

Life Group Lesson

The Last Arrow – Save Nothing for the Next Life • Week of May 29

Introduction

This weekend we have had the privilege of hearing a GLS (Global Leadership Summit) message by Erwin McManus, called “The Last Arrow – Save Nothing for the Next Life.” Pastor McManus opened his story by declaring that the greatest battles we ever face are the battles within us. Growing up, he struggled with the question, who am I? Will my life ever amount to anything significant? As an adult, after hearing his stepfather say to his own son, ‘your dad was just average’ mediocrity began to haunt him. He said so many people never live into their full potential because we believe the lie. We fear failure, fear what others think, and fear dying.

Perhaps you have known someone who had so much potential but that individual never lived into God’s purpose for them. Perhaps that person is you. Ask yourself: What is keeping me from becoming who God created me to be? Am I so concerned with trying to conform and fit in, that I have forgotten that I am ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’—unique in God’s eyes? When you decide to become who God created you to be, you will be like no one else in the world. Not everyone will be able to understand you, or maybe even accept you. But you will begin to access ‘the more’ inside of you as you choose to press through your pain and fear.

Background

The kingdom of Israel was divided only two generations after David; although God kept His covenant with His people, the northern kingdom (Israel) never experienced national godliness (leadership under a good and righteous king). The southern kingdom of Judah had times of spiritual renewal, but eventually, they too were led away by lack of godliness and idolatry. During the reign of king Jehoash of Israel, the prophet Elisha gives his final prophecy. King Jehoash comes to visit Elisha in his illness, and Elisha tells him: “Get a bow and some arrows.” And the king did as he was told. Elisha says, “Put your hand on the bow,” and Elisha lays his own hands on the king’s hands... then commands, “Open that eastern window and shoot!”

“This is the Lord’s arrow, an arrow of victory over Aram, for you will completely conquer the Arameans at Aphek!” Elisha sees a great victory ahead for Israel if king Jehoash will live into it. But when Elisha tells him to strike the remaining arrows against the ground, Jehoash stops after only three strikes. Elisha is angry because he knows that three victories will not be adequate to completely destroy the Aramean Army. Why did you quit? Why did you strike the ground only three times? There may be a God-assignment over your life that fear has you stopping short. Pastor McManus says that while many people need ‘permission to get started’ no one needs permission to quit. Partial victory is not

sufficient. How can we have the courage to push through our fears and pain, in order to complete the victory God has before us?

Reading the Text

Read 2 Kings 13:14-19

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

In Closing

Pastor McManus said he had to come to terms with what all great individuals must come to grips with – the fear of dying. He shared that once in the middle of a crime-filled street, he stopped his car and cried out to God to help him overcome his paralysis of fear. Desperate to hear from God, this Scripture “for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21) came to his mind; and he heard the Lord say: “If you will just die right now, I will take you where only dead men can go.” For many of us, death (fear of dying) is still in front of us. Jesus Christ can put death behind us. The Lord faced death head-on so that we will not have to. Only in Christ will your fear of dying be completely conquered. When death is behind you, all that is in front of you is LIFE!

This past week the Church remembered John Wesley’s conversion on May 24, 1738. John Wesley had been wrestling with his lack of faith and feelings of utter failure in the American colonies (Georgia). Three years and no converts. He was miserable in his spirit. On his way back to England, the small ship he was aboard headed into a fierce storm in the middle of the Atlantic. Fearing ‘the end’ he not only battled the voice of failure, he was riddled with fear. As the storm raged on, John Wesley overheard a group of Moravians singing hymns and praises to God. How can these people be so bold in their faith, so confident in the middle of this storm?

God allowed John Wesley to arrive safely back in England; but God also allowed him to continue wrestling in the deep place of his soul. There was a deep longing to experience a change, a personal salvation like his Moravian friends had. He would cry out to the Lord, “Help my unbelief!” On May 24, 1738, after attending EvenSong at St. Paul’s Cathedral, John Wesley ‘very reluctantly’ made his way to nearby Aldersgate Street where at about 8:45pm he attended a Moravian prayer service. Moravians and others had gathered for prayer and as he settled in, he heard someone reading from Luther’s preface to the epistle

of Romans. As he listened, the Holy Spirit met John Wesley in the deep place of his soul. He later journaled—

...“While he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

John Wesley came to grips with his fear of dying (and failing) and trusted Christ alone for salvation. With death behind him, Wesley became bold in his preaching and witness of Christ. He no longer cared what people thought. He began to preach in the open-air and was unafraid of being ‘expelled’ from his beloved Anglican church. John Wesley became a most courageous, effective herald of the Good News of Christ. As McManus shared in his message, when you and I live into a story bigger than our own, the failures only enhance the story. Our freedom is on the other side of our fear. Our greatness is on the other side of our pain. Our future is on the other side of our failures. Resolve today: fear will not have the final word. The victory belongs to Jesus. Christ put death to death, so that I will not have to live in fear. I will complete the call before me. I will have victory in Jesus’ Name!

Close in a Time of Prayer asking:

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

40 DAYS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

Text: 2 Kings 13:14-19

One Year Bible Readings

May 29: 2 Samuel 14:1-15:22, John 18:1-24, Psalm 119:97-112, Proverbs 16:8-9

May 30: 2 Samuel 15:23-16:23, John 18:25-19:22, Psalm 119:113-128, Prov. 16:10-11

May 31: 2 Samuel 17:1-29, John 19:23-42, Psalm 119:129-152, Proverbs 16:12-13

June 1: 2 Samuel 18:1-19:10, John 20:1-31, Psalm 119:153-176, Proverbs 16:14-15

June 2: 2 Samuel 19:11-20:13, John 21:1-25, Psalm 120:1-7, Proverbs 16:16-17

June 3: 2 Samuel 20:14-21:22, Acts 1:1-26, Psalm 121:1-8, Proverbs 16:18

June 4: 2 Samuel 22:1-23:23, Acts 2:1-47, Psalm 122:1-9, Proverbs 16:19-20

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