

Flourish or Wither

(Sermon Notes)

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When the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day are over, we head into about five months of late fall and cold winter days before beginning all over again with the Plan of God in the spring Holy Days. This season can be a difficult time for Christians.

The word **Flourish** means to open up, develop, flower, blossom thrive, prosper and be productive.

The word **Wither** means just the opposite. It means to shrink, shrivel, or dry up on the vine – producing nothing.

Now is the time for us to gird up our loins and **not let down** – spiritually speaking.

Matthew 24:12) “The Godly love of many shall grow cold.” (spiritually speaking).

There are ways to attain the goal we seek and not grow cold. Actually, this is a time to **renew** our resolve to **stand strong** in the faith.

Sure, it can become discouraging when it seems the entire world is dedicated to merry making, frolicking and celebrating their holiday revelry and season’s festivities. We hear music declaring, “Peace on Earth.”

Whenever we leave the peace, serenity and tranquility of our homes we are hounded and pestered by winter rites that have nothing to do with the **peace of God**.

Philippians 4:7 “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

There is a true and lasting peace that will come upon this earth—but **not** the way this world thinks it will come.

The peace of this world is a **hollow** wish because this world does not recognize the Christianity and Godliness of our Savior.

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth **peace**, good will toward men.

The world does not know the true **Prince of Peace** who said,

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives do I give it unto you.”

God intends that His people **flourish** and not **wither**.

Psalms 92:12-13 “The righteous shall **flourish** like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall **flourish** in the courts of our God.”

Judges 6:24 “Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it YHVH-shalom.” [“**God is Peace**”]

In Psalm 72 we find **flourish** and **peace** together.

Psalm 72:7 “In His days shall the **righteous flourish** and abundance of **peace** until the moon no longer exists.”

That is prosperity of the highest order. **Flourishing** is well described by the Hebrew word for **peace**, “*shalom*.” “Shalom” means: Peace, -- but it is so much more than the absence of war. We do not have a comparable word in English – but must rely on a multitude of **concepts** to grasp the intent of “Shalom.”

“Shalom” also means the tranquility and harmony of Justice, Prosperity, Salvation, Healthiness, Wholeness, Integrity, Soundness, Righteousness and Well-being.

We begin to see what and **all encompassing** peace – the Peace of God is. Shalom indicates a reconciled relationship with God and with neighbor. “Shalom” is the way God intended the world be when He created it.

We know for sure that these winter days are certainly a time to separate ourselves from those who do not understand Godliness and Christianity. We also know that we have to buckle down and **flourish** in the work of God—lest we **wither**.

2Corinthians 6:17 “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye **separate**, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

As we look back at our history in God’s Church, we see that so many of our friends over the years have **withered** and have gone back into the world.

These are trying times in that—even some who think they **remain** within the Church of God—have gone back into the world—at least in their hearts and minds. God warns us not to let down...

Will we **flourish** – or will we **wither**?

Are we producing **good fruit** with our lives – or are we drying up and withering away for **lack** of Godly involvement in our lives?

This next verse about the sower is where Jesus Christ explains to His disciples that unfortunately – some will hear the word of God – and yet **wither** away.

These are the words of Jesus:

Luke 8:6 “Some seed fell upon a rock [stony ground]; and as soon as it was sprung up, it **withered** away, *because it lacked moisture.*” [They did not exercise or utilize God’s Holy Spirit]

God’s word was sent to this earth – and yet it withered away! Is it possible to fall away from the truth of God and His good graces, and lose out on salvation? The answer is, "Yes."

Extremely trying days lie just ahead for those of us in the Church of God.

Everything that we hold sacred will soon be overthrown – everything, that is, except **our faith**, which must continue until the very end.

Over and over in the Bible the Church brethren are admonished to live lives of overcoming, and remain faithful to the end. How do we go about it? Do we grit our teeth in rigid determination to hang on – or is there another method?

Revelation 2:10 “...**Be faithful unto death** and I will give you the crown of life.”

Spiritually speaking, as Christians we have our ups and our downs.

We go through spiritual highs and lows, where sometimes we feel absolutely unshakeable, and other times, we crumble. Enduring to the end is not a matter of relying on our own strength and will-power. If we rely on ourselves – we will ultimately fail.

We have the example of the Israelites who had the faith to leave Egypt, but lacked the faith in God to give them the victory to enter into the Promised Land. They did not persevere unto their goal – the promised rest (Hebrews 4:1-2).

Do we have the proper faith in God to deliver us in every trial and bring us securely to the Kingdom of God? That remains for us, if we **flourish** and persist to the end. Paul reminds us that our faith must be in God alone,

Hebrews 3:12 "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of **unbelief**, in departing from the living God."

How secure is our relationship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ? Do we have faith in His peace? How well do we trust in His **Peace**? ...His unchangeable nature – in His love, in His

trust-worthiness, in His providence, in His protection, in His sovereignty, in His holiness, in His mercy, and a whole multitude of other divine characteristics.

If that faith and full reliance is not growing and **flourishing**, then we are actually in the process of *departing from the living God*. We are either moving forward in our understanding and trust of God, or we are slipping away, **withering**, and putting our entrance into His **rest** in danger.

It is only through Christ that we too are assured of victory, if we remain steadfast unto the end. Brethren, unlike the ancient Israelites, we have been given the greater promises and means of *“holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised.”* (Hebrews 10:23)

Our faith, therefore, is in God – not in ourselves to be able to endure whatever trial or test that may come – be it sickness, betrayal, abuse, illness, loss of hope – despair...

Do we actually believe that God knows exactly what we need – and He sends it to us – trial or blessing? It is God who governs the timing and intensity of trials so that we may learn to rely more and more on Him. To avoid the trial is to avoid the tremendous blessing of growing closer to God.

Too many in God's Church have a misplaced reliance on their own faith. An individual's misplaced reliance on inward faith might reveal itself with an, “I’ve got it made because of ...such-an-such” – attitude. And, we do not say it openly, but we think it inwardly – and it goes something like this:

I’ve got it made because I keep the Sabbath on Saturday – My foundation is sure – because I know my Bible – I’ve got it made because I follow a man who would not steer me wrong – I’ve been in the church for ump-teen years – I’ve got it made! I’m with a real big group – I’ve got it made!

Contrast that misplaced inward faith with an outgoing enduring faith.

1Timothy 4:10 **“...we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.”**

As we countdown to the return of Jesus Christ, let’s realize that a final test of our conversion will be for the purpose of seeing if we will remain faithful and **flourish** throughout this life God has given us.

Once taken for granted, our liberty is now being eroded and our religious freedom is being encroached upon.

Paul illustrated that it is possible to lose our salvation.

Hebrews 4:11 **“Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest [the millennium and Kingdom of God], lest any man fall after the same example of **unbelief**.”**

For the people of God, there remains little doubt that there will be sore trials, severe tests, and great temptations in these last days.

We are still in 1Timothy 4 – and we are specifically speaking of our time – today. Some of us brethren, will succumb to Satan's devices and lose our salvation. That should scare the socks off us! If there was ever a red-flag Scripture this is it:

1Timothy 4:1 **“Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times **some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”**

This threat is indisputable. The question is: who among us will **remain faithful** in the face of such a severe ordeal? Many people start off strong when they first hear the message of the Kingdom of God, but are unable to remain faithful until the end.

*“Many are called, **but few are chosen.**”* (Matthew 22:14)

That clearly means that many will not hold on to their precious faith, as they should. It can happen to us – regrettably, it has come to pass for all too many already.

Flourishing means to be doing good things - **well doing**.

*"Let us not be weary in **well doing**: for in due season we shall reap [salvation], **if we faint not.**"*
(Galatians 6:9)

God is faithful to impart His Holy Spirit to us – a gift more precious than our physical lives.

God's Word says that we will be *presented holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable in His sight, **if we continue in the faith.*** (Colossians 1:23)

Our faith must be in God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and not in ourselves.

*"...**God is faithful**, who will not allow you to be tested above that ye are able..."* (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Our calling at this time is about Godly concern for others, helping, encouraging, praying for, and supporting them—that is what **flourishing** means—that is what **gives us the faith of Christ**. Otherwise we **wither** on the vine... Jesus says:

John 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is **withered**; and men gather them, and cast them into the **fire**, and they are burned.

James gives us direction so that we are in tune with the wisdom of Christ.

James 1:8 A double minded man [one who does not rely solely on the **faith of Christ**] is unstable in all his ways.

James 1:9 Let the brother of low degree **rejoice** in that he is exalted: [flourishing with true blessings come from God]

James 1:10 But the rich [man rejoices], in that he is made low: [and therefore not excluded] because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

James 1:11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it **withereth** the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perishes: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

James explains:

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endures trials and temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.

This is Mark's rendition of the parable of the sower – sowing the word of God:

Mark 4:3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

That is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God going out.

Mark 4:4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and **devoured** it up.

Note closely – because we are all in jeopardy of being devoured or **withering**...

Mark 4:5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

We saw this earlier in Luke 8:6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it **withered** away, because it lacked moisture. [They did not exercise God's Holy Spirit]

Mark 4:6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, **it withered away**. [The love of God dried up—spiritually they died.

A man without spiritual root and foundation withers away.

Mark 4:7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

Mark 4:8 And other fell on good ground, [it flourished] and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

Brethren it is in order that we ask ourselves and God what "fruit" we have "brought forth."

Mark 4:9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Mark 4:10 And when [Jesus] was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

Mark 4:11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

Again we do not measure ourselves with those in the world.

Mark 4:12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Mark 4:13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

Mark 4:14 The sower soweth the **word**.

Mark 4:15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan comes directly, and takes away the word that was **sown in their hearts**.

Mark 4:16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

Mark 4:17 And have no root in themselves, and so **endure** but for a time: afterward, when **affliction or persecution** arises for the word's sake, immediately they [**wither away** :6] and are offended.

Mark 4:18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

Mark 4:19 And the **cares of this world**, and the **deceitfulness of riches**, and the **desires for** other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Mark 4:20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Again, Jesus brings these warnings to us in the end time:

Luke 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

Luke 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Luke 21:35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and **pray always** [is prayer and contact with God an integral part of our lives?], that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

We do not pray, "O God let me escape." No! We pray to God that our lives are flourishing in His way of life.

Psalm 34:16 The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

God knows we are having problems. But, He is there for us.

Psalm 34:17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them **out** of all their troubles.

...If they are remorseful, and humbly looking to God to promote their well-being—rather than always trying to 'bless' themselves—or promote themselves.

Psalm 34:18 The LORD is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and **saves** such ones as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalm 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him **out** of them all.

We have seen that for the people of God there will be sore trials, severe tests, and great temptations—especially in these last days. Who today is **exempt** these days from some pretty severe trials?

1Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Trouble? Expect it! Trouble is our lot as Christians, but with the faith of Christ we will **endure**.

2Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall** suffer persecution.

Expect it brethren – count on it!

2Timothy 3:11 ... out of **all** the trials and persecutions the Lord **delivers us** out of them all.

Like a weight lifter pushing on iron, steel and barbells – our trials and testings are for the purpose of making us spiritually stronger. Do not resent the trials that come our way – but count them all joy.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into different kinds of trials;

God keeps them measured—they will not overcome us.

1Corinthians 10:13 There hath no trial taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tried more that ye are able to bear; but will with the trial also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

There is a promise of God's protection, sustenance and rescue.

Psalm 34:20 He keeps all His bones: not one of them is broken.

This is a **Messianic Prophecy** of Jesus Christ – showing the integrity of the Body of Christ – His Church.

Psalm 34:21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

Psalm 34:22 The Lord redeems the lives of His servants: and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate. [condemned]

How many of our brethren have fallen by the way side? How many of our brethren think they are okay – but they have left off the **truth** once delivered. Maybe they never proved what was True for themselves. Maybe they never studied or wrote out the Correspondence Course and proved things for themselves.

1Thesalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

We are to study God's word as a guide for our every action. It directs our choices. The Bible is our instruction manual for life itself. God gives us encouragement to hold on to His principles in a decaying world.

America is spiritually bankrupt - only God's Church remains to morally and spiritually defend the high ground. We, God's people, we do stand for something, and we live by Christian teachings and principles.

As time goes on it becomes harder and more difficult to hold on to the entire truth of God – not easier. We are compromised in every way. We grow weary...

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Get to work – Godly works – stay busy.

We'll look at Elijah's example in just a moment: When Elijah came to that point in his life where all seemed futile – God told him to **get back to work** – it is good for your mind set.

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

God told Elijah to get back **to work!**

Elijah's name means "My God is the Lord,"

Let's review for just a moment:

Elijah prophesied a severe drought to come upon the whole land of Israel as the consequence of King Ahab's evil rule. (1Kings 17:1–7)

We can expect some similar scourge and plagues to increase on America and Britain.

Elijah was caught in the ensuing famine and had to endure it - just like everyone else.

God sends Elijah to a near starving widow woman's home.

Then, we see that God provides food enough for Elijah, the woman, and her son.

Miraculously, the widow's barrel of flour and jar of oil never run out (1Kings 17:8–16).

The lesson is that God fulfills all of our needs. Jesus said:

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [**all of our needs**] shall be [given] unto you.

The widow's son dies and God works a great life-giving miracle through Elijah.

1Kings 17:24 And the [widow] woman said to Elijah, Now by this [miracle] I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

Then, Elijah confronts the prophets of the false god Baal on Mount Carmel (1Kings 18:17-40).

The prophets of Baal called upon their false god—Baal—all day long to send fire from heaven—but all to no avail.

Then Elijah builds an altar of 12 stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel—so that everyone is represented, and he digs a large ditch around it, puts the sacrifice on the top of wood and calls for lots of water to be poured over his sacrifice three times.

1Kings 18:36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

Elijah calls upon God, —and in a rare demonstration of His great power— God sends fire down from heaven, burns up the sacrifice, the wood, and the stones and even dries up all the water in the ditch.

God proved He is more powerful than false gods – because they are not gods at all. It was then that Elijah and the people of Israel kill all of the false prophets of Baal.

After the great victory over the false prophets, Elijah prays for rain to return to the earth after 3 ½ years and a **great rain** once again fell on the land. (1Kings 18:41-46)

Then a strange thing happens: In spite of the great victory God gave him, Elijah seemingly loses faith and crashes into a deep depression. (1Kings 19:1-18)

Brethren, how many victories has God given you? Do you write them down? Do you count them? Do you remember them? Do you rely on God to be there for you? We should – we must! Are we thankful for God's many, many interventions in our lives?

The world has not changed one iota since the time of Elijah when people followed their own evil hearts. The drought stricken Israelites of Elijah's day did not change **their idolatrous ways** even after the miraculous events were performed in their midst.

America and Britain are the same way today – ungrateful – without regard for our true God.

The Israelites witnessed that Elijah was a **true prophet of God** when God responded for Elijah to show Himself as the **true God** by sending fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sopping wet sacrifice.

The people recognized that Elijah's God **was the true God** and they helped Elijah execute the 450 prophets of Baal for their wickedness. God did great works through Elijah.

All Israel saw that it was God who had withheld the rain for 3 1/2 years because of their own sins. Like America and Britain today those Israelitish people did not change their ways after God sent the rain to end the drought and famine. America and Britain today are not seeking God and repenting of their sins.

It's just not likely to happen. In fact it's very unlikely to happen. There is an ever-widening gulf between those in the world and God's elect.

That is not to say that we are more deserving or "good", because we are not.

More and more we are seeing **extremes** of drought, flood, storms and fire nipping at our heels. Brethren, we know that Jacob's trouble is just around the corner for us.

Just as Elijah had to endure the 3 1/2 years of drought he prophesied to come, these extremes we see are also a test for those of us who know the true God and understand the truth.

God expects us to be faithful witnesses of the truth in times such as these.

Ahab had a "*sweetheart of a wife*"—Jezebel! She was notorious for killing the **true** prophets of God.

1Kings 19:1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets (of Baal) with the sword.

Jezebel, Ahab's wife, vowed to kill Elijah – if it is the last thing she ever did.

Jezebel tells Elijah — "You got 24 hours!"

1Kings 19:2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.

Jezebel's curse strikes fear into Elijah! He cowers. He pities himself. His faith crumbles and he flees for his life. Elijah is out of character.

1Kings 19:3 And when he saw that, he arose, and **ran for his life**, and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

Elijah plummeted into despair and depression. Somehow, after God's great slaughter of the 450 prophets of Baal by the hand of Elijah, he took his eyes off of God and became spineless. It's a lesson for us to never let down—but to keep working. But, this lesson shows that it can and does happen to the best of us.

There is an important lesson here for us if we can hear it. Even when we are at our worst, God is at His best. God is faithful to see us through every trial.

1Kings 19:4 But [Elijah] went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, **take away my life**; for I am not better than my fathers.

Elijah's attitude and resolve was **up** one day and **down** the next.

Elijah was at times bold, faithful, courageous, and decisive and at other times, he was fearful and tentative.

1Kings 19:5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

That's God's intervention.

1Kings 19:6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cup of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

1Kings 19:7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

1Kings 19:8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat **forty days and forty nights** unto Horeb the mount of God.

That is a picture of Christ's trial and fasting.

1Kings 19:9 And [Elijah] came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What are you doing here, Elijah?

1Kings 19:10 And he said, I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

1Kings 19:11 ... behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and **strong wind** rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an **earthquake**; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:

1Ki 19:12 And after the earthquake a **fire**; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a **still small voice**.

1Kings 19:13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, **What are you doing here, Elijah?**

Elijah sticks to his story”

1Kings 19:14 And he said, I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

When Elijah stopped focusing on the fear of what men could do and his feelings of inferiority, God was heard, and Elijah went back to work.

1Kings 19:15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus:

“Get back to work, Elijah!” God says.

Sometimes it's easy for us to let our own trials and struggles take precedent, until we realize that it's not about “us.” Our calling at this time is about Godly concern for others, helping, encouraging, praying for and supporting them, **that gives us the faith of Christ**.

God reminded Elijah:

1Kings 19:18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

2Timothy 1:13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye **continue in my word**, then are ye my disciples indeed;

Hebrews 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we **hold fast the confidence** [the faithfulness] and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold fast** our profession. [Godliness and Christianity]

Elijah got to thinking that he was the only one – not realizing that he was one of God's assembly – one of 7000. Brethren we are the body of Christ – we are in this together – we are to be working to profit withal – everyone of God's people.

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but **exhorting one another**: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

1Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to **profit withal—everyone** of God's people.

We have to do it now – we must **flourish** and not **wither** – we don't get another opportunity.

End: Flourish or Wither