

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday April 8, 2016.

"The Last Arrow: Be Your Own Hero".

From the book *"The Last Arrow"* by Erwin Mcmanus.

A. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message on Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still go thru it to help you dig deeper in your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

The opening quote from Sunday this:

"If you knew you would undergo an endless cycle of Eternal Return, that you would relive every detail of your entire life over and over again, what changes in your attitudes and actions would you make to your life right now? If there are things in your life you wouldn't want to repeat for eternity, why haven't you changed them yet? Remember, the goal is not just to endure this life, but to love it — all of it. To amor fati".

This quote basically asks; are you living the kind of life you would want to live over and over again. If not, what changes would you be willing to make.

So...some specific questions from the book *"The Last Arrow"* to start this study.

What is the posture of your heart?

Or what are you looking for out of life from deep within you?

How can you live a life NOW that's worth reliving?

Or what changes and choices can you make to curve the path of your life?

Erwin states in his book we have to overcome and conquer two barriers to live a *"Last Arrow"* kind of life.

1. **FEAR**. - What are we trying to avoid?
2. **PAIN LEVEL**. What challenges our comfort and security?

Because FEAR and PAIN establish the boundaries of our freedom.

-Think on this statement and let it sit awhile.

Can you identify specific fears you fight, and comfort you seek, that have held you back?

How do FEAR and PAIN limit your ability to live fully for God?

Are there specific practices or habits you can incorporate into your daily life to help you overcome fears and any aversion to pain?

B. Scripture.

We were created to live a life bigger and more meaningful than most of us are living currently. We live a 'smaller' life mostly because we let good things become important things. We know these things, (status, possessions, people), can feel good and satisfy, but over time we can feel the 'thinness' of them because they don't always bring meaning and fulfillment. Just temporary happiness.

We try to make them more than what they were intended to be.

And because we settle for these lesser things, we find life to be less satisfying than we hoped, and we don't know where to turn next. Jesus says these good things of life were given to us for our enjoyment and are part of God's love and grace to everyone, but they were never meant to bring us truer deeper meaning.

So Jesus challenges his followers with this passage to consider what it means and takes to live a "**Last Arrow**" kind of life.

Luke 14:25-34. (MSG).

25-27 One day when large groups of people were walking along with him, Jesus turned and told them, "Anyone who comes to me but refuses to let go of father, mother, spouse, children, brothers, sisters—yes, even one's own self!—can't be my disciple. Anyone who won't shoulder his own cross and follow behind me can't be my disciple.

28-30 "Is there anyone here who, planning to build a new house, doesn't first sit down and figure the cost so you'll know if you can complete it? If you only get the foundation laid and then run out of money, you're going to look pretty foolish. Everyone passing by will poke fun at you: 'He started something he couldn't finish.'

31-32 "Or can you imagine a king going into battle against another king without first deciding whether it is possible with his ten thousand troops to face the twenty thousand troops of the other? And if he decides he can't, won't he send an emissary and work out a truce?"

33 "Simply put, if you're not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it goodbye, you can't be my disciple.

34 "Salt is excellent. But if the salt goes flat, it's useless, good for nothing. "Are you listening to this? Really listening?"

Jesus is saying, before you choose this more meaningful life you have to decide if you're willing to do the hard things it will take to follow him. To 'do the math', count the cost, and decide if you're willing to make the sacrifices, chose the harder life to live following Jesus...this more meaningful life.

So...some final questions.

Do you want, seriously, to live a bigger more meaningful life? (This is a real question).

What are you holding onto, possibly have moved from good to important, that you need to let go of in order to follow Jesus?

This kind of life takes courage. In what small ways could you begin to 'practice' being courageous?