

## AUGUST SERMON SERIES...BUILDING RESILIENCE

Demanding one's own way.	Thoughtless accumulation of possessions.
Paranoia.	Competition.
Rage.	Dehumanization.
Striving.	Lack of satisfaction.
Insincere religion.	Division.

### *Sound familiar?*

In Galatians 5, Paul describes how some in the Christian community harmed themselves and others. Buckled under the pressure and stress of circumstances and culture, their lives demonstrated the opposite of the values they professed as followers of Jesus.

Paul describes their selfish, self-interested behavior:

*It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. —vs 19-21, The Message*

Many in the U.S. and elsewhere are behaving the same way.

Under extraordinary and very real stress—from the threats of a life-threatening illness to economic hardships, isolation from loved ones, and demands for long-overdue justice—many are managing only to look out for themselves as they try to survive another day.

**I would argue that Paul is describing people who lack *resilience*.**

**What is Resilience?** It is the ability to endure pressure or hardship and retain (or regain) your original form.

As Christians, this means the ability to endure stress and continue exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—no matter the circumstances.

*Holy* resilience, if you will.

Like a tree planted by the water, un-phased by heat or drought.

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit. — Jeremiah 17:7-8

Paul describes what’s possible when this holy resilience grows in us:

*What happens when we live God’s way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely (vss 22-23, The Message).*

Knowing what holy resilience is made of, however, and actually fostering it in ourselves and our community of faith are two different things.

## HOW DO WE CREATE FERTILE SOIL FOR THE SPIRIT’S MYSTERIOUS WORK?

The Scripture offers a wealth of resources for our present struggles to foster resilience.

**Below dozens of verses related to resilience are organized by four themes:**

- 1. This is hard. – August 9**
- 2. You aren’t alone. – August 16**
- 3. You can do something. – August 23**
- 4. There is hope within you. – August 30**

When you feel called to foster resilience, you can revisit these themes and verses.

We will be focusing on Holy resilience for the month of August and how you can foster more of it. I hope you find this helpful. You might consider reading through them by theme daily each week of August. You might even share the scriptures that are most meaningful to you with family and friends on social media. Or, consider drawing them out and coloring them as you meditate on their meaning.

*Join us and invite others on the journey to resilience*

*Sundays 9:30 a.m. or M-F Noonday on Facebook Live: St Georges Texas City*

## AUGUST 9: THIS IS HARD

### THE STRUGGLE IS *REAL*.

Scripture describes all kinds of pain, struggle, and difficulty, and we can use these acknowledgements to help our listeners feel seen by God:

- Rom. 7:24: Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
- 1 Peter 1:6b: You have been grieved by various trials.
- Judges 12:2: And Jephthah said to them, “I and my people had a great dispute with the Ammonites, and when I called you, you did not save me from their hand.”
- Ps. 23:4: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 2 Cor 1:9: Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.
- Eph. 6:12: For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
- Heb 10:32: But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings,
- Psalms of communal lament:
  - Psalm 60
  - Psalm 74
  - Psalm 79
  - Psalm 80
  - Psalm 85
  - Psalm 90

## AUGUST 16: YOU AREN'T ALONE (EVEN WHEN YOU'RE ISOLATED)

### GOD IS WITH YOU

- Dt. 31:8: It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.
- Ps. 34:17-18: When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.
- Rom 5:8: But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- Romans 8:38: For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Is. 40:28-31: Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

### THE SAINTS HAVE GONE BEFORE YOU

- 2 Cor 12:9-10: But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
- Heb. 12:1-4: Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

- Heb. 4:14-15: Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Consider also the lives and witness of:

- Job
- Moses
- Isaiah
- Sarah
- Mary, the Mother of Jesus
- Mary Magdalen
- The Samaritan Woman at the Well
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Brother Lawrence (Hated scrubbing pots in the monastery kitchen!)
- Etty Hillesum
- Therese de Lisieux (The Little Flower)
- Nelson Mandela
- Harriet Tubman
- Sojourner Truth
- Desmond Tutu
- Members of your congregation and the history of the congregation itself

## AUGUST 23 YOU CAN DO SOMETHING

### PRAY—A LOT – JOIN OTHERS ACROSS THE US AT 8 PM

- 1 Jn 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- Mt 7:1-2: Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.
- Rom. 14:10-13: Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.
- I Cor 10:13: No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
- Matt. 5:21-22: You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.
- Ps. 46:10: Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

### BE A HELPER

- Acts 14:21-22: When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.
- 1 Jn 1:1-10: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father

and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

- Heb. 13:1-25: Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ...
- Phil. 2:3-5: Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

## HONOR THE PERSON GOD MADE IN YOU

- I Cor 6:19-20: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
- I Cor 12: 4-11: Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good....

*(Also, do some journaling: What have you come through before? What are your gifts and skills? How can you put them to work.)*

## BUILD COMMUNITY

- Rom. 15:6: That together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Eph. 4:32: Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
- Rom. 8:28: And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.



## AUGUST 30: THERE IS HOPE WITHIN YOU

HE WHO IS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN HE WHO IS IN THE WORLD (1 JOHN 4:4).

- Luke 2:10: And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.
- 2 Cor 4:8-9: We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;
- Heb 11:1: Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
- Phil. 4:13: I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
- John 1:5: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
- 1 Jn 4:4: Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
- Prov. 3:5: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.
- Jn 16:33: I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”
- Phil. 4:7: And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

May God grant you and yours holy resilience, that your life would be characterized by the fruits of the Spirit, and that you would participate in ushering in God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.