

Sermon Series: TRANSFORMATION

Sermon: Witherproofed

Text: Psalm 1

Discussion Questions:

The definition of the word "**Wither**" is: *To shrivel; fade, or decay.*

Synonyms include: *To wrinkle, dry, decline, languish, droop, wilt, shrink or waste.*

Fruit can wither on the vine or branch.

Buds can wither in a drought.

Plants wither in the hot sun.

The word has as its origin the word weather. This would imply that *withering* is the direct result of *weathering*. Too much sun. Too much heat. Too much wind. Too little moisture and shade.

Our **SOULS** can wither as well. Our souls can languish, wilt, decline and dry up.

Discuss this. How does this happen? What causes a soul to wither? What are the symptoms? What are the results? What are the solutions? Have there been times in your own life when you've experienced a withering of your soul? What did you do? How did you find relief?

Examination:

Read **John 7:37-44**.

- We don't often think of Jesus yelling or shouting. Yet, it seems that that's exactly what he did in verse 37, "*Jesus stood and said in a loud voice...*" Why do you think he chose to shout in this case?
- Here's what Jesus said: "*Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.*" There isn't much in the preceding verses or immediate context that prepares the listeners for this declaration. What (or who) do you think Jesus meant when He refers to "the thirsty"? How do we "drink"?
- Jesus seems to clarify what He meant by "coming to Him" (v. 37) when He said "*Whoever believes in me*" (v. 38).
 - Talk a little bit about what you think Jesus meant when He talks about coming to Him - or believing in Him.
- What's the benefit or result of believing in Jesus (v. 38)?
- Verse 38 is translated in the NIV as "*...water will flow from within them.*" The footnote gives an alternate translation: "*...out of them will flow rivers of living water.*" In one case water will flow from within them - and in the other case, water will flow out of them. Is there a difference?
- Verse 39 tells us what this water is. What is it?
- None of this sounds very "religious" (a bunch of do's and don'ts) - it sounds much more like an invitation to anyone with a withered soul. What do you think?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to shout this?

Read Isaiah 55.

- This passage is known as “**The Great Invitation.**” What’s your immediate reaction to reading this or hearing it read?
- Go through these 13 verses, and pick out all of the action verbs (come, listen, seek, etc.). What can we observe or learn from these actions?
- How do you “buy” something without spending any money (v. 1)?
- Verse 2 talks about things that don’t satisfy. What might those things be?
- What do you think it means in verse 6 when it says, “*while He may be found*”? Does this mean that there will be a time when God can’t be found?
- How is the Word of God like rain and snow (vv. 10-11)?
- Discuss this chapter in light of this topic of “withering”. How important are these words to someone with a wilted or dry soul?
- What are the results of “finding” the Lord (vv. 12-13)?

Read Psalm 1.

- Verses 1 and 2 describe a contrast between two types of people:
 - On the one hand, there are those who walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers.
 - What does all of this mean? Who are these people? How do you walk in step with the wicked? How do you stand in the way that sinners take? How do you sit in the company of mockers?
 - On the other hand, there are those whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditate on His law day and night.
 - How important is reading the Bible? What does it look like to delight in Scripture and meditate on God’s Word?
- Spending time in God’s Word (meditating and delighting) sure seems to have a significant impact on our soul (v. 3). What is that impact?
- Discuss this metaphor of a tree that is planted by a stream. What does this say to you? What does this conjure up in your mind? How is this such a powerful image?
- The opposite of the tree with roots down into the water - are those who are like chaff - blown away by the winds. Unpack this metaphor. How does this connect with what it means to wither?

Application:

- Have you accepted God’s “great invitation” to come to Him - and be refreshed? Is your soul withering or flourishing?
- Spend time every day this coming week meditating on Psalm 1. Take the time required to meditate on God’s Word. Delight in it. Seek the Lord - allow His “streams of living water” to flood your soul with refreshing water. Invite the Holy Spirit to minister to you - and to fill you.
- And don’t keep this to yourself. Share with another person who seems dry, or withered, what the Lord can do for them! ...and what He’s done for you!