



# A Resilient Life

Matt VanCleave  
January 8, 2023

## REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- ☐ I will spend some time thinking about how I want to grow with God this year
- ☐ I will pray and spend some time with God to prepare my heart and mind for 2023

## THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

What do you do when life doesn't turn out the way you planned? What do you do when a relationship ends, vocational hopes die, someone wounds you deeply, or your health fails? What do you do when you're caught waiting when hope seems to be running out?

The Bible is filled with stories of resilience. The journey of the Israelites across the Old Testament is a journey of resilience. Paul and his travels, documented in the New Testament, are filled with stories of resilience. Characters like Moses and Noah, Joshua and David, Ruth and Esther, and Hagar are all stories of resilience.

In the middle of the Old Testament is a book of the Bible named after its main character, Daniel. Daniel and the characters surrounding him were extremely resilient. They experienced, in the face of tremendous challenge, a fierce sense of resolve and said, "I will not give up." They enlarged their capacity to handle problems. They not only survived, they thrived. And we can do the same. Join us for this series as we learn from Daniel how to live a resilient life.



# A Resilient Life

Matt VanCleave  
January 8, 2023

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Tell a story of a time in which you had to be resilient. What did you learn from this experience? How did this experience shape your identity?
2. Have you ever experienced a time in your faith life in which you had to be resilient? What happened? How did it feel to walk through a season of resilience?
3. The story of Daniel's resilience starts with the destruction and disconnection of his community. The Israelites, who had this covenantal relationship with God, have had their lives destroyed. They find themselves in a foreign land without their sacred home. Why do you think the story of resilience starts with such devastation? Why do you think God starts stories of resilience with stories of destruction and disconnection? What do you learn about God in the introductory to this story?
4. Not only did Daniel and his community lose their promised place and their holy place, but Daniel and his friends also had a name change. It was a total identity change and shift that was out of Daniel's control. Have you ever had a season of life in which you felt like so much of your identity was taken from you? Have you ever had an experience or time in life in which you had to redshift or reform your identity? What was that like? How do you balance faith with this total shift?
5. Matt talks about how all of this destruction and disconnection was centered in a place called Babylon. What is your Babylon today? Do you have a relationship that is struggling, are you discontent with work, are you trapped in a place that feels counter to who you are? What is your Babylon right now?



# A Resilient Life

Matt VanCleave  
January 8, 2023

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

6. How does it make you feel to know that even in our Babylon, God is working?
7. Matt highlights four characteristics that help us fight through our Babylon, four characteristics to be resilient. The first is that **spiritually resilient people resolve to honor their deepest values**. Daniel valued his faith and so refused to defile himself with wine (v8). What values do you hold in your life? How do your values reflect the way you characterise God? How does resilience and values surface for you in your difficult season?
8. The second characteristics is that **spiritually resilient people take initiative**. This initiative can open up cognitive changes or action steeped changes, they help someone form a warrior identity as they wander through the tough season. What does taking initiative look like in your life? How does taking an initiative help you in your faith with God?
9. Next, we learn how **spiritually resilient people are committed to living in community**. You are in a small group, so you already have this one down! Why is this community you are a part of helpful in your path of resilience? How can you become more vulnerable and open with this community so that you can be resilient in the face of difficulty?
10. The final characteristic is that **spiritually resilient people remember that their life, and even suffering, has meaning and purpose in the eyes of God**. Do you believe that characteristics? How can pain and suffering be purposeful? How does this characteristics of God and this characteristics of resilience form your faith this week?

A black and white photograph of a person rappelling down a dark, craggy rock face. The person is wearing a helmet and a backpack, and is positioned on the right side of the frame. The rock face is dark and textured, while the sky in the background is light and cloudy. The title 'A Resilient Life' is overlaid in large white text on the left side of the image. The author's name 'Matt VanCleave' and the date 'January 8, 2023' are overlaid in smaller white text on the right side of the image.

# A Resilient Life

Matt VanCleave  
January 8, 2023

A black and white photograph of a person rappelling down a dark, craggy rock face. The person is wearing a helmet and a backpack, and is positioned on the right side of the frame. The rock face is dark and textured, while the sky in the background is light and cloudy. The title 'A Resilient Life' is overlaid in large white text on the left side of the image. The author's name 'Matt VanCleave' and the date 'January 8, 2023' are overlaid in smaller white text on the right side of the image.

# A Resilient Life

Matt VanCleave  
January 8, 2023

## NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

- ☐ I resolve to honor God and live by my deepest values.
- ☐ I refuse to live as a victim of circumstances beyond my control.
- ☐ I will decide to take initiative and not complain.
- ☐ I will take initiative and get connected in community.
- ☐ I will remember God is at work in the midst of suffering.

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Daniel 1:1-21

## PRAYER REQUESTS