

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday April 29, 2018.

***"The Last Arrow: Choose the future"*.**

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.

B. Recap & get you thinking.

This is the fourth Sunday in this series, and basically the movement of the topics thru the series has been along a line of examining your life to see if you're making choices and decisions for your comfort and security or are your decisions ones that have meaning and impact.

A quote from *"The Last Arrow"*, Erwin says:

"The most spiritual thing you will do today is choose".

So, a question to start this devotion.

Look over the many choices you've made this past week, about everything, and what 3 to 4 words would you use to describe those choices? (i.e. comfort, safety, less struggle, more difficult, etc.).

C. This week's message.

Pastor Lamar used two passages to talk about the importance of the next generation in living a ***"Last Arrow"*** life. Psalm 127:4 and Proverbs 22:6. The life we lead, choices we make, will be an example that inspires the next generation, and will actually launch them into the work that's ahead of them. There were two metaphors drawn from this message.

1. ARCHERS.

Archers must pull their bow in order to launch an arrow. This means they have influence over it. Archers must also be able to live with the tension of a pulled bow. This requires a learned ability to manage that tension well...with precision in order to be accurate.

And

Archers must aim, have a plan, a direction, they want their arrow to travel.

So...archers determine the direction the arrow will go.

And those of us who follow Christ, claim to be a disciple, a committed follower, exercise that same kind of 'pull' influence over the lives of some around us.

So, a couple of tough questions about the tension between a life lived for God and the world.

Where do you feel you have influence or the potential for influence in a positive way over people near and around you?

What changes, even if just a few, could you make to create opportunities to make the best use of the pull, influence, you have with others?

2. ARROWS.

Lamar described two truths about arrows.

First, arrows must be sharp, have a point, and he equated this to intelligence or practicing wisdom.

Lamar stated; *“we must be socially conscious and scripturally correct”*.

In order for us to live the **“Last Arrow”** life we have to be intelligently informed and actively engaged in our world to make a difference and an impact.

Second, arrows must be straight or ‘true’ to have accuracy.

Our lives need to be lived with integrity. It’s the cliché saying; *“our actions will speak louder than our words”*. We are to live honorable lives so that our words will have more impact.

Again, some question to think about being an arrow out into the world.

What regular habits, practices, routines, are in your life to help grow your understanding, knowledge base, who you are as a person in the world that can impact change?

This doesn’t have to be only a Bible study. It can include other elements, (books, podcasts, video series, small group participation), that help grow you as a person and expand your understanding of what it means to live for God and to show the love of Jesus to our world.

And then the tougher question...that means brace yourself.

What specific things are in your life that could compromise your character?

These may not be practices or habits that the church has always struggled with, (the classic don’t drink, dance, or go to movies), but rather things in your life or shortcomings you have that may hurt your influence with those around you who don’t have a relationship with God. (i.e. anger, impatience, materialism, laziness, not keeping your word, etc.).

The **“Last Arrow”** life is one that calls us to risk our comfort and security choosing a more demanding life because that’s the life Jesus lived, and it’s really the only life that brings meaning and true purpose. The kind of life that when we get to the end of it we can look back and have the peace of mind and satisfaction that we died with our quiver empty.

And if our life is about preparing the next generation and launching them out, then our children and grandchildren will tell great stories about how lives were the major influence in theirs. THAT is truly life well lived....a **“Last Arrow”** kind of life.