

**Message: Spiritual Resilience**  
**By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison**  
**Philippians 1:3-11**  
**Resilience: The Art of Moving Forward**  
**August 16, 2020**

The Apostle Paul had highs and lows. He experienced relentless hardship. He had spiritual, physical, mental, and social stressors. But he also had the affection of Jesus. In return, Paul loved the Lord and was on mission for Jesus. He had a deep affection for the Church. He was never alone. He always had teammates. He refused to quit. He saw the big picture. He knew who he was and where he was going. He finished strong.

The key to the Christian life may be the development of spiritual affections. How we spend our money and time may be the best indicators of what we truly worship. "Passion" is a good word, but it is often connected with sudden impulses that override wisdom and reason. Affections may be less intense and less sporadic but more continuous. It is hard to stay in the heat of passion for long. Affections can be nurtured and developed over a lifetime. We can build, grow, and shape our affections.

Jonathan Edwards, an influential New England preacher in the 1700s, helped birth revival (The Great Awakening). He felt too many Christians of his day did not understand what it meant to have their treasure in Jesus Christ. He observed how material riches were the source of security, hope, and beauty for many congregants. Faith becomes more vibrant when we realize our true riches come from God. "Stuff" can be good but can never be ultimate or best. Loyalty to Christ is first but that loyalty is expressed through church.

APPLICATION: Jesus said "*Seek first the Kingdom of God.*" (Matthew 6:33) What does this look like for you with time, money, relationships, media, music, books, speech? How are you developing your affections for Jesus?

**New sermon series Intro.** COVID-19 has obviously been terrible. There have been 644 deaths out of the 47,000 confirmed cases in Oklahoma (13 out of every 1,000). While nearly 99 out of every 100 survive, others have become quite ill. However, the overwhelming majority have felt little effect. Many who have it didn't even know they had it. However, Covid's impact has been more than health. People have lost jobs & income. Isolation has left many at home alone.

Zoom can't replace personal contact. Don't shake hands. Don't hug. Stand 6' away. Wear a mask. Anger & fear abound. I saw a guy @ a Walmart store tell someone to put on his mask. The unmasked guy wanted to fight the masked complainer. This WILL go on for months. It could go on for years. My doctor said, *"They should not allow pandemic during an election year."*

We begin a sermon series on Resilience today: Spiritual, Mental, Physical, Social + again, Spiritual.

I recommended a great book recently – **"The Coddling of the American Mind."** I said every parent should read it. Terry, a member, told me this week that he read it and it was very helpful. It's about helping children develop resilience. Resilience has never been more important bc we are ALL having to deal with it. When we get knocked down, we must learn to get up and fight back.

**How do we build spiritual resilience?** We begin with scripture! **Intro scripture:** Philippians = my favorite book in the Bible. Paul LOVES the church at Philippi. He has **anguish** about all the problems of the church in **Corinth**. He was **astonished (angry)** with the Galatians. He was **frustrated** by the Thessalonians. His personal letters to young **Timothy** are full of mentoring, coaching, and affection. He was trying to solve a problem with **Philemon**, though he says twice in the letter that he had a heart for both Philemon and Onesimus. But **Philippians** is the epistle of joy. He loved them and was profoundly grateful for them. He has great affection for them. He really wants to be with them. It's a letter of commendation, encouragement, gratitude, love and joy.

Read text: Philippians 1:3-11 *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,*

*filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

*I THANK my God* – Paul does not always express gratitude like this in his other letters, but he was grateful.

*Always in every PRAYER of mine for you all* Prayer – he is always praying for them. *making my prayer with JOY* What exactly is joy? It is not a personality trait, something conjured up by a pep talk, or something we gain by favorable circumstances. Joy is not dependent on a well-funded 401K or well-adjusted children. It is certainly not the result of a lack of trials. The Bible suggests joy is a spiritual response to the grace and love of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit. Joy is ours because we have Jesus and He gives us His gifts and ultimately, the gift of Heaven. His prayer is hopeful. *because of your PARTNERSHIP in the gospel* Paul orients his whole life around Jesus, but it is not just an individual thing – Paul puts everything in the context of community and partnership.

*From the first day until now* Acts 16 tells of his time in Philippi. Lydia's conversion, a demonic slave girl delivered and the Philippian jailer who was going to take his own life

*You are all partakers with me of GRACE* Participants of grace = receive *both in my IMPRISONMENT and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel* Paul was imprisoned several times – even in Philippi. Philippians is one of Paul's 4 "Prison Epistles."

Paul did not suffer for doing something wrong, but from sharing the gospel. *it is my prayer that your LOVE may abound more and more* wants it to grow *with KNOWLEDGE and all DISCERNMENT* "When Helping Hurts"

*so that you may approve what is EXCELLENT* Phil 4:8-9 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

*and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

This is Paul's **true north**; his destination – Jesus. He had many challenges, but this is what he always focused upon.

What are you asking me to do?

The 1<sup>st</sup> habit in “**7 Habits of Highly Effective People**” = “**Be Proactive.**” We are always in control of 3 things: What we think, what we say, and what we do. We can always do something. What is our response? What will we do? How can we take initiative in this? It's not just positive thinking or burying our heads in the sands – it's facing the facts and doing something about it. Nothing else matters if we're not proactive. Passive people don't take responsibility for life – they will achieve anything.

**Jesus** encountered a man at the Pool of Bethesda who had been lame all 38 years of his life. He asked the question: “Do you want to get well.” Jesus didn't dispute the facts, but he asked if the man wanted to take control of his life.

Ron Chernow's book on **Ulysses S. Grant** shows Grant was not a proactive person until he led in the military. Grant was a failure in business and virtually everything else but was an incredible general. He was proactive. Unlike McClellan, (“*General, if you're not going to use the army may I borrow it for awhile?*”) he took charge and attacked. He wanted to win the war.

People often say, “*I don't know how to study the Bible.*” The Bible is a book of words trying to convey spiritual truth. We need to know it, yet a lot of people do not. People say, “*I don't know how to get involved.*” That's passive. People say, “*I don't have any friends at church.*” Well...your response = your responsibility.

There was a change in the practice of medicine 12 years ago or so. Medical studies revealed that in many surgeries (not for all, like back surgeries), like bypass surgeries, if you let the patient lay in bed afterwards, blood clots, pneumonia, muscle atrophy and other complications can set in. They will get patients up a couple of hours after a bypass surgery to get things moving again. Laying there doing nothing is not helpful. It's painful – but patients need to get up. They take responsibility for getting well.

If we want to be spiritually well, we must take responsibility for our lives, too. There are so many things we can do, but if we don't up, we will atrophy. Our spiritual muscles will deteriorate very quickly. There's nothing new about this. We've just got to do it. Will you?

Christians need to be resilient bc the church needs to be resilient and the world needs to hear the message of Hope we have in Jesus Christ. We can lead others through a difficult time.