

DISCIPLINE IS BETTER THAN MOTIVATION

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Good morning! It is an honor and a privilege to be with you this morning. I am so grateful that Pastor Lisa and I are meeting a new family, Bacon! May God bless you for allowing me to be with you!

I'm excited because we serve a God who loves us and who is concerned about us and it doesn't matter how old, how young, the color of your skin, where you come from, your background. We all were created by Him and everything that God created, He loves and so I'm just here to share a word of encouragement to you, to let you know that no matter where you are, God has not forgotten you. That God hears your prayers and that God is concerned about the things that concern you. For the Scripture says that we should cast our cares upon Him because He cares! It's amazing that God, who created Heaven and the Earth, every creature on the land, in the air and the sea and that whenever we call, He knows our voice and we have maybe 30-35 people here now and if we all were to say "Lord help me" He hears us and He knows your voice and it's different from my voice but He pays attention to you! How could we not love Him back? How could we not render our lives to Him for all that He has done for us through His son, Jesus.

And so the Scripture lets us know in Psalms chapter 5, verse number 19 that until what He had said came to pass, the word of the Lord tested Him and today that's where I want to pull my subject from. This discipline is better than motivation! I don't know about you but I'm a Bills fan. I don't need a cheerleader to encourage me to cheer on the Buffalo Bills. Do you know why? Because I'm a fan! So if nobody else is saying the Bills make me want to shout (and they do make me want to shout.) because sometimes we lose but no matter what- win or lose- I'm shouting. And sometimes individuals need somebody to just help push them along to say "come on let's give God the praise" and in fact we should always have a praise on the inside of us because when I think of the goodness of Jesus and all that He has done for me then I don't need a cheerleader because if it had not been for the Lord on my side I wouldn't be here today. I'll give Him a praise when nobody else will praise Him. I'll say "Hallelujah" because He has brought me this far and all that I have, God has given me! Where I am is because

He brought me and where I go is because He'll take me! So, if nobody else will give a praise, I will and we ought to give God a praise!

The Scripture lets us know that it's in Him that we live and move and have our being! The truth of the matter is that we can't do nothing without Him! We are nothing without Him! We should rely and depend on Him for everything and there's a lot happening in the world for me. There's the Covid happening, there is the crime, there is a forced vaccination, there is the sickness and disease, there are individuals who are lovers of themselves more than of God! There are barriers that exist in the world today in the church that separates us and if not more than ever before! The church and the body of Christ should come together as one. In John 17 Jesus says He prays the priestly prayer: "Father make him one as you and I are one." We always quote the Scripture in 2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, what will happen if we really unify!" What will really happen because in 2 Chronicles it lets us know that unity gets God's attention. What if we can really break down these barriers of separation, of denomination, of race, of gender, of titles and we come together as God's people?

Oh, I wish we really would love one another the way Jesus loved us. He gave His life for us. He hung on the cross for you and I. The Bible says that he who knew no sin became sin. If we could love that way, if love, in spite of what the world is doing and what the world is saying because we represent the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Do you know that you are ambassadors? Oh, for the kingdom of God in our prayer "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. In order for Heaven to come to earth, it's us! In order for God's love to be conveyed and displayed in the earth, it's you and I. Do you need a cheerleader to tell somebody you love them? Do you need somebody to provoke you to say "Listen, God cares!" No. No. No.

When we look at the life of Joseph, all Joseph did was have a dream. It wasn't his fault that he had a dream. What he did was he went to his family and he said listen I had this dream and this was the dream and his very brothers got jealous of the dream. His father could not interpret the dream at the time, didn't understand the dream. There are individuals who have dreams right now and you share your dream and it seems like everything that you were doing to make it

come to pass, you're being attacked! It seems like it is impossible. It seems like it's not going to happen but I'm here to tell you today that discipline is better than motivation. I'm here today to tell you that if you hang in there just a little while longer, you will see the manifestation of God's promise over your life!

So let's look at Joseph. All he did was have a dream and because of the dream, his brothers threw him into the pit. Oh, it's tough when your loved ones hurt you! It's tough when your friends turn their backs on you. It's difficult when those who you would give your life for, turn their backs on you or are the very reasons why you are suffering! You know we don't like that word "suffering" but you know when God called the Apostle Paul, who was Saul at the time, He told him you were going to suffer for me. And the Scripture lets us know in Psalms 34, saying many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord will deliver you! Ah, there's that good word. Many are the "afflictions." In other words, we have got to go through some stuff. That means that every day is not going to be sunny. That means every day you're not going to be saying "Oh, look at me, look at me! Oh, what a beautiful day!" There are some days that you are going to say "Oh, God help me", "God give me the strength", "god I need encouragement." David in Scripture when he came back from Ziklag, he had lost everything. He lost his wife, his children and everything that belonged to him he lost and the men that were with David were thinking about killing him. The Bible says that David went inside of the cave and encouraged himself. Sometimes when we're in the go through, sometimes when we're facing things, we have got to learn how to be our own cheerleader. When was the last time you looked in the mirror and said "Yes I can!"? When was the last time you said you can do this? Sometimes you and I have to encourage ourselves when nobody else is around to encourage you. You have to speak to yourself the promises of God.

What does God say about it? It's not what man said. It's not even what the doctor says because God is our healer. The earth is the Lord's in the fullness thereof and they that dwell therein. God owns everything! The Scripture says if there are cattle on 1000 hills, they belong to God. The silver is His! The gold is His! Oh my goodness! So, when I'm in the go through and when it's tough for me, I encourage myself in the word of God. The word of the Lord says I'm in the head and not the tail! The word of the Lord says I'm blessed in my going and in my coming. The word of the Lord says I am the lender and not the borrower. Do I

have everybody in here that believes the word of the Lord? Yes! Yes! It's the Word of God! It's a land unto our feet and a light unto our path! The Word of God is the system, it's the raving Word of God, the spoken word and we read the logos Word of God, the written word and if we would apply that to our lives that brings the encouragement we need but it's not from me saying hurrah, hurrah, hurrah! The discipline is that you have a personal relationship with God. The discipline is that you're reading the Word of God.

So, Joseph is in the pit and then they sell him as a slave but God is still with him because God gives him favor, even as a slave. Sometimes we minimize what God is doing in our lives because it's not what we wanted at the time but I could see the favor of God in my life even when I was in the storm. I could see the favor of God when tears were coming down my eyes. Can you see the favor of God right now? In the midst of all that's going on you and I are able to gather and worship Him! You and I are able to gather and pray together and to just exalt Him! There are some places in my travel over in Africa and Haiti and Jamaica where they don't have the opportunity to gather but when you talk to them, they're so excited because they know God loves them! They encourage themselves! They are disciplined to say no matter what, I trust the Lord! No matter what's happening I know God is able to work out on my behalf. So, Joseph is a slave with favor and then he's lied on and he did nothing wrong. They didn't tell the truth and he's now put in prison. Can you look at his life and say wait a minute: from a dream you go from the pit to a slave to prison and all you did was share your dream. Oh my goodness! I believe that Joseph had a conversation with God like "God, what is going on here? I did nothing wrong. I didn't make up the dream you gave me. I didn't seek to put myself in this position." And how many know that on life's journey we have some valleys. We have some low points because we're not always on the mountain but no matter where we are God, a faithful God, is there with us, for He said through His Son Jesus "I'll never leave you nor forsake you. I'll be with you always." Oh, I love God because He is not like man. He doesn't take back what He said. Do you know there's some Indian givers, you know, who give it and then take it back. Sometimes you're promoted but then you can be demoted! Sometimes you're celebrating and then you have some people that say no we don't like you anymore. But no matter what, God is faithful, that we can depend on him no matter what's going on in our lives. He's

just a prayer away. Sometimes all we have is our communication with the Father and the Father is listening, He's paying attention.

Joseph now is in prison and God gives him favor again. I don't know about you but I don't want that life of Joseph. I don't want to go to the pit. I don't want to go to be a slave and I don't want to be in prison. I want God to give me favor while I'm at Erie County Medical Center. I want God to give me favor while I'm in the community, while I'm serving at the mall but no matter what your journey is, God is saying a disciplined life will keep me right with you. The Scripture says if you knock, the door shall be opened, if you ask, it shall be given and if you seek Him, you shall find Him. David said I shall bless the Lord at all times and His praised shall continually be in my mouth. That's discipline! That is a lifestyle of praise! I've learned that no matter what's happening in my life my response is to give Him praise! Oh my God can you say God thank you even when it's not going your way. Oh God, thank you God, when I have a bad report. Thank you, God when I'm hurting! What happens when you give God praise? The Bible says that God inhabits the praises of his people which means He lives in your situation, He lives right where He dwells, right where you are and, I believe, that Joseph had a lifestyle, a disciplined lifestyle of prayer and praise, even to the point where while he was in prison, he was helping others. Now that's a disciplined person! You see because a selfish person would want to help no one in prison. You help yourself! A selfish person will say no, I can't worry about you because I'm in the same predicament you're in. Why would I help you and it's not going to help me but a disciplined individual, who loves the Lord, is connected to God and has a relationship with God will stop and help someone else even when they're in need! Have you ever been in a place where you needed encouragement but you have to encourage somebody else? Have you ever been sick in your body but you had to pray a prayer of healing for someone else? That's discipline because your life is not your own! While I was in prayer the other day, one of the things I heard during my prayer was that Jesus could've come off the cross but He said I need to go all the way so that I can defeat the death knell in the grave, so that I can give you all true victory! A disciplined life will cause you to go far beyond where others have stopped. Oh, your faith will say "I've got to trust God no matter what! Oh, and when I'm sitting here, I look at my favorite Scripture up here "Trust in the Lord" and lean that to your own understanding in all ways

acknowledge Him and He will give you direction! We have to trust God in spite of what's happening in the world today. Listen, God is not surprised. Sometimes we're surprised. We know that the Bible lets us know that God is all known. He knows the end of the thing while we're yet at the beginning. God is saying to you and I today that if you trust me, if you rely on me, if you adhere to my Word, you know what I love about God, He says my Word won't return void but it shall accomplish the thing that I set it out to do. So, when you called the Word of God, when you read the Scriptures, you're quoting His Word and whatever His Word says it's going to accomplish it.

So, what is the word saying about your situation? If you're sick, the Word of the Lord says by his stripes you are healed. If you're hungry, He says I will provide energy. I am Jehovah. Well, if chaos is all around you, you can speak peace over your situation for the Word of the Lord says if you keep your mind stayed on me, I'll keep you in perfect peace. The Word of the Lord, it's not about what man is saying but what does God say about it. Sometimes you might be watching the football game and the Bills you might wonder "How are we going to get through this?" But sometimes we win and when others are leaving the stadium there are a few fans hanging in there that think "I know we lost but I still want you to know I'm a fan!" I'm a fan of God even when all hell has broken off in the world and you know the Scriptures are so true where Matthew 14 and 24 where it lets us know that there are wars and rumors of the world and there are things happening in the earth that the Scripture lets us know that we can't even be surprised because it has to happen.

Bacon, you are in a place right now that God has made you want to be the light in a dark place, to be the voice of hope when folks are losing hope, to be conduits of love in the earth when people feel like there is no more love in the earth. Well, what happens when you show up or God shows up. Oh my God, when they see God leading and then they want to experience God's love through you. I just wanted to encourage you all today to listen and create a disciplined life that will give you the authority and boldness you need to carry out the work God has given you to do. Greater work shall we do the Scriptures say! Have you put a limit on God? Have you put a limit on yourself? Don't do that because the Bible says "greater is he that is within thee and that He is in the world. God is on the inside

of you and He gives you the power to do what you normally can't do on your own."

Joseph had to go through and then one day one of the ones that he helped remembered him and he had to come before the King, come before the pharaoh and came before the one that was in charge. Then God used that same gift that he helped others with to help the King and overnight Joseph went from prison to the palace, OVERNIGHT! Do you know what I love about Joseph? When you read that he says that prior to going before the King, I've got to shave. I've got to clean myself up and that's encouraging, right, because sometimes we are so overwhelmed. The Scripture says be not weary and well-doing and sometimes if we're honest with ourselves it is hard and sometimes it's hard to smile. Can I be honest with you guys? I serve this hospital and I'm serving our community and sometimes I don't want to talk. Sometimes I just want to come and stay in my office but the call in my life, the charge of my life, the responsibility God is giving me, requires me to lay aside my own emotion and convey and display His love. To be a help to those who I need to support, to those who need comforting. Joseph had the help in the prison and now what he did has brought him up in front of the King. I'm here to encourage you today that God is preparing us to get ready to be in position for the blessing. There is a blessing for both of us. There is a blessing for all of us. There's a blessing for those who are believers in the world of God, for those who seek his face, for those who are intentional and being true representatives of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Bible says in Proverbs 13:12, Hope deferred makes the heart sick, relentless disappointment. I wish I could tell you that you will never cry. Wish I could tell you that every day will be peachy and everything will always be all right but disappointment happens in our lives and disappointment is happening all around us. What God is saying is that it's the tree of life that eventually it's going to turn around. Eventually it's going to get better for you because we may endure but for a night. Joy is coming! Anybody need joy? I think the world needs joy and I believe you and I could be the conduit of joy that when you walk into the room, oh, we're happy, thank God, we're here, thank, God! Or Jesus, and ultimately, you guys also become like Joseph second in command in the nation, after the 13 years he went through but that they came when God exalted him. When God looked at him. So, you and I must make a lifestyle of faith, for the just shall live by faith. We shall live by faith.

We can't have faith one day and don't have food for the next time. We got to have faith at all times because we believe God is so faithful to His Word that He's going to show up on our behalf and the truth of the matter is we won't always understand everything. It won't always make sense but I'm here today to tell you that the Scripture says all things work together for the good of them and it is called according to His purpose. So, no matter what's happening in the world today it's working out for my good and it's working out for your good. So, trust in the Lord and lean not. Listen, I know you're smart. I know you got letters in front of your name and letters behind your name but when it comes to God just trust Him because there are these people of God we just can't figure out. We don't have the answers too but Jesus is the answer! I love the song that we played for the children "Yes Jesus Loves Me." Jesus loves you! God has been faithful from child to death! I sure wish you have a lifestyle of faith that looks for people to encourage you, for you to praise and worship your creator, your healer, your deliverer. God displayed His love for us through His Son, for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish and have an everlasting life. Jesus said in verse 17 "I did not come to condemn the world but through me all might be saved." I believe we are just the hands, arms and feet of God in the earth and I want to carry on the work that Jesus started. I want to be a good disciple which requires me to have a disciplined life.

In closing, when it's time to take a test, you can't ask the question because you've already seen that prepared. The teacher has already given you everything you need to pass the test so when it's testing time you can't say "Oh, I've got a question." No, No, No! You have the Word of God, you have the Bible and in there we have the answers to pass every test and as believers testing is required because we want to be good soldiers, we want to be great disciples. For the Scripture says go therefore and make disciples. We have a responsibility. Would you hold onto your discipline of applying the Word of God to your life, not just reading it but applying it so that you can be the example to others, so that you can reproduce disciples from the kingdom. God Bless You!