

## A NEW BEGINNING: BE RESILIENT!

Scripture used: [Isaiah 43:16-19 \(NIV\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

Our "A New Beginning" sermon series continued this week with a powerful sermon on the importance of being resilient. We are investigating the story of the nation of Israel, and how it managed to build a brighter future for itself no matter the challenges. In the case of [Isaiah 43:16-19 \(NIV\)](#), the Israelites are in exile in the kingdom of Babylon, subjugated and persecuted. Their situation seems hopeless, yet God instructed them to forget the past and instead focus on what He was doing for the future. God was making streams in the dry wasteland, and that would allow the soil that was dried out to become fertile ground again. That is an example of resilience, which Pastor Hurmon defined as "the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad has happened." Resilience takes many forms. Pastor Hurmon was reminded of the Golden State Warriors, who bounced back from an embarrassing loss to San Antonio Spurs to beat them the very next day.

Resilience is found in a marriage that lasts for decades despite many issues. It's found in history, like in the life of Abraham Lincoln, the President who saved the Union despite his serious challenges with crippling depression.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) Resiliency is spiritual.** Our abilities are limited, but God's are not. [Philippians 4:13 \(NLT\)](#) reminds us that we can do all things through Christ. Through a relationship with God we can tap into an inexhaustible supply of love, grace, power, energy, and wisdom. There is nothing so challenging that God cannot help us bounce back. In other words, we are spiritually resilient. This kind of resilience rests on three things. First, we must have faith that God specializes in redeeming the improbable and the impossible. Second, we must be confident that God is both with us and ahead of us in every season of life. After all, [Isaiah 43:1-3 \(NIV\)](#) reminds us that God summoned each of us by name! Third, we must trust in God's everlasting love. [John 3:16 \(NIV\)](#) reminds us of God's sacrificial love. He gave His life for us! Similarly, [Romans 8:38-39 \(NLT\)](#) reminds us that nothing can separate us from that love.
- 2) Resiliency is relational.** The relationship we enjoy with God often begins as an "I, Thou" relationship. The focus is on our individual relationship with God. Once we have that in place, however, it's often helpful to expand to "We, Thou." Deep, fulfilling relationships with other Jesus followers will help us bounce back from life's inevitable challenges. This kind of fellowship requires us to be loving in the way Paul describes in [1 Corinthians 13:1-7 \(NLT\)](#). Expressing this kind of love to others over time builds up relational resilience in addition to individual spiritual resilience.
- 3) Resilient relationships require empathy.** Jesus suffered with us, taking on our pain and suffering as it says in [Isaiah 53:4 \(NIV\)](#). Jesus, the son of God, died for our sins in such a way that He actually experienced what we all experience every day! This is the ultimate expression of empathy, which means the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. The resiliency of our relationship with God is that we know God understands and cares; we can apply this principle to form strong relationships with those in our lives and stand in solidarity with those who are being abused, harmed, or unjustly attacked (for example, the recent spate of attacks against the Asian American community).

### DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR** - No matter how hopeless a situation seems, God is at work. His process of redemption never ends, and we are invited to be a part of His plan. Bad things will happen, though, and we need to be resilient to be effective instruments of God. When have you had to bounce back from a setback or trial?
- 2) UNDERSTAND** - The world continues to struggle with COVID-19, while Americans also deal with racial injustice in many forms. Two of the most powerful ways we can help others is by extending love to people, and standing up to injustice. We can foster resiliency by letting other people know that they aren't alone, and that we care about them. In other cases we can call out disparaging comments -- even in private -- to let other people know that's not okay. Consider the steadfast, resilient love of [1 Corinthians 13:1-7 \(NLT\)](#). When have you experienced this love? When have you been able to give it? What makes it possible?
- 3) DO** - This week's affirmation is "I will model empathy in my relationships!" As a practical step, Pastor Hurmon challenged us to consider first responders. Their service and sacrifice have blessed us all. This week's action is identifying one thing each of us can do to demonstrate our appreciation for first responders. And then actually go do it!