

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 08.22.2021

FLOURISH: PSALM 92:12-15

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

God has wonderfully and complexly made each and every one of us. Starting with a tiny DNA molecule, God programmed all the future characteristics of a child – the color of his or her skin, eyes, hair, the shape of facial features, and all the natural abilities one will have. All that the child will be physically and mentally is contained in a single DNA molecule. From it will develop: 60 trillion cells, 100 thousand miles of nerve fiber, 60 thousand miles of vessels carrying blood around the body, 250 bones with joints, ligaments, and muscles. God formed our inward parts; each one a marvel of divine engineering. Think of the brain, with its capacity for recording facts, sounds, odors, sights, touch, pain; with its ability to recall; with its power to make computations; with its seemingly endless lair for making decisions and solving problems. And God knit all this together in a tiny DNA molecule that will someday flourish and bring glory to Him. Let's get into our study...

1. How has God wonderfully and complexly made you?
2. What does it mean to flourish?
3. What stood out to you during this week's study?

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 92:1-15

Psalm 92 has the most direct references to "flourish" than any other chapter in the Bible. When we look at this psalm, it's amazing to see that it begins and ends with God's goodness, His provision, and His righteousness. For this, we are told it is good to give thanks and sing praises because of His faithfulness. We learn that the wicked flourish for a while, only to be struck down later for their lack of faith and faithfulness to God. Their wickedness condemned them, and their flourishing was short-lived. Later, though, it says the righteous will flourish like the palm tree and cedar in Lebanon. The palm tree depicts resiliency and durability. The cedar tree depicts strength and endurance. Trees are stable, long-lasting plants, and the longer they live, the more they tend to flourish, both in fruit and through adversity.

1. We are to give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind (PS 107:21, COL 3:17, 1 THES 1:2, 1 TIM 1:12). Describe the Lord's unfailing love and some of the wonderful deeds He has done in your life.
2. Matthew 6:33, says "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you". The verb "seek" here is best interpreted as "seek continually". The concept corresponds to the "hungering" and "thirsting" one is to have for righteousness, which is the very essence of the kingdom of God. Describe what it feels like to hunger and thirst. How might one correlate this to hungering and thirsting after righteousness?
3. We learn that the wicked flourish for a while, only to be struck down later for their lack of faith and faithfulness to God. Why is their flourishing short lived? (1 COR 6:9-11)
4. The righteous will flourish like the palm tree and cedar in Lebanon. What are the characteristics of a palm tree? What are the characteristics of a cedar tree?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23

Visitation/Restoration in 2021

Jesus provides here the parable of the Sower. The parable has three main elements: the Sower, the Seed, and the soils. The Sower represents the Lord, the Seed represents the Word of God, and the soils represent four categories of hearers, each with a different response to the Word of God. The wayside soil represents the callused heart, and the seed could not penetrate the soil. The stony ground depicts the casual heart. The seed would fall and immediately take root, but because their roots could not go deep enough to draw from the ground, the plant would wither in the heat. The thorny ground represents the crowded heart. This soil has weeds that eventually choke out the seed. The good ground represents the converted heart. This is the person who hears the Word, allows truth to sink in, and is genuinely saved. This seed grows and produces a fruit hundred-fold, sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold. However, in the parable, Jesus presented no example of a seed growing and producing zero-fold.

5. We are designed to flourish in good soil. What specific good soil are we designed to flourish in? (PS 92:13)
6. Trees need to be planted in a lot of good soil to grow and achieve their full potential. Trees in pots have limited good soil resulting in a stunted growth. How might Christians better plant themselves into the church?
7. Good soil produces a fruit hundred-fold, sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold. But there is no example of a seed growing and producing zero-fold. Why is it important for Christians to continually produce fruit? (PS. 92:14, James 2:26)
8. Trees are stable, long-lasting plants, and the longer they live, the more they tend to flourish, both in fruit and through adversity. How might our Christian life resemble that of trees?

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Acorns play an important role in forest ecology. Acorns are too heavy for wind dispersal, so they require other ways to spread. Oaks therefore depend on biological seed dispersal agents to move the acorns beyond the mother tree and into a suitable area for germination (including access to adequate water, sunlight, and soil nutrients), ideally a minimum of 20–30 m (70–100 ft) from the parent tree. The tree relies on birds and squirrels to gather and scatter acorns in a variety of locations in which it is possible for them to flourish and produce fruit. In the same way, the church consists of dispersal agents, gathering the Word of God and scattering it to a lost world.

1. We are the seed dispersal agents of the Church. Are you gathering and scattering the Word of God to a lost world? How might you better flourish in this area?
2. Church is a place to flourish in your Spiritual gifting (1 COR 12, ROM 12:6). What gifting are you flourishing in today? What gifting do you need growth in? What actions will you take to flourish in your Spiritual gifting?

PRAYER

Father God, thank you for Your goodness, Your unfailing love, Your wonderful deeds, Your provision in our life, and Your holy righteousness. Lord, help us to seek first the kingdom of God and flourish in Your righteousness, that we might be like the palm tree and cedar in Lebanon, bearing much fruit even in adversity. Thank you for making us so wonderfully complex, each of us unique, each with a specific gifting to edify Your church. May your Holy Spirit teach us, anoint us, and blossom us with abundant fruit that glorifies your Name.

"It is good to praise the Lord." Psalm 92:1