

Passage: **2 Corinthians 4:8-9**

In January, we covered the topic on running with horses.

Some questions we reflected on:

1. Who are the 'footmen' who weary you in your life and ministry?
2. What are the 'horses' the Lord wants you to run with?
3. What should we be doing in our 'land of peace' to prepare for the flooding of the Jordan?

Today, we want to consider how to be a resilient people. We will go through **2 Corinthians 4** and glean what it means to be a resilient people.

Definition of resilience

1. The power or ability to return to the original form, position after being bent, compressed, stretched. It is elastic.
2. Ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity. It is buoyant.

To be resilient is to be able to bounce back under pressure. How can we be resilient?

I. Know what our proclamation is.

Matthew 12:34b .. the mouth speaks from the overflow of our hearts. What is in our hearts will come out through our mouths.

1. Our proclamation reveals who we are.

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

2. Our proclamation reveals what we believe

1 Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

The 'Him' refers to God the Father. God is good, intrinsically good. He loves and cares for us and Jesus became these things for us:

- A. Righteousness - right standing with God.
- B. Sanctification - Growing into Christ-likeness.
- C. Redemption - Awaiting the resurrected body.

We have the more abundant life. All of us are to develop a wealthy mindset, regardless of the amount of money we have in the bank. For the poor, their concern will be the food available. For the middle income, it will be the kinds of food, quality of food but for the rich, it will be the ambience, the presentation of food. Do we have

the poverty mindset, the middle-income mindset or the wealthy mindset? God wants us to have the wealthy mindset.

3. **Who and what we believe increases as we know and experience God.**

2 Peter 1:2 tells us that everything given is through the knowledge of Him. God has given us great and precious promises.

4. **We are to grow in the spirit of faith to speak what we believe.**

2 Corinthians 4:13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak.

We declare His goodness, that we have divine wisdom; surrounded with favour; speak and sing the goodness of God.

II. **Know what our posture in life is**

1. **We are children of God.**

John 1:12 But those who did welcome him, those who believed in his name, he authorized to become God's children.

Psalms 139 tells us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. We are each wired differently.

Matthew 10:40-41 tell us about receiving a prophet and getting a prophet's reward; receiving a righteous man and getting a righteous man's reward. We need to honor one another. We honor what we have, not what we don't have. We love our spouse for who he or she is wired. The same goes for our cell leaders. We honor them for who they are, not what they are not. Don't compare one child with another. Once we understand this principle of honor, we honor the personality, strength of the person, not what he is not or unable to do well.

2. **We are disciples of Christ.**

Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. (NIV)

As disciples,

A. **We deny our self-life.**

What is self life? It is the old man, the sinful nature. To deny means we don't react to the old nature.

- B. We take up our own cross daily.
The cross is the instrument of crucifixion. The cross can be our spouse, mother-in-law, cell member, etc. We don't respond according to the self-life.
- C. In following Jesus, we hold tightly to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.
If we hold tightly to someone, he can become an idol and we will be disappointed; likewise for money.
- D. Other than the Word and the Holy Spirit, we hold everyone and everything in life loosely.
The person we first hold on to is God. As disciples, Jesus must take pre-eminence. Jesus is Lord, Adonai, Master.

3. We are also servants of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

As servants and disciples of the Lord, we may suffer persecution in our identification with Him and His Word. God is not pleased with every suffering. Not every suffering is commendable to God. What then are the times we suffer?

- Philippians 1:29 - We suffer for His sake.
- 2 Tim 3:13 - We suffer persecution when we live godly in Christ.
- 1 Peter 2:20 - We do good and suffer.

Read up **1 Peter 4:13** and you get to see that Paul distinguishes between suffering that is commendable and that which is not.

1 Peter 4:13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. **14** If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. **15** But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. **16** Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

All suffering by a believer is a trial of his faith.

- i. Suffering in a fallen world – no choice
- ii. Suffering due to our own 'faults' – wrong choice
- iii. Suffering for righteousness sake – right choice

4. We are members of the Body of Christ

We must belong to a community.

- A. Accountability and Covering (A & C)
- B. Praying and Communicating (P & C)

III. Know the power of resurrected life

1. The treasure in each believer is the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:7a But we have this treasure in earthen vessels ... He is the Spirit of power who enables and give us strength when we are down and out. Who is the Holy Spirit?

- A. John 14:16-17 - Our Companion
- B. John 16:13 - Spirit of Truth
- C. Ephesians 1:17 - Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation
- D. Romans 1:4 - Spirit of Holiness
- E. Isaiah 11:2 - 7-Fold Spirit of the Lord

2. The Holy Spirit helps heal and restore all our capacities.

- A. Spiritual
- B. Mental
- C. Emotional
- D. Physical

IV. Have an eternal perspective always in every circumstance and situation

2 Corinthians 4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (NIV)

Pay attention to the word, 'fix'. What do we focus on? To fix means to gaze or stare intently. What are we gazing at? We need to hold on tightly to God and everything else loosely.

We need to understand time and eternity. What is time? It is a created dimension created by God. God is outside of time. There was a time when there was no time. There was a time when God created time, and then space and within the dimension of time and space, He created man. So man lives within the boundaries of time and space. There will be a time when time no longer exists. It is called eternity!

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. **17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ...

Pauls exhorts us not to lose heart. Our personality must be changed and transformed. Our spirit must be strong when the physical body is frail. We fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

3 stories as I wrap up:

1. Persecution – Suffering of Paul.

2 Corinthians 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. **24** From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep

2 Corinthians 11:26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; **27** in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness — **28** besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

2 Corinthians 11:29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? **30** If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. **31** The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. **32** In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; **33** but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

Paul's life is in constant danger. How did he have resilience? How did he bounce back? Philippians 3 gives us the answer.

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death ...

2. Story of David in Ziklag

1 Samuel 30:6 Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

When David was away, the raiders came and all his family members and those of the families of his men were taken away. They were all very distressed and David was almost stoned by his own people. How did David bounce back?

He did so by strengthening himself in the Lord.

3. Story of Jacob

Genesis 37:31 So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. **32** Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?" **33** And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces."

Genesis 37:34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. **35** And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Genesis 45:25 Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. **26** And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them.

Genesis 45:27 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. **28** Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

There was a change of name, from Jacob to Israel. Israel means the price of God. Joseph is a type of Jesus. Notice that Jacob's heart was revived, and there were 2 things that led to that:

- A. the words of Joseph. For us, we need the word of God.
- B. the carts that Joseph sent. For us, these are the people who journey with us.

Thus, it is important to have people with us. Don't be a lone ranger. When we go through difficult times, we need people around. That's how we build resilience.

End

Questions for discussion

1. From the passages covered, what makes a person resilient? Are you able to relate to the passages presented i.e. when you go through difficult times, how do you stay resilient?
2. Even as you work towards resilience, do you have someone whom you could share your struggles with, or someone whom you would call to pray for you?

3. When bad things happen, what kinds of conviction or belief do you still hold fast to and not give up on God?

4. How does having an eternal perspective help you to deal with your trials?