

Message: Social Resilience

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Hebrews 10:24-25

Resilience: The Art of Moving Forward Sermon Series

September 6, 2020

People with strong personal relationships are more resilient. Anything worthwhile demands an investment of time, energy, and attention. If we neglect social contact, then friendships will wither and atrophy. Hebrews tells us to consider ways to “*stir up one another.*” When someone puts cream or sugar in coffee or tea and stirs it up, it permeates the whole drink. The NT lists how to treat “*one another.*” A few descriptions: “*Be in harmony with, greet, welcome, outdo in honor, serve, comfort, do good to, confess your sins to, be gentle, patient and kind, submit, forgive, admonish, encourage, build up, have humility for, show hospitality to, be at peace with, and have fellowship.*” Jesus said five times in John 13 and 15 to “*love one another.*” Love is less about feelings and more about behavior. John says the same thing six times in his epistles. The flip-side states it in a negative way: “*Do not.... judge, have lawsuits, compare, bite and devour, provoke, consume, lie to, grumble.*”

We are to avoid the bad habit of *neglecting to meet together*. Instead, we are to be *encouraging one another*. Matthew Hansen writes, “The Divine is hidden within community, and this community, when submitted to, shapes us into resilient people we could not have become on our own.”

APPLICATION: Are you showing up to church? When is the last time you invited someone to join you? Jesus took initiative. How can we “*awake, revive, motivate, inspire, incite, stimulate, fire up, and excite*” one another? A phone call, text, email, invitation to coffee may help someone who is struggling. Breaking down walls of division, creating unity and reconciling the world to Christ should be our habit. To quote “Ghostbusters,” “*Who ya gonna call?*”

Intro: The 4th in our series on Resilience – the art of moving forward. Spiritual (our relationship with God), Mental (our commitment to grow intellectually), and Physical (exercising, eating right, and managing stress). Today’s is on Social Resilience. By social, I mean the relationships we have with others. It could also be social/emotional.

You can find this in Stephen Covey’s book, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Why was this written? The 1st century was a difficult time for Christians due to persecution. The faith was brand new. They didn't have Bibles, years of tradition, or even church buildings. They met in homes and small groups. Heb 10:32-37 *But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.*

let us consider how to stir up one another This is the positive way to state it. When someone puts sugar or cream in coffee, it needs to be stirred so it will permeate. It is more difficult to "stir up one another" when we are not present with one another. We are currently being stirred up by other sources, and not necessarily to love and good works. This "one another" is the social construct. There is no such thing as an individual, privatized faith. Some people say they love Jesus but don't need His church.

to love and good works to love & good works The book, "Supernormal," describes the "Grant Study." It studied 268 Harvard U students who were children in the 20's & teens in the Great Depression. They were chosen because they were considered mentally, physically & emotionally sound. JFK was one of the students. The study began in 1938 and continued throughout all their lives. A 2012 book was the most recent to tell what became of the men. None of them had it easy. Alcoholism broke up more families than anything else. By age 50, almost 1/3 of the men met the criteria for a mental disorder such as depression/anxiety. The most important influence determining whether the Grant's men turned out well surprised the researchers. Those who had love in their lives flourished at home/work. That love could've come from parents, sibling, marriage, friends, co-workers, or children. A researcher said, "75 years + \$20 million spent on the Grant Study points to me to a straightforward conclusion: Happiness is love."

not neglecting to meet together This is the negative way to state it. We are better together. It is easy to neglect things, but we have to pay consequences when we neglect. Ignore a leaky roof, and the problem won't go away. If we fail to sharpen the saw, we'll have to work harder. If we are so focused on driving that we forget

to put gas in the tank, it will be a major disruption. There are stages of neglecting. First, we forget and overlook something. Then when we are aware of it, we disregard, ignore, and avoid it. Neglecting something repeatedly over time, creates the risk of moving to a different place – we abandon and desert it. The writer of Hebrews is concerned about the social/spiritual neglect he sees happening among Christians. This has always been a danger. You've probably heard about the guy on a campout in the evening sat with a friend at the campfire and said he could be a Christian but didn't need church. The friend didn't argue or say anything – he walked over to the fire and removed a burning piece of the wood and isolated it. It didn't take long for the piece of wood to no longer be aflame. I don't know how someone can be a Christian w/o the church.

as is the habit of some, Habit = an acquired behavior pattern regularly followed until it has become almost involuntary; a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up. A habit can be good, bad or indifferent. But it's easy to fall into bad habits.

but encouraging one another There are many discouraged/very lonely people now. With people stuck at home, unable to go to work or school, and unable to meet with friends & family due to the risks associated with physical gatherings. But there was another risk many didn't anticipate – loneliness and the toll it can take. Ironically, in a day in which we are digitally connected, people have increasingly been feeling lonelier and lonelier.

and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Begin with the end in mind. Keep on doing good. Remember – Jesus is in control. "The Day" is when all things will be restored.

How do we build social resilience?

1.) **Be Proactive.** Find or create community. Don't wait for someone else. Reach out. Connect.

2.) **Listen.** Slow down. Take time. You don't have to solve their problems. Just listen. Tensions have escalated. We need a calm, non-anxious presence. "*A gentle answer turns away wrath.*" We don't have to swing back.

When our worship service ends, don't rush out. Linger and fellowship now. Resilience is about adapting to change and moving forward. Community and relationships help us build resilience.

3.) **Love Your Neighbor. Circle of Concern/Circle of Influence.**

Garage door openers, air conditioning, privacy fences & TV are all wonderful, but people used to go for Sunday drives and go over to people's houses. We've lost much of that today. I've been in a small group since 1985. A guy in my group said Tuesday he thought it'd be a good idea to invite his neighbors over for dinner. He

didn't really know them. He just waved as he'd see them in the neighborhood. He's lived in the same house for 29 years. For the first time in 29 years, he invited his neighbors to their house for dinner. 10 people came over. It was good. They will try it monthly. Another neighbor is supposed to do next.

We've had dinners for 6 in ADC's. It's not about "entertainment" but about hospitality. Entertainment is about looking good and focuses on the meal. Hospitality focuses upon the relationships.

Jesus ate together with people – including, sinners. He was criticized for that.

A guy in our church, I'll call "Bob," is 77 recently purchased a used sofa w/hide-a-bed which he hauled home & unloaded into the garage but he wanted to move it into the sunroom at the back of the house. Bob also found a used upright freezer, rented a U-Haul trailer and the seller helped him load the freezer into the trailer. Once he got home, he knew it was too much for him and his wife to unload and place in the garage and to carry the hide-a-bed around the house and into the sunroom. He went down the street to see if a young Hispanic couple who live 2 houses down could help. He knocked on their door and the young father came to the door with a baby in his arms. The dad immediately went to get his wife because he can't speak English, but his young wife can. Bob explained he needed help moving 2 household items and would pay them to help. They agreed to do it when the older brother who also lived in the home returned from work. When the brother arrived home, the whole family came down. Bob was shocked when the 2 men refused to let him pay them! How could Bob repay them for their kindness & generosity? Maybe his wife could bake them one of her wonderful cherry pies. Then he remembered 2 weeks before when a young Mexican lady who had been their neighbor in their previous residence, came by to visit with his wife. His wife shared that it was her Bob's birthday. The young woman left and returned with a flan dessert from the Hispanic bakery on Garnett Road. Bob told his wife instead of having her bake a cherry pie, he would go over to the same bakery in a few days and bring a flan dessert home to this family that helped them. He thought they would probably appreciate a dessert from their own culture more than a cherry pie. Bob said it was a win-win. They helped us through their service, and we helped breaking down barriers, if any, of race. It really blessed us.

Next Sunday night we will have an outdoor event with our neighbors from a north Tulsa church, "World Won For Christ." We are calling it, "**United in Faith.**" We are trying to combine social/spiritual.

Never too late for one person to change for the better. We may never get back to “normal” or back to the good ole days – but THESE are the good ole days. This is the day the Lord has made – we will rejoice & be glad in it.