

Personal Resilience

Dr. Billy Wilson: Welcome to *World Impact*, and welcome to Warsaw, Poland. Today I'm at the Warsaw Uprising Memorial or monument here in the city of Warsaw. This monument commemorates the fact that during World War II the people in Warsaw fought back toward the end of the war. Now, they were crushed by the Nazis, and the Nazis then, just out of revenge, destroyed Warsaw. It's estimated that about 90% of the city at that time was destroyed.

What's amazing is that now Warsaw is one of the great cities of Europe again. In fact, Warsaw is now the seventh largest metropolis in Europe, and it is a bustling, beautiful city with high skyscrapers and great people in the population.

Today we're going to be talking about personal resilience, how that no matter how difficult life becomes, you can come back, you can get up again, and you can keep going. Now, as we minister today on this show, I want you to write me at **worldimpact.tv**. Tell me your story, what you're going through, what are the things that are happening to you right now that you need resilience in order to endure, and we'll pray for you.

Also, I appreciate you writing us. I appreciate your prayerful support as you help us do this ministry around the world. And if you have questions today as we talk about Warsaw and World War II and personal resilience, go to **worldimpact.tv** and let us know your concerns or your questions.

Today we're going to be talking about the apostle Paul and how he was an exceptionally resilient Christian and leader, and how you and I need some of the same qualities in our life that he had in order to be resilient in the 21st century.

I want you to stay with me. This is going to be a show, I believe, that's going to touch your life, touch your heart and family. I pray God will minister to you and lift you up through this program as we talk about the fact that Paul got up, and so can you.

Male Announcer: When it comes to getting back up, few communities can compare with the resilience displayed by Warsaw, Poland. During World War II, only 5% of cities occupied by Nazi Germany mounted any kind of organized resistance.

For nearly 5 years, Warsaw struggled under brutal Nazi rule. The city's population was subjected to mass executions, forced labor, and the systematic destruction of its Jewish community. Then Warsaw stood up not once, but twice.

In April of 1943, Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto launched the first urban revolt against Nazi forces in all of Europe. Using homemade explosives and stolen weapons, they held off German reprisals for almost a month. In the end, Nazis had to destroy the ghetto building by building.

A year later, with the Soviet Red Army advancing toward Warsaw from the east, the people of the city saw an opportunity to reclaim their home. The citizens launched a resistance campaign now known as the Warsaw Uprising.

Dr. Pavel Ukielski: My name is Dr. Pavel Ukielski. I'm deputy director of the Warsaw Rising Museum. Our main goal was to tell about values—universal values—that stood behind those young, brave people who did not want to—mostly did not want to—become professional soldiers, but they knew that this was the only way to fulfill their dreams, for independent, free Poland.

Announcer: The Polish Home Army, consisting of men, women, and even children, moved rapidly to liberate their city from Nazi control. The price they paid was terrible. Food and water became scarce while medical supplies ran out.

Despite the unimaginable hardships, the people of Warsaw continued to support the fighters, providing whatever assistance they could—from cooking meals to relaying messages under fire. But the initial successes of the uprising were met with a brutal response.

The infamous Nazi SS units, known for their ruthless efficiency, were tasked not with recapturing the city but with razing it to the ground by shelling and carpet-bombing it into oblivion. After 63 days of relentless fighting, the uprising was crushed.

A vibrant city that once housed 2 million people was a wasteland containing a scant 2,000, but it didn't stay that way. The Polish people got back up, and now a museum to the uprising stands in the heart of Warsaw.

Pavel: Today we have another message. This is a message of hope. Our museum tells the story from the very beginning, end up with a totally devastated city, and then you go out and see skyscrapers around, a modern, dynamic, living city.

When Ukrainian First Lady Olena Zelenska was here, she did not cry inside, she cried outside because she understood that this is the message of hope: that this city was totally destroyed, like Mariupol today, but there is hope. You can see a modern city in exactly the same place.

Announcer: So exact that paintings from Warsaw's artist community of the 1800s were used as architectural references. The result is stunning. Today's historic old city looks almost exactly as it did 500 years ago, but with ice cream and a metro connecting all 1.7 million people into a vibrant, modern city.

Billy: Today *World Impact* is in Warsaw, Poland. I'm sitting in front of the Warsaw Uprising Memorial, a commemoration to the fact that Warsaw fought back at the end of World War II, but also suffered exceptional destruction. Warsaw recovered. They were resilient.

And today on this show, we're talking about personal resilience. I want to look at a passage found in the book of **Acts 14**. Actually, I'm going to look at three words today as I zero in on this message and challenge you to be personally resilient in the 21st century.

The Bible says: *"Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city."*

My message today is simply that *he got up*.

Billy: Now, Paul and Barnabas arrived in Lystra in Asia Minor, having been rejected by a couple of cities, and when they got there, God worked miraculously. In fact, a man that had been lame since his mother's womb miraculously was healed and walked.

When that happened, the people of Lystra thought the gods—the Greek gods—had come down to them in the person of Paul and Barnabas, and they tried to worship them. Paul and Barnabas said, *"No. We're human just like you are,"* and they wouldn't let them worship them.

And then the people from the other cities that had rejected Paul and Barnabas and fought against them arrived in Lystra and turned the crowd from worshiping Paul and Barnabas totally against them, so much so that they dragged Paul outside the city, stoned him, and left him lying there for dead.

Now, some scholars believe that indeed Paul did die in this moment and was supernaturally resurrected. I don't know about that, but they thought he was dead and left him collapsed. The disciples of Lystra gathered around him, and the Bible says he got up.

Now, what I want to say to you today is this is the story of the Christian life: we get up. Over and over and over again we just keep getting up, and that is a sign of resilience.

Now, the word *resilience* means the ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune, and it is essential to any effective leader in the 21st century. Resilience actually comes from a Latin word *resilion*, which means pliant elasticity of a substance, the ability to stretch and come back. Like a rubber band being stretched out of shape, resilient people are able to come back into shape and keep on going.

Others define resilience as the capacity to face stressors without significant negative disruption in functioning, positive coping, adaptation, and persistence. The social sciences generally define resilience as the ability to recover from negative life experiences and become stronger while overcoming them.

I believe as Christian believers we need to be some of the most resilient people on earth. When all is lost, when we've been down, when it seems we've been beaten up and it seems like we can't go on, we get up.

Nelson Mandela said this: *“Do not judge me by my success. Judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up.”*

The apostle Paul was one of the great resilient Christians of all time. Over and over again he was hit, he was pushed down, he was pushed back, and over and over again Paul just kept coming back for more.

Listen to how Paul describes it in **2 Corinthians 11:23–28**: *“Are they servants of Christ?” Paul says. “I can go them one better. I can't believe I'm saying these things, it's crazy to talk this way. But I started and I'm going to finish. I've worked much harder, been jailed more often, beaten up more times than I can count, and at death's door, time after time. I've been flogged five times with the Jews, 39 lashes, beaten by Roman rods three times, pummeled with rocks once. I've been shipwrecked three times and immersed in the open sea for a night and a day. In hard traveling year in and year out, I've had to ford rivers, fend off robbers, struggle with friends and struggle with foes. I've been at risk in the city, at risk in the country, endangered in the desert, sun, and sea storm. I've had betrayal by those I thought were my brothers. I've known drudgery and hard labor, many a long, lonely night without sleep, many a missed meal blasted by the cold, naked to the weather. And that's not the half of it,” Paul says, “when you throw in the daily pressure and anxiety of all the churches.”*

Paul just kept getting up. No matter what he went through, no matter how difficult it was, he showed extreme resilience.

Now, what I want to share with you today are four things that Paul had in his life that helped him get up and keep going when things were difficult and it seemed like he was beaten down.

Number one, Paul had the right people in his life. And if you're going to be resilient, I believe in the 21st century as a Christian believer you need the right people around you. I want to remind you that Paul had people like Barnabas, and Luke, and Timothy, and Silas, and Aquila, and Priscilla. The disciples gathered around him at Lystra, and when they did, Paul got up.

Now, we don't know what they did that day at Lystra. We don't know if they were cheering him on, saying, *“Come on, Paul, you can get up, go another round,”* or if they were praying for him. I don't think they were putting him down. I don't think anybody was standing around saying, *“Paul, I told you you shouldn't have done that here in Lystra because you were going to get beaten up and stoned.”*

They were there to encourage him. They were there to lift him up. If you're going to be resilient, surround yourself with people that are balcony people, people that will lift you up and cheer you on. Find people in your life that are encouragers and surround yourself with them, and it will help you stay resilient.

The second thing Paul had that I believe is key to resilience in the 21st century is Paul had purpose. Paul knew why he was in Lystra and why he had to get up from that moment of being beaten down.

Viktor Frankl lived through the Holocaust here in Poland. In fact, he was in four different concentration camps. Over a period of about 3 years, he lost his father in a concentration camp, his mother, his brother, and ultimately his wife. Frankl was able to survive even Auschwitz because he lived with a purpose. He would say later on in his autobiography, *“Those who have a why to live for can bear with almost any how.”*

Then he would also say, *“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances but only by lack of meaning and purpose.”* Frankl understood that as long as we know our *why*, we can keep going even when it's tough.

Thomas Edison said, *“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”*

Know why you're in the world. Paul knew that day lying on the tarmac on the road of Lystra outside the city that he still had a purpose and a reason to live. And so, by the grace of God, through the disciples cheering him on and praying for him, and because he had purpose in his heart, he got up again.

If you're going to survive in the 21st century as a believer and endure until the end, you're going to have to be resilient. You need the right people around you and you need to know what your purpose in God is. If you know your purpose, if you know your *why*, you can go through almost any kind of *how*.

Well, today we're talking about personal resilience and how you can bounce back no matter what's going on in your life. I want you to stay with me. We're in Warsaw, Poland. I'll be back in just a moment to share a couple of other qualities Paul had that helped him that day at Lystra to get up.

Pavel: The Warsaw Rising was very important for Polish remembrance after the Second World War, and it was too important to silence it totally by the communist government. So, of course, communists had their own propaganda narrative against the leaders, against the commanders. Later on it was more nuanced—so, good soldiers, criminal commanders—but on the other hand there was remembrance among people, among ordinary people. So this myth of fighting for freedom, for independence, was very, very strong and important and allowed people to survive the communist dictatorship.

But on the other hand, the remembrance of huge losses during the Warsaw Rising decided that Polish society did not raise up arms against communists. That's why also the Solidarity Movement was peaceful. It did not organize any armed resistance in 1980, '81, even after introduction of the martial law—because of remembrance of the huge massacre during the Warsaw Rising. Avoiding violence was a priority for both Polish workers and the communist party.

[speaking foreign language]

So this remembrance supported Polish resistance against communists but also prevented them from becoming an armed uprising.

Billy: Today on *World Impact* we're talking about personal resilience. I've been looking at a passage in **Acts 14** where Paul is stoned and left for dead outside the city of Lystra. The Bible says after that moment, disciples gathered around him, and he got up. In fact, my message title today is *"He Got Up."* Because he got up, you can as well.

I've been looking at qualities that Paul had—things he had in his life—that helped him be resilient and helped him get up again and helped him get up at Lystra. First of all, he had the right people around him. Number two, he knew what his purpose was. He knew his *why*, and because he knew his *why* he could keep going.

Number three, while Paul was lying there dead or almost dead at Lystra, he had the right perspective. He knew why he was serving God and he knew what he was living for.

In **2 Corinthians 4:16–17**, Paul would say: *"Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."*

Paul had an eternal perspective. He would say later on: *"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."* The truth is, that day at Lystra if he'd gone home to be with Jesus, it would have been a glorious day in Paul's life. He had an eternal perspective. He knew that this moment at Lystra was temporary, but eternity was real.

When we look at the Bible at people who were resilient with difficult things happening in their life, perhaps Job stands out as one of the most resilient people in human history. Job was a wealthy man and he was a righteous man, and God had blessed him abundantly. He had great herds, he had a wonderful family of 10 children, he had numerous servants, and in one day, Job lost everything.

Satan had gone to God and asked if he could touch Job's life because he believed Job would curse God if he touched what he owned. Well, in one day, Job lost all of his cattle, all of his

sheep, all of his donkeys, all of his servants, and a great wind blew a house down on his children and he lost 10 children in one moment. I can't imagine what it was like to have 10 funerals of your family members in one day and to lose all of your wealth at the same time.

Job was depleted. He was what had been wealthy and was now broken in one day. This was one of the greatest financial collapses in history. But the Bible says Job, in that day, bowed down to the earth and rose up and worshiped God. He refused to curse God, he refused to rebel against God, and instead he blessed God and said, *"I came into the world without anything, and I'm going to leave without anything. Blessed is the name of the Lord."*

And later on, even after Job was afflicted in his body, so much so that sores broke out from the top of his head to the sole of his feet, Job would still keep his eternal perspective.

In fact, Job would say: *"Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"*

Job said, *"This disease that's taking and rotting my skin away"—so much so that his skin became black and he had to scrape dead skin off of his bones—"even if my skin is gone, even if my flesh rots away, I know my Redeemer lives, and someday he'll stand on the earth and I will stand with him."*

Job kept his eternal perspective. He knew that what he was going through was temporary.

I want to say to you today: whatever you're going through, it's temporary. It's not going to last forever, but eternity will be forever. So keep your eternal perspective.

So, the apostle Paul had the right people around him. He had purpose in his life—he knew why he was alive and what he was doing in Lystra in the first place. And he had an eternal perspective. He knew that if he died, if he went home, he would be with Jesus Christ.

And finally, Paul had power—supernatural power inside of him. That day as he lay there almost dead or dead at Lystra, the Holy Spirit of God was alive inside of him. Now, I believe as Christians, God's power in us helps us keep getting up. And if you're going to be resilient, if you're going to make it in the 21st century, you just got to keep getting up, over and over again.

When Job got attacked by Satan, he got up. When David went through moral failure and failed God, he got up. When Elijah was in depression in a cave, he got up. When Peter betrayed Jesus and failed God, he got up. When Paul was knocked down on the road to Damascus, he got up—and he got up at Lystra. And the prodigal son, finding himself in the pigpen away from God, got up and went home to the Father.

The truth is: Jesus got up out of the grave, and because He got up, you and I can get up. The Bible tells us that the same Spirit that lived in Jesus Christ and raised Him from the dead dwells

in us, and that Spirit will quicken our mortal body and give us supernatural strength to go on, even when we feel like we can't go on.

So when you feel like you've exhausted all the possibilities—you haven't. God is inside of you and working to help you keep going.

A story was told of a preacher one time who was preaching. He was on a stage—it was made out of wood. And he was in a big way a Pentecostal preacher, and he jumped up real high and came down on the stage, and when he did he went through the floor of the stage. And he was standing waist deep in stage, looking at the crowd, not knowing what to do. Everybody was aghast. They didn't know what was going to happen.

The preacher looked around for a moment and said this: “*Well, the devil can get you down, but he can't keep you down.*” So he got up out of the hole and he kept on preaching.

Well, that's a funny story, but there's a lot of truth in it. In our lives, Satan can get us down. Sometimes he beats us up, sometimes he stones us and crushes us and leaves us for dead, but the Holy Spirit in our lives will raise us up again to serve the living God.

So what is it that Paul had that we can have in the 21st century to keep us resilient? He had the right people around him, he had purpose in his life—he knew his *why*—he had an eternal perspective, and most importantly he had the power of the Holy Spirit living in him.

And so that day at Lystra, when everybody else gave up and the crowd walked away, his friends were still there, and the Holy Spirit raised him up to keep going. Today, he got up, and you can get up. By the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God, keep going. God's with you. Be encouraged.

Billy: Today on *World Impact* we've been talking about personal resilience and the fact that Paul, when all seemed lost and he was lying dead or half-dead at Lystra, got up. And the fact is—you can get up. Whatever you're going through, you can get up and keep on going.

An account is given of a man in Australia. His name was Cliff Young. Now, Cliff decided to run the ultramarathon in Australia, which is a race that is 544 miles long, stretching from Sydney all the way to Melbourne.

Now, Cliff was a farmer, and he had been used to chasing sheep in his field in rubber boots. He first tried to put on tennis shoes to run the race and then said, “*Nah, those are not comfortable.*” So he put on rubber boots. He ran the 544-mile race in record time—mostly because when other runners were asleep at night, Cliff just kept on running.

Cliff Young: For sure I'm going to run all night tonight, and I hope to finish tomorrow.

Billy: When he got to the end and the finish line and won the race, somebody asked him, “*Cliff, how did you do it?*” His answer was very simple, but very powerful. He said, “*I just kept going. I just kept going.*”

I want to say to you today, by the power of God's grace and by the Holy Spirit, you can keep going. Maybe God has sent me today to be a cheerleader in your life and tell you: no matter what you're going through, no matter how hard you fall, and no matter how much Satan is beating you up and beating you down, God wants to lift you up.

We believe in you. We believe that you can make it. And if you need prayer today, I want you to write me at **worldimpact.tv**. I'd love to pray for you and your life and what's going on. Or if you have a question about something we've preached today, please write: **worldimpact.tv**.

I really appreciate your support, your prayers as we share Jesus all over the world.

Today *World Impact* has been in Warsaw, Poland. I'm sitting in front of the Warsaw Uprising Memorial, commemorating the fact that Warsaw fought back in World War II. And even after this city was devastated—90% of it crushed, 90% of it devastated—Warsaw built back into a mighty metropolis.

If Satan has crushed you and devastated your life, you can come back by the grace of God. Thanks for joining us today. I'm Billy Wilson. This is *World Impact*, and we're sharing Jesus with the world.

Announcer: This has been *World Impact* with Dr. Billy Wilson, president of Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

We want to hear from you. Submit your prayer requests by going to **worldimpact.tv**. While you're there, check out the latest issue of *Miracles Today Magazine*. Stream episodes online, and connect with *World Impact* on social media at **worldimpact.tv**.

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