
Hey everyone, we are in this series *Resilient*. And let's just start off this way. Who is the first person that comes to mind when you hear the word resilient. Like if the word could be personified into one person, who would it be? We would love to know. Throw that in the chat right now, no wrong answer. It could be someone famous. It could be a fictional character. It could be someone in your family. Who is it?

I know, for me, since we started this series there has been one person on my mind and it is Rocky Balboa. I mean, that man can really take a punch. Nothing can keep him down. It reminds me of the speech he gave—I think it was in like Rocky 37. Maybe you remember it. Here is what he said.

“Let me tell you something you already know. The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place, and I don't care how tough you are, it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it. You, me, or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward; how much you can take and keep moving forward.”

I think this is a pretty good description of what it looks like to be resilient—this ability to take the shots as they come, to maybe even get knocked down from time to time, but to still get up over and over again. To continue moving forward.

So, the message title today, if you're taking notes, is this:

Still Standing.

If you are watching right now, go ahead and throw that in the chat right now. Even if it feels like you are not standing right now, or you are on some shaky legs, you are more resilient than you think. And the incredible thing we're going to be looking at in this series is that you can become more resilient than you ever thought possible.

What we're going to be focusing on in this series of message is how do we do that? How do we become more resilient? How do we stay resilient? Both for this tough season we are in and for the season to come.

And to do that we're going to be studying the life of a man named Joseph. His story, we're going to pick up with it in Genesis 39, he is going to be our guide for this. But what we're going to do right now, as you flip or scroll there, is I want to give you the backstory to Joseph's life because a lot happened.

I think we'll see through his story that he is about as resilient as they come. You see, Joseph was a regular dude in a regular family. It was a big family, though, a blended family with lots of brothers. Amongst all of his brother, he was his dad's favorite.

Now, that would create enough problems on its own. It was already hard for Joe to be liked by his brothers. But then something happens that is just the icing on the cake. You see, Joe begins to have these dreams where his brothers are actually coming to him and bowing down to him.

Then he has other dreams where his whole family is coming to him and bowing down to him, like he is some kind of royalty. And, it's one thing to have that dream, it's one thing to tell people about that dream. It is a whole step further to tell the people who the dream is about.

But Joe isn't very self-aware, and he goes to his brothers and says: Guys, you won't believe this, but I had this dream where you guys all came to me and were bowing down to me. It was pretty wild.

And the brothers hear this and they are like: Yeah, it's pretty wild. They don't love the dream, though. And by not loving the dream, I mean they make a plan to kill Joseph. The story escalates really, really quickly.

And one day as Joe is going out to see his brothers, they see him coming and they say: Now is our time. They grab Joseph and they throw him into a pit. They throw him into this giant hole while they try to figure out what they are going to do with him.

Now, if you can just imagine what it would have been like being Joseph in this pit, hearing his brothers' conversation above him: We are going to kill this man. Seriously, he is the worst. I am done with it. Let's be done with him.

Joseph was like: What are you guys doing? This is crazy. It was just a dream. I was kidding, kind of, I was serious, but don't kill me. And his brothers were like: Yeah, we should kill him. But then they change their mind. They are like: Man, no, let's not kill him. Joseph was like: Yes, please God, you guys are crazy.

Do not kill him. If we kill him, we don't get anything out of that. But we have a better idea. Let's not kill him, let's sell him into slavery. That way we get rid of him and we get some money. It's two birds, one stone, fistful of money with high fives all around.

And this is what the brothers decide to do. They grab Joseph out of the pit and throw him into slavery. He is sold to this man named Potiphar. This is where we pick up in the story in Genesis 39. Take a look at this.

"Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. The Lord was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. Potiphar noticed this and realized that the Lord was with Joseph, giving him success in

everything he did. This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned.”

So, just to recap here, Joseph was thrown into a pit. He is sold to this man named Potiphar. You would think Joseph is down for the count. You would think he was just crawled up in a ball somewhere crying. But that’s not what we see.

We see in Joseph’s story that even after the pit, even after being sold to Potiphar, he’s not only still standing but he is successful. He is still moving forward. So successful that Potiphar actually notices this and promotes him immediately. Now Joseph is not just there, but he is over everything Potiphar owns. He manages it all.

It goes on to say it is going so well that the only question Potiphar has to ask, the only thing he worries about every single day is: What am I going to eat for dinner? Like the good life unless you’re Enneagram type 9, but that’s another point.

But you get this. Things are going so well. Out of the ashes my man is rising. Why? There is no accident here. Did you catch this line?

The Lord was with Joseph.

And success followed him. From there you might think, “Okay, we’re out in the clear. It is going to be okay now. Nothing bad is going to happen to Joe because God is with him.”

But, we’re going to see in a second that’s not what we see. That’s not true to Joseph’s story, and it’s probably not true to yours either. You see, the resilience he has shown is really going to be tested now. Keep reading.

“Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man, and Potiphar’s wife soon began to look at him lustfully. ‘Come and sleep with me,’ she demanded. But Joseph refused. ‘Look,’ he told her, ‘my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God.’”

Now Joe is doing so good, so good that Potiphar isn’t the only one who notices Joseph. It says that his wife begins to see him, and they she begins to tempt him to sleep with her. And this is really where we begin to see how Joseph is able to be so resilient, how he is still standing after all of this.

Joseph, he takes her advances and tries to do everything he can to stay away from her and keep her at bay. But his wife does not give up. She continues to press forward. Look at this. Keep reading.

“She kept putting pressure on Joseph day after day, but he refused to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible. One day, however, no one else was around when he

went in to do his work. She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding, ‘Come on, sleep with me!’ Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.”

She tries again. And she corners him this time. She gets him into a spot where he cannot move. And she grabs him by his cloak. The only option he has at this time is to pull away as hard as he can, and to run for his life. And that is exactly what he does.

But as he pulls and as he begins to run, she is still holding onto his cloak and she lifts it off him. This means Joseph is butt naked. Joseph is completely naked here and he takes off running down the driveway. This is not a good look. Running naked in public will bring some questions with it.

If you’ve ever been naked in public, you know what this is like. You know what I mean? I kind of know. I’ve been naked in places I was not supposed to be naked in. I can relate to Joe here. My clothes too were once ripped from me.

You see, when I was a younger man I was all about clothes that were a little too big for me. It was the 90s, it was a crazy time. Maybe you remember this. If you’re watching the Last Dance right now, maybe you get it.

There I was. I was at J C Penney clothes shopping, trying to get some clothes that were a lot too big for me. I get this pair of shorts that are pretty much like pants because of how big they are. I pick them up and show them to my mom.

She takes one look at them and she is like, “It’s not happening. You’re not getting them. They are too big. Put them back.”

“But I need these shorts.”

We continue to have a conversation and we settle with this. She says, “Okay fine, go and try them on first. Let me see how they look.”

So, I take them into the dressing room and I put them on. She wasn’t wrong, alright? The shorts are way too big. I can barely keep them up. I have to spread my legs all the way out just to walk out to see her. But I’ve already seen myself in the mirror. I need these shorts.

So, I get all the way out to the middle of J C Penny, and I look at my mom and I say, “See, I told you.” She said, “I told you. We are not getting them. They are too big.”

But, I can’t give up. I’ve already seen myself in these shorts. I’ve already seen myself on the first day of school in these shorts. But her final blow, where she really got me, was where she says, “Come here.” And I walk over and we’re in the middle of everything. And her final blow was just to give a little tug on the shorts, just to see how big they really were.

Now, neither one of us were prepared for what happened next. When she went to pull on the shorts, of course the shorts fell down. They were way too big. But, my underwear also fell

down. So, there I was butt naked in the middle of J C Penny. That is a place where you never have a good reason to be naked in.

And immediately I take off running, just like Joseph down the driveway. But, the shorts were already too big, and now that they were around my ankles it was the slowest, most embarrassing, most sad run back to the dressing room.

But that's where Joseph was. He runs out naked. All the other workers are looking like, "What is going on?" Joseph has to be embarrassed. But there is no way he is as embarrassed as Potiphar's wife. Because now, a naked man will get some people talking. So, Potiphar's wife has to create a story. She has to be able to tell her husband something before anyone else can.

So, she develops this story. As soon as her husband comes, she runs out to him and she tells him: Hey, while you were away, Joseph, he actually came and attacked me. I had to fight him off. I had to push him away. Here are his clothes. He is probably out there running naked somewhere. And so, Potiphar at this point is so frustrated. And he is hot. He immediately goes looking for Joseph.

Maybe you're trying to process this right now. How is this happening? I thought it said that God was with Joseph. And Joseph did everything right. He stood his ground. He didn't fall back. Why would this happen?

Is God still with him? Did God leave him? But he didn't. We're going to see that here in a second, keep reading.

"Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife's story about how Joseph had treated her. So, he took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king's prisoners were held, and there he remained. But the Lord was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the Lord made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden. Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison."

Like how though? How is he still standing? What gave Joseph this resilience to still be standing? What gave him the power and the strength to stand in the pit, to become a slave to Potiphar, to withstand the temptation of Potiphar's wife, and then to still be standing after being thrown in prison. It's because he had something that we all need to be resilient. It's foundational. Here is what it is:

We need a reason to be resilient.

For us to be resilient, we need a reason. There has to be a *why* for all of us. We need something that will bring us to our feet again and again. Resilience is something that is built; it's not something we are born with. And we have to have, "Why is it worth it?" to be resilient. Why is it worth it to stand back up over and over again, even when we're brought to our knees?

We need to identify that one thing we're loyal to. There can be smaller things, but there is one thing that takes the number one spot, one thing we're faithful to more than anything else no matter what.

And Joseph, he had a reason for his resilience. He shared it back when Potiphar's wife tried to sleep with him. Maybe you caught it. His ultimate reason came out. And when we're tested, what is foundational will float to the top. And when she came to him and tried to sleep with him, the reason he gave her says everything about his resilience and why he is still standing. Here is what he said:

"It would be a great sin against God."

This is why I can't sleep with you. His ultimate reason, his why for what he was doing wasn't because he was worried about losing his job. It wasn't anything about money or power, or anything. His ultimate reason that dictated what he did and didn't do was his relationship with God. It was his faithfulness to God.

He said: That is ultimate. And I know if I sin against God it will fracture that relationship. In doing so, it will fracture me and my resilience and everything else I stand for. Joseph had a why.

What is your why?

This is a great season to wrestle that down. And chances are your circumstances have changed over the past few weeks. Maybe it feels like you were thrown in a pit or maybe more likely a prison. And things are changing around you and you are trying to figure out, "How do I respond? How do I keep going?"

And what we need to do is first settle on and identify, "What is our why?" And not the first thing that comes to our mind, or what sounds good, or that we wish was our ultimate why.

But what is it? Take a look at our lives. Take a look at our schedule and decisions, and then make the answer. What is ultimate in my life? What is the thing that over and over again brings me to my feet? What dictates what I do, and what I don't do? What keeps me moving forward? What is the reason for my resilience?

I just want to throw out a few questions here, just to help identify what your why is. And here are a few.

What is it that pushes you past the pain?

What is your motivation to keep moving forward? And the second thing is:

What gives you purpose?

What gives value to your life? And the final question—and this is a big one:

How will you measure your life?

What tells you that you are moving in the right direction? How do you know what success looks like? What is it you want to look back on at the end of your life and say, “If one thing could be true, it is this because I gave everything to it. I made sure this was what I focused on, this is what I was loyal to. Ultimately, this is what I was faithful to.”?

Many of us, we become resilient for different reasons. Through our lives, you know, some of us become resilient to escape the bad and freedom becomes our why. Some become resilient to erase the memory of being poor, so money becomes our why. That’s our driving force.

Some learn to fight and to be strong so we never have to feel like a victim again, and power becomes our why. You know, there is always something on the other side of our why. It’s what we want most. It’s what we are most loyal to. And by its bell, we rise.

It was his loyalty to him. That’s what motivated him. That’s what gave him value. That’s what he measured his life by. That’s the one thing he wanted to be certain of, even with all these other things he couldn’t control, he knew he would remain faithful to God. And if I do that, I will remain resilient.

Joseph’s resilience was rooted in his faithfulness to God.

Our resilience will be rooted in our faithfulness to something. So, we have to be able to answer, “What is our why?” And I know it can be a handful of things that come to mind. It’s okay for you right now if the answer is not faithfulness to God. Maybe it’s because you don’t believe, or maybe you’re just being honest and that is not what keeps you moving forward. That is not what motivates you.

But what is it? What are you faithful to? There are a lot of things we’ve been discussing that could be your why, but there is a difference, a big difference between God being what you’re faithful to and anything else. Whether that is freedom, money, power, control, security, sex.

Here is the difference between everything else and God. None of those things have picked you as their why. None of those other things will be faithful to you, no matter how faithful you are to them. But God has.

You know, that’s the other thing we see here. Joseph isn’t the only one who is resilient. Joseph wasn’t the only one who was faithful. The first time it said that God was there with Joseph, and the second time, when he was in prison did you catch the extra line that was added?

“But the Lord was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love.”

Why was God there with Joseph? It’s because God was faithful to Joseph. And maybe you are thinking, “How can I know God is faithful to me? My setting, my circumstances, the stuff that I have been through makes it really hard to feel like God has been faithful.”

I think we can look at Joseph's story and see that our circumstances are not evidence of God's faithfulness because he was faithful all along, even when it doesn't feel like it. You see, evidence of God's faithfulness will never be found in the circumstance. But we can have evidence. We can know that God is for us, that God will always be faithful to us. There are two things. Here is what they are:

Jesus is the evidence of God's faithfulness

God's faithfulness can be seen in Jesus. God is faithful, so faithful that if you ever want to know what he is willing to do, how resilient he is for me and you, look to Jesus. Jesus is the faithful love of God. He is who gives that faithful love a face.

And Jesus was resilient. He didn't fold, even when it got down to the wire God was with him. But just like Joseph, he still took shots. Even though he lived a perfect life, he still got betrayed by his brothers just like Joseph. He was arrested and falsely accused just like Joseph.

Jesus was stripped of his clothes just like Joseph and me, but what kept him going, what kept him pushing forward, what was that? What was Jesus' why? Why was he still standing? What was the reason for his resilience?

His reason was you and me. That's what allowed him to keep going. Sentenced to death, still faithful, he goes to the cross to show God's faithful love, the greatest act of love the world will ever know. Jesus died for us, but he didn't remain dead. Three days later he would rise. Three days later not even death could keep him down.

He rose telling the world: I'm still standing. And if God was there at the cross for us, if God was faithful to the point of dying on a cross, we can know, we can be confident that he will be there in any circumstance we find ourselves in—any pit, any prison, and circumstance. God is faithful. He has chosen to be loyal to us.

That's how we can know. That is the evidence. The second thing is:

We are the evidence of God's faithfulness.

Followers of Jesus, when we see we are his reason, when we see we are his why, when we see we are the reason he went to the cross and endured all of that, when we see he is faithful to us, we will become faithful to him. And within us will be built a resilience that cannot be shaken. Nothing can keep us down.

It's a faithfulness our history books are filled with. It's faithfulness that is still changing the world today, lives that are constantly questioned with how. How are you still moving forward? How can you take that much and keep moving forward? Over and over again we see it is faith.

No matter the leaders you look back on, whether it's Martin Luther King, Bonhoeffer, Mother Teresa, what is it that kept them moving forward? How could they be that resilient? Their

answer, the thing they were ultimately loyal to, was God. It was their faithfulness to him that allowed them to keep going.

When we are resilient we get to stand and say the reason that we are is because of his faithful love. We are still standing, both in this world and the world to come, because we are the resilient. We are the witnesses of God's faithful love.

And we are the evidence that God is with us in every circumstance when we can say, "I don't know how I'm still standing...but God. God gave me strength. God pushed me forward. God kept me going. God motivated me. God gave me value. God gave me meaning."

And when we live like that, when the reason for our resilience is our faithfulness to God, we will remain resilient no matter the situation. Because the truth is nothing can separate us from God's faithful love. I want us to look at that and to close with that—Romans 8.

"Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with Death?"

Do you see what he is saying here? He is saying, "Is there evidence? Is there any evidence, no matter the situation, that God isn't faithful?"

He says: No, no matter the situation, no matter what we go through we can be confident in this. That God is with us.

"No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

When we live convinced that we are his reason, when we live convinced that God is faithful to us, he is loyal to us, that nothing will ever stop him from being right there for us, then we will have a resilience that cannot be taken.

And his faithful love is something you can respond to today. You can make him your why today. We want to be there for you. You can go to tpcc.org/prayer and just put on there, "I want to give my life to Jesus," and in that moment you will begin to see a resilience that the world cannot break. Nothing can steal us from God's faithful love.

And for all of us, we are the resilient. We can keep standing, no matter the circumstance, no matter the situation, no matter the shots, nothing can keep us down. We are still standing. If the reason for our resilience is our faithfulness to God, nothing can take that.

Would you pray with me?

God, thank you so much for today. God, thank you for this season even though it's hard, even though it's tough, even though we've taken shots. God, I know faithfulness is growing when we're brought to this spot and we can see you, we can know that it's not just in the good times, but in the bad times, in the hard times, no matter the circumstance you are faithful.

And God, you are powerful. You are good. You are for us. You are loyal. God, let that be our motivation. Let that be where our value comes from. Let your faithfulness be what we measure our life by, Jesus. We look to you. We believe, we trust, that if we have faith in you, God, we will remain resilient.

If you are our reason, nothing can stop us from moving forward. Jesus, we are still standing, but only in your name. Amen.