to obey. The power to love.

But now what? Was this just a momentary thing? Now do I automatically possess Your vision, Your power and strength? Or..."

My voice trailed off. My earlier sadness begins to return. I felt the "old me" beginning to return as well.

"Think back to early this morning."

Had it only been earlier that day? I wanted this to go on for the rest of eternity.

"You started your day with prayer, asking for me. You didn't know you were, but you were. You were asking for ME – not just My help, My presence in you.

"Want to know something more? I always come when you ask. But if there's too much of you in the picture, you can't see Me. Worldly, self-centered vision crowds Me out of your view. Not out of your life, that's not possible, but out of your view. Sometimes I have to allow you to become so desperate that you just want ME. Not something FROM Me – just ME. I love you that much.

"To truly begin to experience what we had today you will need to totally surrender to my Spirit, and this has to be done daily. There are no promises for tomorrow – today has to be good enough for now. Let the days stack up, day after day, week after week, year after year – for the rest of eternity. Surrender every day to My Spirit – seek Me and you will find Me if you seek for Me with your whole heart, if you want Me – only Me, not what I can do for you, not how I can "help you" – and allow Me to do what I will in your life.

"Don't forget and begin once again to try to please Me though your own efforts and strength. That's the wrong target. WE are the right target – My Father, My Spirit and Me. Remember, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

If you have enjoyed this blog – perhaps learned a thing or two, PRAISE GOD – literally. For He is the author – not me. I am no one – people who know me know that I don't normally write like this. I pray that He will give you a vision of Himself that means everything to you. Go in His LOVE for He is LOVE. (Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.1 John 4:8)

The preceding is an excerpt from the upcoming book and Bible Study, *But You Will Receive Power – the Power to Love,* Book 2 of ***the Practical Guide Series.*** Feel free to copy and distribute at will.

Maranatha My Friends!
BoB