"***Our Greatest Witness in life often develops from how we handle Failure and Adversity in Life.***

For those of you who are visiting with us for the first time we have developed a church theme for 2017. Consistent with our church vision and what we believe God desires of us as a church. Our theme for 2017 "Living the Abundant Christian Life."

There are four Cornerstones that we are focused on to honor God and want to reflect as a body of believers.

These four cornerstones have been the hallmark of my preaching and teaching for the last few months and I am asking all of us to demonstrate these principles in our daily life and interactions with people.

As a reminder these Four Cornerstones Are:

1. Modeling Grace

2. Witnessing

3. Fellowship

4. Worship

This morning I want us to examine one of the greatest biblical characters in the entire bible who suffered greatly, but his life patterns Jesus Christ more than any other character in the entire bible.

 People watch how we behave and often we think witnessing is all about going out and sharing the gospel and passing out tracts. I don’t want to diminish this approach it is very important and essential. However, the greatest way to witness to people is when they see us going through adversity and failure and yet they see us remain completely devoted to God and loyal to the biblical principles outlined in the bible.

This is one of the greatest testimonies to the world about our character!! It is an important way to witness to the world and have transformational impact on the lives of people, because they see a sermon in our daily walk instead of hearing a sermon from us. Actions always speak louder than words!! When people see us living out the principles of the Bible it has a divine and profound impact upon them.

This morning we are going to drop anchor starting in Genesis chapter 37:12-36 and examine the hardship and adversity that Joseph experienced as a young man and see his great character and witness to everyone around him.

There are five (5) essential points that I want you to remember that are beneficial for us to understand and put into practice.

Let's examine the text: Genesis 37:12-36

As we examine this text we discover from verse 2 of Chapter 37 that Joseph is 17 years old when we he has a serious close encounter with adversity and hardship like he has never experienced before:

1. The first question we need to ask ourselves is why was Joseph hated by his brothers?  Let me explain why Joseph was hated by his brothers.

**Five Essential Points**

I. **The first point** I want you to see from the text is that at some point in life we are all going to experience adversity and hardship.

II. **The second point** is even more important and essential for us to understand.**We don't have to do anything wrong to experience adversity, failure and hardship.**  The fact is you can be doing everything right and experience adversity, failure and hardship. Adversity, failure and hardship is going to happen in life because we live in a fallen world. Joseph didn’t do anything wrong nor did he deserve what he experienced.

 He was hated by his brothers because his father loved him and unfortunately, his father showed favoritism toward Joseph and his brothers saw it. This was not Joseph's fault. He had nothing to do with the conduct of his father. He couldn't control his Dad’s behavior or be held responsible for the conduct of his brothers.

The reason Joseph's father, Jacob, loved Joseph more than his other sons is because Jacob wanted to marry Rachel in the first place and Joseph was the first born of the wife he really loved. He was tricked by his Uncle Laban. You find this insight by reading Genesis chapter 29 about Jacob's life. His uncle tricked him into marrying Leah. Rachel was the younger daughter and the person who Jacob really loved.

III. The **third point I want you understand is that trials and adversity reveal our true character. The person we truly are is revealed when we are under stress and encounter adversity, failure and the trials of life.**

**How did Joseph behave under severe stress and the trials he encountered? He drew closer to God as a result of these trials.**Joseph learned very early not to put your trust in man based on the disappointments he experienced in life. He realized that he couldn't trust even his own brothers and he needed to put his faith, confidence and trust in God.

Joseph didn't allow his circumstances to dictate his behavior. **He was determined to honor God despite His circumstances!! The question we should be asking is what about us?**

**In all circumstances, are you willing to honor God, trust Him, and obey His will for your life despite what is going on around you, regardless of what other people are doing, regardless of what your friends are doing?**

*The greatest blessings come when we go through adversity, the trials, temptations and failures of life and find ourselves hated by our enemies and remain steadfast, faithful and walk upright before God despite our circumstances and situation!!!!*

One of our **greatest tools for witnessing is staying focused on the Word of God and demonstrating how to behave differently than what the world expects when we encounter hardship and difficulty.**

**A perfect demonstration of this is what the members of Mother Emanuel Church did during their response to the tragic shooting.**

The world expects us to fall apart or seek revenge and when we do the complete opposite of what they anticipate by staying faithful, demonstrating love and refusing to sin, this is a great testimony for God and has transformational impact!!

**IV. The fourth point I want you to understand is that if we remain faithful in the midst of our trials and adversity, we will experience a "But God Moment.” What is a "But God Moment?"** *It is a moment when God shows up in the midst of our trials and adversity and starts to make provisions on our behalf to reverse the outcome of the trials and adversity.*

**Let's go to Genesis chapter 39 and examine verses 1-23 and let me show you Joseph's "But God Moment."**

**Joseph greatest "But God Moment” came while he was in prison at the lowest point in his life. When it looks like he has fallen to his lowest point, Joseph has a “But God Moment.” God starts his restoration process in a prison cell and he ends up going from the pit to the palace in due season!!**

This brings me to my fifth and final point this morning that is essential for you to remember.

**V. God has a way of intervening in our lives when we are at our lowest point and He gives us a "But God Moment".**

**Joseph’**s **"But God Moment” came while He was in prison. God was with him and it was so apparent that God was with him that the Warden put Joseph in charge while he was incarcerated in prison. The Warden knew Joseph was a man of God. Joseph remained faithful to God despite his circumstances.**

Despite being incarcerated for a crime that he didn't commit, Joseph remained faithful to God and even looked after the welfare of the men he was in prison with. Joseph spent thirteen years in prison for a crime he didn't commit. Despite all of this, he remained faithful to God. Young people, if you walk upright before God, He will ultimately bless you more that you can imagine in the end.

During our lowest point, just at the moment we want to throw in the towel, we must learn to be steadfast and trust God during these moments of despair. During our moments of despair just when we are about to give up our greatest breakthrough could be on the verge of occurring.

**The one thing we need to realize and I want you to write this down. We all struggle in life with some issue. There is no such thing as life being void of struggles. "The key to life is struggling well."**

**"I challenge you to struggle well like Joseph did and honor God during your struggles."**

**Now allow me to close by showing you how Joseph’s life was like that of Christ and how unique he was as a biblical character and how his life was so closely patterned after Jesus Christ.**

**Let's look at the power point I have created that shows eighteen 18 characteristics and patterns in Joseph’s life that represent Jesus Christ. If you attended our bible study on biblical characters a few years ago you have this illustration in your book.**