

# The Last Arrow

Week 3 – January 17, 2021

Scripture: John 21:1-19 and Philippians 3:8-10

*Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!*

**Share:** Can you think of a time when you ate poorly (i.e. ice cream for breakfast) and then "gave up" trying to eat better for the rest of the day? What did you eat?

**Read John 21:1-19 and Philippians 3:8-10 together:** Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

## Discuss the following context:

When Jesus invites us to follow Him, He is asking us if we love Him more than our past shame or success. He is asking us if we are grounded by our past or if our identity is tied to Him. In his book *The Last Arrow*, Erwin McManus says it like this: "*When He is calling us to choose Him, He is calling us to choose the Future*". When we choose the future, we choose to allow our past to *inform* us, not *limit* us, regardless of success or failure. We choose a future worth discovering. Jesus calls us to choose the future with faith and faithfulness as He leads us. What future will we choose and what do we need to let go from our past to do so?

## Share your thoughts about following questions:

1. Think of a time you felt stuck in the past. Share the experience. Was it due to shame, success or something else?
2. We can learn much from looking at two different stories of a person being held back by their past. The first story is about Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples. The second is about Paul, originally an antagonist of Jesus. Peter was stuck in his past shame and regret; Paul was stuck in his past success.
  - a. After all Jesus and Peter had experienced, Peter ran to his past leaving behind the opportunity to help lead the disciples and the church. In John 21:1-9 Jesus invites Peter to leave his past by speaking into Peter's identity and reminding him of what the future holds. How can you relate to Peter?
  - b. It's easy to believe the lie that we are not good enough. What other lies do we hear when we are feeling shame and regret?
  - c. Paul had a pretty good thing going but ultimately encountered Jesus and walked away from the success of his past and chose the future God invited him into. He writes Philippians 3:8-10 as a reflection of his past success. Paul says to "press on" giving us a vision for choosing the future. *Your past, shame or success, influences who you are, but it doesn't have to define where you go!* Do you find hope or courage in Paul's vision? Why or why not?
  - d. What story (Peter or Paul) do you find yourself in today? Why?
3. In both of these stories, Jesus wasn't talking to their actions. He was talking to their hearts. What could it look like to trust Jesus and His invitation to choose the future?

**Pray together:** Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Ask God to meet you where you are. Press into His voice and listen to whether He is speaking identity, opportunity, hope or forgiveness into you. Thank Him that your past successes have meaning in Him and your past failures have redemption in Him.