



## Resilient

### Part 4 –Knocked Down but not Out

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We have just spent the last three weeks in a series called Resilient. I'm closing the chapter on this series today. Here's why I think it's so important. In the last three sermons that Ted has given on this were phenomenal. So, even though most of you slackers didn't do your home work when he asked you to do your homework, that's okay because we're bringing it home today. But here is why this series matters. Resilient grandparents and resilient parents create resilient kids, and I think we need more resilient kids. I grew up in the 80's and I wholeheartedly believe that people who grew up in the 50's were more resilient than I was. And the people who grew up in the 30's, through the Great Depression and everything else, were even more resilient than they were. So, I think resiliency is on the way out.

Let me give you an example. When I was growing up in 1985, do you know what the percentage of sales were for hand sanitizer? Zero. You want to know what it was last year? Three billion. Dirt is great for your immune system. When I grew up, there were kids outside all the time playing football, basketball, and sports. They would have disagreements and they would have to figure out how to resolve conflict. So, they were getting touch downs, and now they are all playing touch screen Fort Night, or whatever else video game they are playing.

When I was growing up, I got gifts on two days of the year – my birthday and Christmas. Now your little jokers have figured out your Amazon password and they got it the next day at your doorstep. Instant gratification doesn't deliver resilient kids. Resilience is so important. Letting them ride their bikes some, hurting their knees... Resilient kids matter. I think we need more resilient kids. In order to have resilient kids, we have to have resilient parents, resilient adults. That's what this whole series has been about – developing resilience.

The final message is called *Knocked Down but not out*. A couple of weeks ago, Ted gave his best Rocky quote. I'm not going to try a Rocky impersonation, I'm just going to show you a video clip from Rocky instead. Video Plays – Rocky talking to his son.

Rocky: You ain't going to believe this, but you used to fit right here (palm of his hand) I'd hold you up and say to our mother, "This kid's going to be the best kid in the world. This kid is going to be somebody better than anybody ever knew." And you grew up good and wonderful. It was great. Just watching you every day was like a privilege. Then the time came for you to be your own man and take on the world, and you did. But somewhere along the line, you changed. You stopped being you. You let people stick a finger in your face and tell you you're no good. And when things got hard, you started

looking for something to blame, like a big shadow. 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 going to hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you're hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done. Now, if you know what you're worth, go out and get what you're worth, but you've got to be willing to take the hits and not pointing fingers saying you ain't where you want to be because of him or her or anybody. Cowards do that and that ain't you. You're better than that. I'm always going to love you no matter what. No matter what happens, you're my son and you're my blood. You're the best thing in my life, but until you start believing in yourself, you ain't gonna have a life. Video ends

He's just preaching resilience to his son, and I think our own fathers are preaching resilience to their children.

I always watching movies with my kids and then I love... Every piece of music or movie you watch has a message. It's trying to lay a message on your heart. I love to take stuff with my son to say, "Okay, what part of that is true and what part is not biblically true?" Whether you realize it or not, there is actually a lot of truth in what Rocky just said there. I don't know if Sylvester Stallone meant to or not, but when he talks about the world being a cold, dark, mean place, and it will beat you to a pulp and keep you there if you let it, it's absolutely true.

Jesus says the same thing. Let's look at scripture and what it says about the world. **18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.**

So, there are so many ways of looking at being knocked down and so many times I think when we get knocked down, the easy, cheat way to do it is to blame God. Don't blame God; Adam and Eve got you in this mess, not God. They are the ones that blew it. The world is broken, it's fallen, it's sinful.

Another way to put it is look at 1 John 5: 19. It says **we all know that we are children of God, and the whole world is under control of the evil one.** Now, this doesn't mean that Satan wins. I've read the whole book, I know who wins. What this is saying is this is a fallen world. Satan doesn't have more power than an omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent God. But Satan is here. As a matter of fact, 1 Peter says he's prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. It's a fallen world. That's what this means. So, if it's a fallen world, there are going to be fallen people. In other words, there are going to be people that are getting knocked down all the time.

Matthew says it this way in **22 You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm (resilient) to the end will be saved.** It's the one who has been resilient that will be saved. Now, here's the reality of all of you that walked in here today. You're in one of these three categories. I've walked with Jesus long enough to know that one of us falls in these three categories. **You're either knocked down right now**, you're flat on your back, you're on the canvass, you're are going through it. You've just been diagnosed with cancer, you're going through an affair, your health, your finances, your job, your relationship, you just broke up with boyfriend/girlfriend. You just got caught cheating, got

caught lying, an addiction... You're either knocked down, you're about to be knocked down, and you might not even see the haymaker coming, or you're just getting up. That's for all of us the rest of our life until we take our last breath on earth and our first breath in the presence of the king. That's the reality of a fallen, broken world.

So, when you think about people all throughout scripture, who are some people that you can think of that have been knocked down? Besides Jesus. Job got knocked down, absolutely. Everything was taken from him. His family, his riches, everything. Who else? Joseph. Joseph got knocked down and he didn't do anything wrong. Potiphar's wife tried to hook up with him and he ran out naked, trying to flee it. And he got accused wrongly. He walked in integrity, and he got knocked down. Who else? Jonah got knocked down. It was kind of Jonah's own fault. If he would have just done what God told him to do, he would have been fine. If you don't want to get swallowed by a big fish, do what you're supposed to do. Paul got knocked down. Who else. Peter got knocked down.

We're going to talk about Peter getting knocked down. I think throughout scripture, be encouraged, there is nobody you'll find in the scripture that didn't get knocked down. Noah got knocked down. Brother got wasted drunk and exposed his nakedness. Moses got knocked down. He killed an Egyptian... You can't find anyone in the scripture that didn't get knocked down, even our Savior got knocked down. So, why would any of you think that you are not going to be experiencing being knocked down? But just because you are knocked down doesn't mean you are knocked out. And if you are still breathing and you're still sitting here, it's because God has a plan and purpose for you.

I want to look at Peter. I can't think of a bigger knockout, knockdown punch than the one he received. Let's look at what I'm talking about. I'm sorry, this is Paul. We talked about Paul. Paul gets knocked down and it says in 2 Corinthians 11: 24, ***24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers.*** Talk about getting knocked down. That's Paul. We'll get to Peter here in a second, but he got knocked down.

So, last week, my wife and I and my two boys did a little tour of Texas to see a bunch of old friends. It wasn't hot enough for us in Branson, so we decided to go down to Texas instead. We spent some time with some friends. As a matter of fact, someone who used to be a member here at Woodland hills before they moved to Waco, Jeff Lemley. He was having a Bible study and we were staying at their house. He said, "Hey, do you want to go to Bible study with me tomorrow morning." I'm a teaching pastor, you don't have an option. "Yeah, of course I'll go. What time?" "Well, we need to be there at 6:30." I'm like, "Awesome. I'm on vacation. We'll get up early. Let's go." Never the less, I went. I just knew God had something for me." Any time I get up here, God just prepares me to be here to makes sure I'm in tune with his spirit, sacred echo...

So, we get there, and Jeff Lemley started this Bible study with just two guys and now it's 19 guys meeting in this little restaurant in Waco. It's exploding. It's has anywhere from like 20-year-old college students in it to 70 year old men. And he designates different people to lead the Bible study every

week. It's really special. So, I show up to this Bible study and I'm like, "Okay, Lord, what do you go?" This guy he designated to lead the Bible study was a guy named Jeff Turner. Jeff starts to share, and I asked him afterwards, "Man, you're not going to believe this, I'm about to give a message to our church body, would you send me everything you just shared." So, this 70-year-old Jeff Turner shared what he's been through in his life and it instantly reminded me of the verse I just shared with all of you. He's had two knee surgeries, his shoulder has been dislocated, torn bicep, broken both legs, concussed, ruptured achilles, 20 killer bee stings, cancer, two heart surgeries, cardio aversion, he's held his brother and his mom in his arms as they died, watched his brother in law die, lost a sister and couldn't be by her side because it was during COVID and she was in ICU and they wouldn't let any outside visitors in. On December 7, 2020, he had bilateral knee replacement surgeries. Two nights later, he had cramps in both legs for 3 hours. They thought he was out so there wasn't anybody paying attention to him. They just thought it would wear off and he'd be awake. But he wakes up. It doesn't wear off so he's awake and has cramps in both legs for three hours. He's incontinent for two hours. He has no pain meds, and he can't reach the call button for four hours. He was so anxious and scared, his heart rate climbed to 200 beats per minute, and he had to be rushed to the ICU.

He finishes sharing all this and he goes, "God is so good." He just radiated this joy of Christ. You've been around these people. They just have something that you can't explain, but it's the joy of Jesus. And despite all that, he understood James 1, which says, ***Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds.*** Because they develop things in us. What do they do? Perseverance, they strengthen our faith, they develop resilience. They develop things in us that Christ will use to develop in us.

Then I thought there are so many people I could think of that could have thrown in the towel because they were going through suffering or difficult times or they've been knocked down, but they refused to be knocked down and they allowed God to use them, and they impacted his kingdom.

How about Nick Vujicic. He was born with no arms, no legs, has literally, by God using him, brought hundreds of thousands of people to the cross and into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He didn't complain. He's married, he's crushing it. If you don't know the story, you have to look him up.

How about Inky Thompson. University of Tennessee, All American defensive player, about to be a first round NFL pick, playing for the University of Tennessee. He hits this guy in a football game, paralyzes the whole right side of his body. Unbelievable motivational speaker, sharing the gospel everywhere he goes. Coaches from every college and every NBA and every pro team all request Inky to come speak with their teams. Every single one of them is like "Man, this guy just has something different." Yeah, Coaches, it's called Jesus. That's what Inky has.

What about Joni Eareckson Tada. Seventeen years old, decides to dive into Chesapeake Bay. She doesn't realize how shallow the water is, fractures two of her vertebrae, quadriplegic the rest of her life. Rather than getting angry and mad at God, she goes through the storm, and she's knocked down. She comes out of it. Now God uses her as one of the biggest evangelists and ministry movers for people with disabilities. She is crushing it. And she paints with her mouth. She creates amazing paintings. She has a podcast and ministry. It's unbelievable how she was knocked down but she refused to be knocked out.

How about Franklin Reavis Hodges. He escaped from El Salvador. The first ten years of his life, he was sexually abused, molested, taken advantage of, abandoned. Then recruited to an El Salvadorian gang, where something in his heart tells him to get out of this because he's going to end up dead. He flees El Salvador on foot, making it all the way to the states where he eventually gets adopted and becomes a part of a ministry in Dallas called House of Eli, where he comes to know Jesus and is living for Jesus. As a matter of fact, I just did his wedding last week. You can look up his story on Christianity Today, they just released an article about it last week. The first act he did when they put on the rings on each other was to get down on his knees and wash her feet.

I met with another sexual abuse victim this last week. He said one of the most profound, powerful things. He said, "I know everything that happened to me wasn't my fault. But I am responsible for how I treat my wife and how I treat other people today." He's really been knocked down.

I want to get to Peter now. When you see him being knocked down... This is Peter! It's like I'm Petra, I'm the rock. I'm never going to get knocked down." I want you to look at this. **31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."** **33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."** What's that called? It's pride. It comes before a fall. **34 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."** **35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."** **And all the other disciples said the same.**

Wow, Peter. That's some loyalty man. You're amazing. You will never disown Jesus. That's amazing. That's so bold of you. Why did Peter get knocked down? It's pride. There are reasons why we get knocked down. Pride comes before the fall. Some of you might be knocked down, flat on your back right now because of your own pride, or you're about to get knocked down because of your pride. Or you're getting up in a much more humble state because you got knocked down because of your pride. Pride is a key sin that flows out every other sin. It's the fertile soil from which other sins grow. And if any of you in here think you don't struggle with pride, you proved my point. It's what got Lucifer kicked out of Heaven and it's what got Adam and Eve to give us a fallen and broken world to inherit. Pride is why you are going to get knocked down, you got knocked down, or why you're getting up from being knocked down. The other one is just God's sovereign plan. Maybe like Joseph, you didn't do anything wrong. As a matter of fact, you walked in integrity. You got knocked down just because of God's sovereign plan and you might not see it, but God is using it in your life.

Romans 8: 28 says, **28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** So, it may not seem good now – the health scare you're going through, the broken relationship you're going through, the difficult season you're in. It may not seem pleasant right now, but God will use it for good. That's a promise. That's God's promise that he's going to use for good in your life.

The other is just sanctification. The word in the Greek literally means to be set apart. 1 Thessalonians 4: 3 says **it is God's will that you would be sanctified.** So, in God's love for you, he's going to grow you, mature you, develop resilience in you. He'll develop all those things in you so that when people look at you, they see hope and they see Jesus working in you and that gives them hope.

You might get knocked down because you let down your guard. You just get comfortable, get loose, just going through the motions. *I don't really need to be in a community of believers. I don't really need to go to church. I don't really need to be plugged into other brothers and sisters in the Lord.* You just let down your guard. I see a lot of young men and women in the work that I do that get knocked down because they let down their guard. The last time I checked, I won't survive with today without Jesus. I can't afford to let down my guard when there's an enemy prowling around looking to devour me. I can't afford to let down my guard when there is an enemy that hates me and any work that I do for God's kingdom. I can't let down my guard.

The other one is a lack of accountability. You don't allow people into your life. You don't allow people to speak hard truth to you. You don't allow people to know what you're really struggling with. You don't allow people to really know your heart and how that manifests itself. What we think about is what we care about, what we care about is what chase, and what we chase is what we become. We don't share some thoughts with people that we're dealing with and eventually they manifest themselves into things that cause us to get knocked down.

The last one is someone else's sin. You might be knocked down and it has nothing to do with you and you did absolutely nothing wrong. But the sin and evil of somebody else knocked you down. A child that's an addict. A spouse that was either emotionally or physically abusive. Not your fault. Your child being an addict is not your fault. You want to blame somebody, blame the enemy. So, some of you in here might be knocked down simply because of someone else's sin.

So, this is where Peter gets knocked down. Look at this. His pride got him knocked down, but now look at this. **69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him.** By the way, a young girl is not going to have much credibility in this day and age in history. ***"You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. 70 But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. (1) 71 Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" (2) 73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away." 74 Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" (3) Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.***

I think so many of us have heard the story, but we haven't really understood the significance of what's going on in the story. Peter thought he could knock anybody out. Peter thought he was the man. Peter thought he was Mohamad Ali. Peter thought nothing was going to knock him out. His Savior, who he walked on water with, who he saw feed thousands with little food, who he saw perform more miracles than anyone had ever seen before. He witnessed all these things and looked him dead in the eye and said, "Jesus, I'm never going to back down. I'm going to die with you. I will never disown you." Denies his savior. Which I think is one of the biggest knock down punches in all of scripture. He denies his savior three times and immediately after he does it, that rooster crows. You want to talk about being knocked down. Peter is flat on his back. He is knocked out. Here's the crazy thing. There were no iPhones or iWatches or Siri to say, "Wake me up at 5:00 am." The rooster did that for you every single

morning back then. So, every single morning what does Peter hear as he's knocked down flat on his back? He hears the rooster crowing again and again and again, and he is reminded every single morning of how he denied his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But you know what's amazing about being knocked on your back? Look where my eyes are right now. The only place they can be. They can only be upward on the author and perfecter of my faith.

I think sometimes our sweet Lord allows us to be knocked down so we can realign our gaze, keep our eyes fixated on the author and perfecter of our faith. We have nowhere else to look, nowhere else to turn. I think he was producing humility in Peter. You know what else is amazing about being knocked down? You know the next position you're in when you get knocked down? It's on your knees. He's practicing you for what you'll experience in Heaven. Revelation says that every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. This posture is the most powerful posture you'll ever be in. and the Lord loves when we are in this posture. Sometimes we're knocked down because we just need to get back to this posture. We need to get to this place.

So, Peter knocked down, hears the rooster crow every single morning and he is reminded of his sin, reminded of denying. You can't mute a rooster like you can mute an iPhone. He heard that crow every single morning. I want you to think about that. He is reminded of a sin every single morning. But here's the beautiful thing. In Ecclesiastes, the scripture says that his mercies are new every single morning. Great is his mercy. So, Peter stops fighting. Peter takes off the gloves and there is a humility that is cultivated in him. But he pouts. That same Peter that left all his nets, everything he knew comfortable to follow Jesus. He goes back to the very thing he knew. He goes back to the very thing he was most comfortable doing.

So, my advice for you is, when you get knocked down, when you go through a difficult season when things get hard, when finances get tough, when kids are trouble, when marriage is tough, what do you do, what do you turn to when you get knocked down. A lot of us, if we are honest, we run back to the drink or the pills or the addictions or whatever else. What do you run to when you get knocked down? For some of us, it might not be addiction, it might just be comfort. Eating or sleep or whatever things we find comfort in. That's what Peter did. He went back to where he was most comfortable. He went back to fishing, back to the boat. How do I know what. Scripture tells us he went back to doing what he was doing. He wasn't advancing all the things that Jesus told him to do. He blew it. He's like I blew it. there's no resiliency in Peter today. I'm going back to doing what I do. I'm going to go count fish.

Some of us go to isolation where we only give fertile soil for anxiety and depression and all these things to grow. So, rather than telling somebody about the difficult season we're going through, we isolate ourselves which is exactly where the enemy wants you to be. He wants you to isolate yourself. He wants you to lay flat on your back on that mat all alone. He wants you to go through the difficult season by yourself. But Jesus doesn't want you to go through that alone. That's why Jesus is extending his hand to every single one of you. The most important thing or person you can turn to is Jesus. Some of you are like *man, I feel like I've been walking with Jesus for so long and it's not getting anywhere*. It seems like the more and more I walk with Jesus, the harder and harder it gets. I'm exhausted. I've Been walking with Jesus for 20, 30, 40 years, and it's just more suffering and more suffering. You feel a lot like this. I'm not here to preach a health, wealth, and prosperity gospel this morning. I'm talking about spiritual riches, spiritual blessings.

Galatians 6: 9 says ***Do not grow weary in doing good, for in due time, you will reap a harvest.***

I'm not talking about a monetary harvest. I'm talking about what Christ is producing in those who are resilient, who are willing to be unwavering in the midst of difficult seasons. Just because we're going through something difficult doesn't give us license to sin and it doesn't give us license to blame God. It does give us freedom to get on our knees in prayer to see what he might be trying to teach us through it. I don't wish suffering on anyone in this room. And I know a room this size and with people watching online, there is definitely suffering. Do not grow weary in doing good.

Here's the beautiful part about Jesus and the way Jesus sees us when we are flat on our back.

John 21: ***15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"(1) "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs. 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"(2) He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"(3) Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time,*** How many times did Peter deny him? I get chills every time. Do you think Jesus doesn't see you today? You think God doesn't see you right in the midst of your storm. He sees you. He sees your pain, he sees your hurt, he sees your child, he sees you're your grandchildren. He sees your parents, he sees your spouse. He sees you. I hope and pray that you believe that he sees you. Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him a third time... ***"Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"***

By the way, Peter was crucified upside down. He was so empowered and so restored after he blew it. Just like us, just like me, we blow it all the time. But he blew it and Jesus said, I make beauty out of ashes. I redeem what is broken. I don't call the qualified, I qualify the called. I got you and all your brokenness and your addictions and everything you've messed up. Yeah, you blew it, but we are going to be resilient, get up off the mat, get on our knees and keep pressing forward to Jesus. And Peter crushes it. The reason you and I are sitting here today is because of what those early apostles did in their obedience to Jesus and spreading the gospel through a persecuted area of the world. Sometimes you're like, ***Man, I don't have the strength, I don't have the energy, I don't have the capacity to get up off the mat. I don't have any resilience in me.*** That's okay. Think of what psalm 40: 2 says - ***He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire. He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.***

Maybe you don't have the energy or the strength today. Jesus does. Jesus, when we're flat on our back, seems to me that's when our eyes are fixated on him when we are in a posture of humility Jesus encounters us in the ER, in our closet when we are alone and crying because no one else knows what we're going through. Jesus sees you. He knows. That athlete I told you about earlier, Inky Johnson says this, "The one thing we all have in common is that we will encounter adversity, but we have to decide how we respond to it. My arm and my hand are paralyzed, but my heart isn't, my mind isn't, my dedication isn't, my work ethic isn't, my commitment isn't."



You know, excuses are like armpits – everybody has them and they all stink.

Romans 1 says that we're all without excuse. At the end of the day, we are all without excuse. All throughout the New Testament, Jesus encourages us to be resilient. He's given you multiple verses on resiliency.

Father God, we thank you for being the most resilient man that we know. I just pray for this room. I can just sense there are people in here going through it, Lord. Going through it. Lord, you see them. I know you see them. Would you just tug on their heart right now, Lord. And just reinforce that they're seen. Would you be with them, with their families. For any parents in here that are dealing with children that are going wayward, would you be with those parents. Any marriages in here that are severely suffering, would you be with those marriage. Any friends in here that are dealing with health issues and fear and anxiety, would you be with them. I just pray you wrap your arms around this congregation, all those listening online, and all those right here. We love you Father God.

It's in the powerful and pure name of Jesus we pray. And all God's people said... Amen.