



DOCTOR'S ORDERS

RECUPERATING FROM LIFE'S INJURIES

WEEK 2 – THE CARE TEAM

CHECK-IN

How are you? Where have you seen God working in your life in the last week? And... today, we start talking about looking forward. So, with summer coming to a close... let's do a bit of that. What are you looking forward to as summer ends? Or does your life look pretty much the same, just cooler?

OPENING PRAYER

God of Connection, grant us the humility and the bravery to rely on others.

INTRODUCTION

Pastor Mike: Welcome to week two of “Doctor’s Orders,” where I’m taking the lessons I learned from my surgery recovery this past summer, and connecting them to the struggles we all have in life, and how we recuperate from them. See, I learned a lot in my time as an invalid. I learned when I’m in pain, I turn into a whiny little baby. I have a high pain tolerance, but evidently when I hit that tolerance, I

become a toddler with a toothache. It's not pretty. But I also learned some things about surgical recovery that seem to parallel our life experiences that provide a pretty good metaphor for what we go through in life. A lot of the things I was struggling with are things that we all struggle with throughout our lives, things we mess up when we're recovering from the injuries of life. And so, just as I needed to heed the doctor's orders for my recovery to go well... there are some "Doctor's Orders" that God gives us that will help us when we are recovering from life's struggles.

Set-up Question: Last week we talked about getting some rest to help our souls heal. Were you able to do that this past week? If so, what did it look like and did it help? If not, why not?

SCRIPTURE

Last week, we looked at the first of these "Doctor's Orders." My first and primary instruction was simply, "take it easy. No work, no chores, no nothing. You have to let your body heal. You need to...

1. GET SOME REST

My body had gone through major trauma. It needed an extended period of doing nothing, of resting, in order to recuperate. Our souls operate the same way. When we've gone through a shock to our mental, emotional, or spiritual system, our souls need time to recover, too. God instructs us, in the 23rd Psalm, to "lie down... and rest beside

quiet waters.” God knows that when we’ve gone through a shock to our mental, emotional, spiritual system, our souls need time to recover, too.

Okay, but *how* do we do it? Are there practices that can help our souls heal? Yup! And in my recovery, I got a few doctor’s orders that gave me practical steps for my recuperation. And a big one was...

2. TRUST YOUR CARE TEAM

The only thing worse than not being able to do stuff, is not being able to do stuff *for myself*. It’s one thing to make me rest, but it is quite literally adding insult to injury for me to have to rely on others for basic stuff. But I had to. My doctors knew that if I was going to heal, I would need a team of people helping to care for me. It was humbling, sometimes embarrassing, but absolutely necessary. And that’s an axiom that’s not just true for me and the last month and a half, this is something that is true for our spiritual lives as well. But that’s not just my doctor’s order. That’s also an order from the Great Physician. And we find a perfect example of this in the Old Testament and a story from Moses. Here’s your set up. After Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt and they are wandering in the desert, they run into a number of people groups who want to defeat them, take what little they have, and destroy their newfound freedom. And in one particular case, a group called the Amalekites are particularly bothersome. They keep attacking the Israelites. So, Moses sends

Joshua out defend their camp from the attacks. That's where our scripture picks up...

Read Exodus, chapter 17, verses 10 through 13.

This is early on in Moses's leadership of the Israelites, and he's still set on doing it all himself. He's judge and jury, he's priest and politician, Commander in Chief. And one might say he doesn't like relying on others to help him. Sound familiar? And yet, we have a situation here where he simply cannot succeed on his own.

Question 1: Consider this story. What stands out to you? Are you typically Moses in this situation? Or do you find yourself being the supporting person, like Aaron or Hur? Discuss.

REFLECTION

Moses finds himself in a dire situation. His army is in battle, and if they lose, there is no defense for the Israelites. They will be overrun by the Amalekites, taken into slavery at best and wiped off the face of the Earth at worst. And everything they have endured will be for nothing. The trials in Egypt, their great escape, the land God promised, the very existence and future of his people... will be lost if they lose this battle. And it seems pretty simple. When the staff is raised, they're winning. When his arm drops, they're losing. And so the fight balances on his bicep strength, and you know he's wishing he hadn't missed so many upper body days at the gym. But in this scripture, we see Moses get to a crossroads. He's trying to do it on his

own, but after such a long battle, he can't. Like me trying to sit up on my own after surgery, Moses simply cannot keep his arms up on his own.

And you can imagine the existential crisis that Moses is having in this moment. "I'm the one they look up to, I'm the mouthpiece of God to these people... It was by THIS staff, the one in MY hand right now, that God turned the Nile red, brought on plagues, and parted the Red Sea. And it is by this staff held high that MY army wins or loses. But I can no longer hold it up on my own... <deep breath, hard swallow> I have to ask for help." So, this is a big step for Moses ... but it's a necessary one. He swallows his pride and asks for help. His brother Aaron and a leader of one of the Tribes of Israel, Hur, find him a place to sit and hold his arms up for him. And because of this act, the Amalekites are defeated and the Israelites are saved.

Question 2: Okay, confession time: how difficult do you find it to ask for and receive help? Do you allow others to help when you know you can't do it on your own? Or do you fight tooth and nail to complete something yourself, consequences be damned?

In this passage, we see three things that I think can help us as we are trying to heal from the injuries we suffer in life and living out doctor's order #2, relying on our Care Team.

And the first is...

ACCEPTANCE

...accepting that we cannot heal on our own. At some point on top of that mountain, watching this battle go down, Moses accepts the fact that if the Israelites are going to win, he can't do it on his own. I won't lie, I was in a lot of pain when I got home from the hospital. And so, it didn't take me long to accept the fact that there were just going to be things I could not do on my own. Much to my chagrin... I was simply going to have to rely on others if I was going to win this battle. The message is the same for us when we go through difficult times in our lives. If you think you can heal from it on your own, you've already lost the battle. There are elements of healing that cannot be done without the assistance of others. We like to think that it's no big deal, we like to think that if we aren't IN the fire anymore, we're good. "I got this. I'll be fine... I don't need help." And that's precisely when you need to rely on your care team. So, step 1, accept that you cannot heal on your own.

Okay, so, you've accepted that you need help... now what? Once you've admitted you cannot do it on your own, you have to find the humility to...

ALLOW THE HELP

You can accept the fact that you need the help, and still be too stubborn to *allow* the help. Moses could have seen what was going on, known that he couldn't do it on his own, and still said, "meh, we'll sink or swim with me," and the battle would have been lost. I was,

we'll say, "lucky" to have had people around me who wouldn't let me do it on my own. My new nickname for the first month was "put that down". Once you admit you can't heal on your own, you have to allow the help.

But, to whom? Well, that's the final thing we learn from Moses here is that he knows who his Care Team is. He had his brother Aaron, who was his right hand man throughout all his life, and this previously unknown Hur. His Care Team was the people who were there to help. You have to...

BUILD YOUR CARE TEAM

Who would you list on your Care Team? After you've come out of the dark valley, who are the people you need to rely on to help you heal? Let me give you some tips. First, part of my Care Team were the professionals who knew medically what my healing would entail. When you are healing from a spiritual or emotional struggle, there are professionals who can help you heal, too. Find a therapist, find a pastor, find a spiritual director... this is what we do. Ask us to be part of your Care Team. Second, I had my closest support to help. Find the people to whom you can say, "hey, I'm struggling, can we talk?" Or, your group of girls to whom you can say, "I need a night out, or a weekend away, can we bail?" Ask and allow them to help you heal. Finally, your faith community... It's what we're here for. True community requires the humility to let someone else carry the heavy loads while your wounds heal. We want to be a place where you can

say, “I’m not okay.” And we will help you carry that burden until you heal.

Question 3: What of these 3 things do you find hardest to do? Which comes the easiest? What of these suggestions would change your life the most, were you to implement it as a practice to help you heal when life gets tough?

CLOSING

Now, we got one more week of this, so definitely come back for that. But for now, remember the second of these Doctor’s Orders. After you’ve begun your rest period following a struggle in life, as Moses did, and as I struggled to do, rely on your Care Team. Admit you cannot heal on your own. And then, allow others to help, relying on professionals, your closest circle, and your faith community to help hold your arms up until the battle is won.

**Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations
and close in prayer.**