Keys To Resilient Faith

Introduction: We as a church have already spent some time talking about the importance of faith. We have heard that *without faith it is* ***impossible*** *to please God (Heb. 11:6)*, we have heard that *God has dealt to every man* ***the*** *measure of faith (Rom. 12:3),* we have heard that *faith is the substance of things hoped for (or* ***title deed****) of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (Heb.11:1)* and we have heard that we are ***partakers of His promise*** *(Eph. 3:6)* by faith. Some us may be wondering, if I have been given the measure of faith and I have all these precious promises that have been made available for me, then How come I don’t see more of God’s goodness in my life?

I endeavor to answer this question today starting with this message entitled: **Keys To Resilient Faith**. We will first identify the 3 of 7 enemies of faith that Jesus points out to us in the Parable of the Sower and we will look at the Keys to Overcoming each of these enemies of faith one by one. **To Exercise Resilient Faith is to Exercise Faith That Overcomes Opposition.** The Secret to all of the Keys that we will look at is that they are all available to us as we live in relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Main Text: *Mark 4:14-20 NLT*

*The farmer plants seed by taking God’s word to others. [15] The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. [16] The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. [17] But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word. [18] The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God’s word, [19] but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. [20] And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”*

*Mark 4:24-25 AMPC*

*And He said to them, Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you—and more [besides] will be given to you who hear.*

*[25] For to him who has will more be given; and from him who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away [by force],*

**Enemy Number One: Lack of Understanding**

We need to look at Matthew’s account of the Parable of the Sower to see this enemy of faith Jesus identified in the text.

*Matthew 13:19 NLT*

*The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don’t understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts.*

We see here that the Enemy (Satan) comes to immediately take away the Word of the Kingdom that is not understood.

Lack of understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is due to a lack of Spiritual discernment and Spiritual discernment begins with acknowledging Jesus as the source of all Wisdom and Knowledge. Self-Righteousness and Pride led to spiritual dullness, for the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14). We see this played out in the lives of the Self-Righteous Church leaders of Jesus’ day of whom Isaiah prophesied and Jesus quotes:

*Matthew 13:10-16 NLT*

*His disciples came and asked him, “Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?” [11] He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. [12] To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. [13] That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don’t really see. They hear, but they don’t really listen or understand.*

 *[14] This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says, ‘When you hear what I say, you will not understand. When you see what I do, you will not comprehend. [15] For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes— so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.’ [16] “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.*

**Key Number One: Humility (which simply is us placing the Highest value on what Jesus has spoken to us and for us).**

* Give Illustration of the Intended Receiver (one goes on his route and does not even look for the ball, and another one runs the route but has a closed fist when the ball hits him in the hands versus the one who runs the route and opens his hands to receive what was intended for him).
* Refer back to Mark 4:24-25
* *Proverbs 2:6 NLT
[6] For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

When we honor God’s Word above all else, allowing it to govern our thoughts, feelings, and actions we are then showing true humility.

**Enemy Numbers Two & Three: Affliction and Persecution**

* Affliction in the hebrew is defined as: bad, evil, adversity, grief, sorrow and in the word in the new testament greek is defined as: pressure, pain, suffering, calamity, misfortune.
* We have a promise to stand on regarding protection against affliction:  *Psalm 34:19 KJV “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”*
* Illustrate the effect that stress or pressure can have on a person's ability to make sound decisions
* Persecution in the greek means: to make to run or flee, put to flight, drive away
* Both affliction and persecution are examples of external opposition that is directed towards stopping the seed of God’s word from bearing fruit in your life.

**Key Number Two: Remembering Past Victories**

* *Hebrews 10:32-36 NLT*

*Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ.* ***Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering.*** *[33] Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. [34] You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail, and when all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy.*

*You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever.* ***[35] So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! [36] Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God’s will. Then you will receive ,all that he has promised.***

* We can build confidence in the goodness of God and His promises by taking time to thank Him everyday for the finished works of Christ along with thanking Him for the large breakthroughs that occurred in your life
* Thus to use this key, we need to initially reflect on the goodness of God on an everyday basis.

**Enemy Number Four: Offense**

* **Offense in the greek: skandalizō: to *entrap* that is *trip* up and Thayer’s defines offense as; to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey.**
* *Mark 6:1-6 NLT*

*Jesus left that part of the country and returned with his disciples to Nazareth, his hometown. [2] The next Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. They asked, “Where did he get all this wisdom and the power to perform such miracles?” [3] Then they scoffed, “He’s just a carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters live right here among us.” They were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. [4] Then Jesus told them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his relatives and his own family.” [5] And because of their unbelief, he couldn’t do any miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them.*

 *[6] And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then Jesus went from village to village, teaching the people.*

* **(Teachings that attribute persecution and affliction set people up to be offended at God for either causing or allowing persecution and/or affliction) God Is Not A Child Abuser**

**Key Number Three: Recognizing Who Your True Enemy Is**

* *John 10:10-11 NLT*

*The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. [11] “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.*

* Since the beginning in the Garden of Eden the enemy has been running a smear campaign against God’s goodness. Thus, throughout the ages misinterpretation of Old Testament passages mixed with the tragedies that mankind has suffered (individually and collectively) have been used by satan to attribute his works to God and thus set me up to be **offended at God,** which has cut men off from the **Very Source of Their Delieverce**.
* As we acknowledge the simple truth that God is Good and every God and Perfect Gift comes from Him, we remind ourselves of God’s character and allows us to identify the work of the enemy more clearly.

**Conclusion- To Exercise Resilient Faith is to Exercise Faith That Overcomes Opposition.**

**Three Keys to Resilient Faith Are:**

* **Exercising Humility (which simply is us placing the Highest value on what Jesus has spoken to us and for us).**
* **Remembering Past Victories**
* **Recognizing Who Your True Enemy Is**