

Resilient Series – Part Three
Keeping Our Eyes on Jesus
Lester Zimmerman

We are wrapping up a three-part series called Resilient. The focus is on being resilient in the face of spiritual warfare.

So far, we looked at how to stand against the lies of the enemy and how to get back up when we fall into temptation. Today I want to talk about how praise and worship makes us resilient in the midst of spiritual warfare.

Spiritual warfare is a very real part of our lives and world in which we live. The Apostle Paul says there are demonic principalities and powers at work behind the scenes.

We have an enemy of our souls who is looking for ways to keep us from God and if he fails at that, he does what he can to limit us in our service to God.

Jesus describes Satan as a thief.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. NIV

Peter describes Satan as a lion.

1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. NIV

Yet as God's children we have been given spiritual weapons to stand against and defeat him. We need not walk in fear, but we do need to walk in wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Luke 10:19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

In the first message of this series Pastor Gary talked about the importance of the Scriptures as a powerful weapon against the enemy. The Word of God is probably the most valuable weapon we have.

The more you get the Word of God into you the stronger you will be against the attacks of the enemy.

There is a time and place to engage in prayers of warfare and deliverance where we bind and cast out the demonic powers at work. We have authority to do that in Jesus Name.

We do need to be aware of the enemy and his tactics, **but** we must be careful we don't become overly focused on the devil. He likes attention. It is so easy to become problem focused and pre-occupied with the devil.

- It creates a heavy spirit in you when you do this. You begin to imagine the devil in everything. You become depressed after a while.
- Not everything bad that happens to you is caused by the devil. Sometimes life is just hard. We and other people make bad decisions that affect us.

And even if the devil is attacking you, the scriptures describe another weapon in our arsenal that stirs God and his angels to action on our behalf and that is our praise and worship of Almighty God.

1. Worship helps us to stay God focused and resilient in our faith.

Worship is primarily about expressing our love for God and declaring his greatness. Praising God helps me keep my eyes on Jesus instead of my problems.

As I am focusing my attention and worship on God, he responds by pushing back the resistance coming against me.

Worship takes us into the throne room and when we see God we see our problems differently. Worship helps create in us a victorious and eternal perspective.

There are some great stories in the bible that illustrate how God responds to our praise and worship by coming to our rescue.

The first story is found in 2 Chronicles 20. Three armies came against the people of Judah. King Jehoshaphat and his people were about to be annihilated. Their back was against the wall. They were no match against the enemy.

What do you do when your back is against the wall? We pray and cry out to God. That's what they did. But they then did something else. They turned their prayers, their fears, their problem into praise and worship.

They began to praise God before they saw an answer to prayer and God responds to their act of faith expressed by their worship.

READ 2 Chronicles 20:15-30

It's a challenge at times to have an attitude of praise while you are waiting for your miracle. It's easy to praise God after you experience the victory.

Giving God our worship and praise while we are hurting or in need is an expression of trust in the character of God. We are worshipping him in that moment because he is the one and only true God.

Praise that flows out of our pain moves the heart of God to act on our behalf. It is the deepest form of worship.

It was praise and worship that turned the tide against the enemy. I believe our God who is the same yesterday, today and forever responds in the same way today to our faith expressed through our praise and worship.

2. When we turn our problems to praise, God sets ambushes against our enemies.

I love verse 22. As they were declaring the holiness of God, God sets ambushes against the enemy. When they took their eyes off of their enemy and put their eyes on God he fought their battle for them.

Sometimes God empowers us to fight our battles with his supernatural grace. Other times he says stand back and watch what I will do. I will fight this one for you.

So, either through his supernatural strength to endure or his supernatural intervention we come out victorious. Either way we win.

I believe God is setting ambushes against our enemy all the time. As we focus our attention on giving God our worship, he sends his angels to set traps for the enemy on our behalf.

Ps 149 states that the high praises of God in our mouths along with the word of God in our hands executes vengeance upon unseen satanic forces in the heavenlies.

- When we offer praise to God it has the effect of binding up the enemy.

“If you want the supernatural intervention of God on your behalf in a situation, the key that will release it is your praise.” Derek Prince

Now let's look at a New Testament story of deliverance through praise. Paul and Silas are severely beaten and thrown into jail for preaching the gospel. They are locked away in an inner cell for high security and also have their feet in stocks.

They are in pain and in a bad situation that looks pretty hopeless. So instead of getting mad and complaining and feeling sorry for themselves what do they do?

READ Acts 16:22-34 – Paul and Silas in prison

3. Our expressions of praise and worship are a powerful testimony to others.

I am not just talking about what we do in a church service. But how we speak about God while at school at work or at home.

Do we speak words of faith and confidence in God or words of complaining and fear?

What do people around us hear us saying about our situation? What do our kids hear?

Before the earthquake the jailer heard Paul and Silas singing the praises of God. He heard them declaring who God was. Then when his life was in crises he turned to the God he heard Paul and Silas singing about when they were in trouble.

I believe even as we are focused on worshipping God this morning that God is moving on our behalf for situations that are going on in our life right now.

I would hope that as unbelievers and skeptics come into our service and they hear us singing and declaring our faith and trust in God that in their time of need they would turn to him too.

EXAMPLE: Going to Full Gospel Businessmen's Meetings – I saw their joy and heard stories of God's power in their lives it made me hungry to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit in my life too. Their testimonies of praise caused me to say how can I have what you have?

Conclusion:

I would like to close with **Hebrews 12:2** “**Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. GNT**”

You will always fix your eyes on something. Whatever you focus on grows with in you. Either the positive or the negative.

If you will keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and his word he will become bigger in your mind and heart, then whatever is coming against you.

When I had cancer. I had a choice to let the thought of cancer consume me or to fix my eyes on Jesus and God's word.

As a parent taking your child to the doctor for a shot – You say look at mommy or look at daddy. If they can focus on someone they trust it helps them with their fear.

What are your eyes fixed on this morning? What is occupying your mind? What is keeping you awake at night or worrying you?

Turn your problem into praise. God will make a way for you. Keep the eyes of your heart fixed on Jesus.

Prayer Ministry after the songs....

Closing songs: Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

Oh, Lord, Your Beautiful

Be the Centre

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

Oh Lord, you're beautiful,
Your face is all I seek,
And when your eyes are on this child,
Your grace abounds to me.
Oh Lord, you're beautiful,
Your face is all I seek,
And when your eyes are on this child,
Your grace abounds to me.

So... Turn your eyes upon Jesus,.....