

The Vineyard

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[0:00] Turn in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 5, verse 1. I will sing for the one I love, a song about his vineyard.

! My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choice of vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well.

Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?

Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard. I will take away its hedge and it will be destroyed. I will break down its wall and it will be trampled.

[1:02] I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briars and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it. The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight.

And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed, for righteousness, but heard cries of distress. Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field, till no space is left and you live alone in the land. The Lord Almighty has declared in my hearing, surely the great houses will become desolate, the fine mansions left without occupants. A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a bath of wine, a homer of seed only an eef of grain.

Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. They have harps and lyres at their banquets, tambourines and flutes and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, no respect for the work of his hands.

Therefore, my people will go into exile for lack of understanding. Their men of rank will die of hunger and their masses will be parched with thirst.

[2:20] Therefore, the grave enlarges its appetite and opens its mouth without limits. And to it will descend their nobles and masses with all their brawlers and revelers.

So man will be brought low and mankind humbled. The eyes of the arrogant humbled. But the Lord Almighty will be exalted by his justice and the holy God will show himself holy by his righteousness. Then sheep will graze as in their own pasture. Lambs will feed among the ruins of the rich. Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit and wickedness as with cart ropes.

To those who say, let God hurry, let him hasten his work so we may see it. Let it approach. Let the plan of the Holy One of Israel come so we may know it.

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil. Who put darkness for light and light for darkness. Who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

[3:22] Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks. Who acquit the guilty for a bribe but deny justice to the innocent.

Therefore as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry grass sinks down in the flames. So their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust.

For they have rejected the law of the Lord Almighty. And spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the Lord's anger burns against his people. His hand is raised and he strikes them down.

The mountains shake and the dead bodies are like refuse in the streets. Yet for all this his anger is not turned away. His hand is still upraised. He lifts up a banner for the distant nations.

He whistles for those at the ends of the earth. Here they come swiftly and speedily. Not one of them grows tired or stumbles. Not one slumbers or sleeps. Not a belt is loosened at the waist.

[4:23] Not a sandal thong is broken. Their arrows are sharp. All their bows are strung. Their horses' hooves seem like flints. Their chariot wheels like a whirlwind.

Their roar is like that of the lion. They roar like young lions. They growl as they seize their prey. And carry it off with no one to rescue. And that day they will roar over it like the roaring of the sea.

And if one looks at the land, he will see darkness and distress. Even the light will be darkened by the clouds. Years ago when visiting Denise and Olivier Favre in Lausanne, Switzerland, I saw one of the most beautiful sights in all the world.

Great vines. Like patchwork quilts. Growing on the hillside. Going right down to the water of Lake Geneva.

It was like a picture on a postcard. These vineyards were things of beauty.

[5:33] But we all know that they were not there to sell postcards. But rather to produce good grapes for their owners. And if they did not, they would be sold off or used for some other purpose.

The vineyard is either good for fruit or it's good for nothing. And the owner seeks a harvest of good fruit. Now I wonder if you have come to grips with this question.

What is it that your owner is seeking from you? What is it that God, your maker and judge, comes looking for in your life?

Well, he's looking for good fruit. For a harvest of holiness. Of the fruit of the Spirit. He's looking for that harvest of worship.

And devotion to him. Of love to God and love to your fellow man. He's looking for trust and obedience to his commandments. He's looking for the good fruit of holiness.

[6:46] Like any owner looks after when it's harvest time for the vineyard. That's his rightful expectation. Now here in Isaiah 5, Judah is compared to a vineyard whose owner has lavished great care upon it.

Only to discover that for all his labor at harvest time. It yields only bad fruit. And the story is told in such a way that the men of Judah are lured into pronouncing their own judgment.

Their own condemnation. Do you remember when David had committed adultery? And murder? And was still unhumbled by it all?

How God sent his prophet Nathan. And told him a story, a parable about a rich man who mistreated a poor man. And David got so angry with that man that he condemned him to death.

And then Nathan said, you are the man. Now that's the sort of thing that Isaiah is doing here. He's telling this story about a vineyard.

[8:07] And when the men of Judah hear this story, they will pronounce their own judgment upon it. And Isaiah will say, you are the vineyard.

They condemn themselves by condemning the vineyard to destruction. And everyone will see that God is more than justified in removing his protection and calling down his judgments upon them.

Now this vineyard that Isaiah sings about had everything going for it. That's the first main point that we're going to look at. The song about the vineyard. And this vineyard had every advantage given it.

Nothing was left undone for its prospering. A fertile parcel of ground was found for this vineyard.

And then the backbreaking work began to prepare the soil.

It was dug up. And it was cleared of the stones. Lots of stones. There was an Arabian proverb that said, that creation, an angel, was flying over Palestine with two bags of stones.

[9:13] And one slipped out of his hand. And that's why half of all the stones in the world are in Palestine. It's a very stony place. And so in order to prepare the soil, there was lots of backbreaking work to remove the stones, to plant the vineyard.

And then the choicest stock of vines were selected and planted. And then those stones were gathered up and were built into a wall of protection around the vine.

So cattle and wild animals couldn't come in and devour. And a protective second hedge was added of a bush to protect and keep predators out.

And then further use was made of all these stones to build a watchtower in which a guard, and perhaps the owner himself, would live there during the critical times of harvest, lest someone could come in and take what he had worked so hard for, a watchtower.

And then a wine press was carved out of stone, huge rocks, that they would carve these rocks out so they could dump their grapes in and stomp on them and get the juice from the harvest.

[10:27] Because he was expecting a great harvest from all this labor he had expended upon it. He looked for good grapes as well he might. But at harvest, it yielded only bad fruit.

Rotten, bitter grapes. Stink grapes, they were called. Not edible. Fit only to be cast out. So that's this vineyard.

And the owner of the vineyard himself now speaks. Isaiah is no longer singing about his loved one's vineyard. He's now putting himself as the owner, as the Lord, speaking directly.

The owner of the vineyard speaks. And he says he wants his hearers to give him their verdict. You dwellers in Jerusalem, you men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? And when I looked for good grapes, why did it only yield bad? Now, these hearers lived in an agricultural society.

[11:35] They understood the frustration of laboring hard only to be frustrated by a poor or non-existent harvest.

Their hearts are empathizing with this owner. You didn't do anything. You did everything. It's that vineyard's fault. And whether they outwardly passed their judgment or kept it to themselves, we're not sure.

But the owner, it's not mentioned here. But the answer is obvious. And then the owner gives his own verdict in verse 5. Now, I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard.

And the four I wills that follow emphasize the owner's active role in the destruction of his worthless vineyard. I will take away its hedge and it will be destroyed.

I will break down its wall and it will be trampled. And so with its double protection gone of the hedge and the wall, the vineyard is wide open.

[12:42] It's vulnerable. It's exposed to any intruder who might come in and trample or raid the fruits. And so it would be destroyed and protection would be gone.

But then also he withdrew his cultivating care. Not only the wall of protection, he says, I'm no longer going to prune and cultivate it.

And when you quit pulling weeds and cultivating plants, what happens? Well, the briars and the thorns grow up and turn it into a wasteland. That's the second or the third I will.

And then lastly, he says, and I will command the clouds not to rain on it. That should have been a hint as to who the owner was. Who else commands the clouds and they obey?

I will tell the clouds to withhold the very source of life. And then what hope will there be for my worthless vineyard? All this because it failed to bear good grapes in harvest.

[13:47] And with that, story time is over. And now it's time for interpretation and application. And just in case by now some still have not got it, Isaiah draws his net and he removes all doubt about his story.

The Lord Almighty is the owner. And you, Judah, are his worthless vineyard. Who've received from him so much grace.

Who've had mercy after mercy lavished upon you. You, out of all the nations of the world, he chose to take to himself. And to reveal his law and his gospel to. He has heaped upon you physical blessings of the promised land.

That you did not deserve. Grace upon grace. And then like the owner in the story, the Lord came expecting a harvest of good fruit from them.

Notice in verse 7, he looked for justice. That's the putting right of all wrongs. But instead he saw bloodshed. That's the inflicting of wrong.

[14:57] And he looked for righteousness. Right living according to God's righteous laws. But instead he heard the cries of distress. The screams of people who were oppressed.

And he who had every right to receive good fruit from you found only bad. Therefore there's nothing left to do to my vineyard. But to destroy it.

And God himself promises to take an active role in the destruction of his vineyard. I will remove its protection. I will call for their destroyers.

He is the one who can command the rains. And it will stop raining on their crops. Their owner is the Lord of the universe.

Now at the outset, let's learn this clear lesson. That blessings received from God increase our responsibility to bear fruits of a holy life.

[15:59] Blessings received from God increase our responsibility to have a good harvest of holiness to our God. Have you thought of the goodnesses that God heaps upon you every day?

Right now. He's causing the sun or the rain to fall. So that this earth will bring forth food for you. He feeds you. He causes your heart to keep beating.

He gives you another breath of air. Of life. He sustains your life. And he's added to that many spiritual blessings. Of growing up in a land where there are Bibles.

And there are churches that preach the word of God. And Christians who live out the truth. And speak the truth to you. You live in all these blessings of God.

It's raining. It's pouring. Blessing upon blessing. And the more blessings showered upon you. The more God expects righteous fruit on the branches of your heart and life.

[16 : 59] And if under his blessings you remain unrepentant. And simply go on your own way. Producing the bad rotten fruit of the flesh.

Then there's only wrath waiting for you on the day of God's wrath and righteous judgment. That was Isaiah's message to his contemporaries. And that was the Lord Jesus' message to his contemporaries.

700 years later. Remember all the parables he told about vineyards that had been lent out to farmers. And they wouldn't produce the fruit that the owner deserved.

And God would come and destroy those wicked men. And give the kingdom. Give the vineyard over to a people who would bring forth its fruit. And the parable of the tree.

And it wouldn't bear fruit. Chop it down. Oh let's give it three more years. And dung it. And dig it. And labor over it. But if then it doesn't produce what? Good fruit. Then we'll chop it down.

[18 : 02] That was the message of Jesus. To his contemporaries. It's the message of Paul. To us. In Romans chapter 2. And many other places. So that's Isaiah's song about the vineyard.

Now it's followed by a sampling of the grapes. Now this is not going to be pleasant. Isaiah takes a basket. And he plucks six different branches.

Clusters of grapes. From the Lord's vineyard Judah. And then you and I. The hearers are given to taste the rotten fruit that they bore to the owner's goodness.

And with it we're told the judgment that's about to fall because of it. Now the six branches or clusters of grape are marked out very plainly for us. They all start with the word woe.

W-O-E. A lament. Oh no. Alas. Oh judgment's coming. Woe. Woe. Woe. Woe. Six of them. They're samplings of the grapes from Judah.

[19 : 07] So we come to the first cluster. And it is the greedy and oppressive land grabbers found in verses 8 to 10. Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field.

So no space is left and you live alone in the land. It's not just that they were land prospectors and buying a lot of land. No. That's not it at all.

It's that they were doing that without any regard to the law of God. God's law declared that the land in the promised land was his. And he just lent it out to them.

As tenants. And that land was to stay in the family line to which it originally was given by God. In other words they were never to permanently sell their inheritance.

That's God's inheritance to them. And so the land was not to be transferred over to someone else. But these fellows were so hungry for more and more land and houses that they disregarded the law of God.

[20 : 06] The law of God is not going to stop me. If I want that field I'll get it. And they knew how to use the system. Just think how King Ahab went about procuring some land that belonged to a neighbor named Naboth.

A vineyard by the way. You see that's what's at stake here. That was his inheritance. It was never to be taken from him. But that would not hedge in the greed.

The filthy greed of Ahab and Jezebel. Micah prophesied during the same time as Isaiah. And he says of these people. They covet fields and seize them.

And houses and take them. They defraud a man of his home. They defraud a fellow man of his inheritance. So they shamelessly worked the legal system to get what they wanted.

Even though it meant on the backs of the poor that they were enriched. Now the Bible nowhere condemns wealth.

[21 : 14] But it's always asking how we got it and how we spend it. Well these got it unjustly and they used it selfishly.

And heaven is appalled at the taste of these grapes. Is this the harvest I get from you? Upon whom I've heaped so much bless.

Upon whom I gave all this promised land. And their landlord in heaven will drive them out of their homes. And will leave their mansions empty and desolate.

A pasture for sheep. And where the sound of wild parties used to be heard. There will now be the bleating of lambs. As they feast among the ruins of the rich.

There's a poetic justice in all this isn't it? God is able to give a punishment that fits the crime. That fits the sin. You guys evicted poor women and men out of their homes.

[22 : 16] Out of their inheritance. I am going to evict you out of your land. And out of your inheritance and into exile you will go. And you will be made to feel the pain that you inflicted upon your fellow Israelites.

And as for their increased lands from which they expected such a great crop. When God commands the clouds to stop. Well a ten acre vineyard.

Ten acre vineyard. Will produce a mere six gallons of wine. And ten bushels of seed. Will only produce one bushel.

Of grain at harvest. They'll not receive the harvest that they expected. Just as they had not brought to God. The harvest. That he expected.

For his goodness to them. Well let's try another bunch of grapes. Maybe we just got into a bad part of the vineyard. And so we come and grab another cluster. Drunken pleasure seekers.

[23 : 17] So that doesn't sound good does it? Eleven to seventeen. Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks. Stay up late at night till they're inflamed with wine.

Calls them brawlers and revelers. In verse fourteen. Until they are inflamed with their wine. Alcohol abuse.

Alcohol abuse. Is the cause of much evil in our nation. I don't have the time to hold before you. All the evils. That alcohol abuse has caused.

It's nothing new though. That's what we're seeing. It was. It was all over in Judah. Seven hundred years before Christ's birth. And notice.

These in Judah were consumed with their drink. It's what they run after. That's the language used. They run after their drinks. It's what they live for. It's what gets them out of bed in the morning.

[24 : 15] More drinks. It's what keeps them out of bed at night. More drinks. When they ought to be in bed. Sleeping. Preparing. Resting for the work of the next day. They live for alcohol.

For the feeling it gives them. The escape it provides them to their problems. They live for the weekends. Oh yes. The parties. Their parties. They have all kinds of music.

Harps and lyres. Tambourines and flutes. And wine. And wine. Indeed. What would a party be without wine? But they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord.

No respect for the work of His hands. Plenty of regard for the music. And the food. And the wine. But no regard for what God is doing.

His work. No sense that I am made for a purpose higher than my own belly and appetites. No sense that I don't belong.

[25 : 15] I am to live for God. He made me for Himself. No regard for God's works. No regard for God's judgment. That was threatened by Isaiah.

His work of judgment. And so their greedy pursuit of land would take them out of the land into exile. And these who can't get enough food and drink will find that the party's over and will actually die of hunger and thirst.

These who live to satisfy their appetites will become the food and drink of a greater appetite that the grave will have when it opens wide its mouth and swallows them alive.

And so man who prided himself on his house, his lands and rich cuisine will be brought low and humbled to the ground.

But the Lord, the Lord will be exalted in his justice. He will be exalted by his justice. By paying back what is due, he will be held in high esteem.

[26 : 21] The holy God will show himself holy by his righteousness. His righteousness is his determination to punish sin wherever it is found. And in that day, he will punish it wherever it's found.

And he will be exalted as the holy God. You see, the judgment must fall because of who he is. He's the holy, righteous, just one. And he'll show himself to be such in that day when all of men are humbled and the Lord alone is exalted.

And that sets up the next bunch of grapes, the sinful scoffers. Verse 18, woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit and wickedness as with cart ropes.

Now, here's a strange sight. Here's a here's a here's a here's a harvest cart and it's laden down.

Full of produce, whatever it is. We'll see later it's sin and wickedness.

But here's this heavy cart and it's being pulled not by beasts of burden. But by men. Who are strapped to the to the to the load.

[27 : 34] With ropes. And it's picturing these men of Judah. They're strapped to their sin. They're working hard. It's sin. And their cart, their harvest cart of sin is full of bad grapes.

It's full of sin and wickedness is what it's full of. But they don't think that they will be punished for their sin. Though their cart of sin is full of sin and unrighteousness, wickedness.

They don't think they'll ever be punished for it. And so they start mocking Isaiah and the judgment of God that he said would fall upon them for their sin. They scoff.

Let God hurry. Let him hasten his work so we may see it. Let it approach. Let the plan of the Holy One of Israel come so we may know it. That's practical atheism.

I won't believe in it unless I see it. So let him bring it. Come on, Lord. Bring the judgment. They dare him. Such is the pride, the arrogance, the idiocy of scoffing unbelief.

[28 : 43] That they call upon God to hurry up this work of judgment that Isaiah says is coming. Oh, foolish scoffers. When you see the judgment, it will be too late to escape it.

There will be no mocking atheist when God's justice falls. He alone will be exalted in that day. And there's plenty of sinful scoffers and skeptics today as well.

Peter said there always would be. Second Peter three. In the last days, scoffers will come following their own evil desires. Their cartloads full of sin and evil desires.

And yet they're the ones scoffing. Where is this coming? He promised. You say Jesus is coming back to judge the quick and the dead. Where is this coming? Everything goes on as usual. What enables sinful men and women, boys and girls, to laugh off the judgment of God?

What? Their unbelief. They don't believe. They don't believe it's going to happen. But wherever they believe, God will not be mocked.

[29 : 58] God will not be mocked. So don't be deceived. He won't be mocked. Whatever man sows, that will he also reap. Be sure your sins will find you out. Well, have we just got into the wrong section of the vineyard?

Let's let's go over here and we take the fourth bunch of grapes and it's the distortion of morality.

Verse 21. Woe to those who call evil good and call good evil.

Woe to those who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. In other words, they're just turning the whole moral code upside down.

Now, these are not just those who do evil, but after they've done evil, they go a step further and call their evil good. What I have just done was good.

It was noble. It was moral. It was upright. So in seeking to justify themselves, they're willing to rewrite the whole moral code of God.

[31 : 02] And they turn God's law upside down and say what's wrong is really right and what you call wrong or right is really wrong. You're confused. It is confusing.

And that's the point. That's the point. So what is right and wrong? Well, don't ask Judah because she's changed all the signs and what God says is good.

They've torn down that sign and they've put up a sign that says good. And what God says is darkness. They've torn down that sign. You don't even see it around anymore. And it says light. And what God says is bitter, they call sweet.

Stolen waters are sweet. You want a good drink? You find the stolen stuff. You find the unlawful stuff. That's sweet. And God says, no, that's the bitter. That's the bitter.

And they put darkness for light. Darkness for light. Light. Evolution.

[32 : 08] Ah, what enlightened minds we have here. Creationism. By God. In six days. You're living in the dark ages, man.

Grow up. We've come of age. Read the science books. Go to the universities. Get with it, man.

Light for darkness.

Calling. Light. Darkness. Obey your parents. That's dark age stuff. Be your own person. Be what you're supposed to be.

You don't need to kowtow to anyone. Calling evil good. And good evil. So abortion, the murder of unborn, is now called a woman's choice.

Who can be against a woman's choice? And homosexual sin that God calls an abomination is now being called a perfectly moral and upright way to live.

[33:17] There's nothing immoral about it. And if you take God's side on the matter, well then you're guilty of terrible sins, of hate speech, and intolerance, and narrow-mindedness.

Oh, but if you stand for homosexuality as a normal lifestyle, why? You're wonderful. You're enlightened. You're so good. You're so smart.

You're so wise. You can teach. We'll listen to you. Calling evil good and good evil. Evil is never content just to live alongside of good.

It must somehow tear down the good. Maybe it's the silent witness of the good against their evil.

And so until we can get people to say that is good, they will not end their campaign.

But I want you to see it's nothing new. This is nothing 21st century at all. This is 700 years B.C. in Judah who had the moral law of God summarized in the Ten Commandments and who turned it upside down and called evil good.

[34:38] And we step to another bunch of grapes off the same branch. Verse 21. It's the arrogant self-wise. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.

This is autonomous man making himself the measure of all things. I don't need God telling me what's right and wrong.

I don't need that old outdated book that you Christians carry around once a week called the Bible.

I've got a good mind and I can figure out for myself the best way to live.

Moving in with my girlfriend before we're married would be a good trial period for us.

I think that's right. That seems right in my own eyes. So why should two incompatible people get married, right? Save the divorce rates. Let's move in. Seems right to me.

[35:41] Proverbs is the way of wisdom. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your steps.

Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and shun evil. And that's precisely what these Judah people were doing. They were being wise in their own eyes and God's wisdom was tossed out for their own wisdom.

And they think they're so clever for the way that they think and they come up with their ideas. Clever in their own sight. And they congratulate themselves on their progressive ideas.

But Paul says, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Fools. Because since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have?

The only kind of wisdom left if you reject the wisdom of the Lord is human wisdom. And that's what God calls folly. Folly.

[36:49] Thinking themselves wiser than God. Do you sense the oozing arrogance in that? The stinking grapes that God gets to harvest from His people.

Judah. Well, the last cluster is drunken, corrupt judges. Woe to those, verse 22, who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks.

Who equip the guilty for a bribe but deny justice to the oppressed. This is where unaided human wisdom invariably will lead you to the pursuit of self-indulgence.

What we have seen already in the other grapes. And so it's somewhat of a summarizing statement for the whole condition of Judah. When the great men of the nation are those whose greatness is drinking.

When the champions are those not who are championing the cause of the unjustly treated and the weak and the oppressed but those who are champions in seeing how much alcohol they can hold before they pass out.

[37:58] When a nation gets to that point there is nothing but judgment to follow. And so these judges who should be upholding justice what are they doing?

Well, they're drunk and they're also drunk with greed and so if you're a thief you'll go to one of these judges and you'll pay him. And when he brings you into his court he'll say he's innocent.

And the guy that he stole from will not get justice. This is the self-indulgence. The love of money that had Judah on a race to judgment.

And so God came looking for a harvest of justice and righteousness and this is what he found.

Therefore the next verses summarize God's judgment will fall on them like fire consumes straw or

dry grass.

And notice the fundamental crime for which judgment is coming. We find it in verse 24 at the end. For they have rejected the law of the Lord Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel. [39 : 15] That's the bottom of all these sins and stinking grapes right at the bottom is this rebellion against God's authority put forth in his law.

God says don't and they say we will if we want to. God says do and they say we won't if we don't want to. They spurn his word they reject they despise his law.

Contempt for the authority of God and his right to rule in the heart is the very center of their sin. Calvin says that if contempt for the law of God is the source of all evil then there's nothing against which we ought more carefully to guard than that Satan should take away our reverence for it. Our reverence for his word our reverence for his law. God says in chapter 66 this is the one to whom I will look he who is humble and contrite and who trembles at my word.

[40 : 26] It's not a healthy sign in America to see people who have grown to the point of not trembling at God's word. It's a sign of judgment already falling.

No that's why the judgment will consume them like fire consumes straw. They no longer tremble. when I speak.

God's not impressed by their new and improved morality rather he's offended at their rejection of his abiding moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments. Therefore verse 25 therefore the Lord's anger burns against his people and his hand is raised as he strikes them down.

The mountains shake and the dead bodies rise like refuse in the streets. yet for all this his anger is not turned away and his hand is still upraised.

He's not done punishing them. His wrath is still not turned away. So he whistles and a fierce army from a nation far away answers his whistle.

[41 : 36] It's later identified as the Assyrian army. Verse 26 says here they come swiftly and speedily just like the mocker said let him come quickly let him hasten his work of judgment here they come just as you've asked and they're well armed and they're irresistible and as a roaring lion seizes their prey and carries it off with no one to rescue it because God would not intervene to save he's done with them he's done and in that day there will be only darkness and distress no light absolutely no hope such as we sang of some minutes ago you see Jehovah's protection is gone and the worthless vineyard is now to be trampled and destroyed and folks if we don't see ourselves in this chapter then we have lost the very reason why it's still in our

Bibles do you realize that the holy God who's the searcher of every heart could fill a whole chapter with my sins just as he's done with Judah sins they would be just as vile just as unfitting of a man who's received blessing after blessing upon God and I've returned to him such rotten grapes and God could fill a chapter with your sins and pronounce woe over you as well is this the way we treat our owner is this the harvest we bring him for his kindness we have filled the harvest cart full of our own stinking grapes of sin we have spurned his word we have gone our own way turned from him and gone astray going our own way where's the hope in this chapter you say where's this hope at well it's not there it's not there because there simply is no hope for those who persist in living apart from

God in living in rebellion against his word and going their own way if you will not repent of going your own way there is no hope for you my friend there is only woe and judgment but now follow me what we have in chapter five are six woes six!

is an number of perfection and when you read in the revelation you read of seven trumpets of judgment seven seals seven plagues seven bulls of God's wrath and when Jesus stands on the earth and condemns the hypocrites of his day the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23 it's seven woes that he pronounces against them so we're one woe short in chapter five aren't we we've just got six but five verses later in chapter six we have the seventh woe and it comes from the same mouth of Isaiah as of Isaiah the prophet but instead of saying woe to you and woe to those it is woe to me woe to me chapter six and verse five I'm ruined it's over it's history for me because I am unclean I am a sinner and it shows them the way that I speak and what I say is a fruit of my heart and out of the overflow of an unclean heart my lips are unclean woe to me I'm finished he sees himself just as deserving of judgment as those six woes in chapter five but he confesses his sin he owns his guilt and deservingness of punishment woe to me now follow it isn't it interesting that this is the only woe that is not followed by judgment but is rather followed by forgiveness atonement the removal of sin and guilt peace with God salvation this this is the seventh woe in

chapter six your guilt is taken away your sin is atoned for and
[46:18] Isaiah knows of no other atonement than that which is found later on in his book and is found in first John of God sending his own son as an atoning sacrifice to swallow up all the wrath of God that we deserved all the woe he takes the woe and he gives us his salvation he takes all the judgment we had piled up in our cart heap of sin and he takes it on himself and is damned on the cross for us that we might be forgiven and saved he was wounded for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquity the punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his stripes we are healed Isaiah can say what a savior he takes our woe and gives us his salvation so you see when a sinner abandons his own self righteousness his own high view of himself!

and he comes to own his sin woe to me I deserve judgment I deserve to go to hell for my sin if you gave me what I deserve that's where I'd be forever and ever I would have no complaints how could you not have already cast me into hell God is pleased by the merits and mercies in Jesus Christ to forgive that poor sinner for Jesus sake when we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness that's where the hope is found not in chapter five but in chapter six the seventh woe have you received blessing from God and returned bad fruit to him yes you have then will you now pronounce judgment upon yourself will you condemn yourself

Isaiah did and lived Judah didn't wouldn't and was destroyed oh come how often I would have gathered you in my arms under my wing of protection but you would not and therefore all that's left is judgment you would not so Judah was the worthless vineyard that failed to produce good fruit for God and so was judged and if we have eyes to see we'll see that we have done no better but there was one who did better when the son of God was on this earth he said to his disciples I am the true vine John 15 1 I'm the real vine I'm the faithful fruitful vine

Judah was the unfaithful wild bitter vine I am the true vine and what a vine he is as God comes searching through his branches he finds no sin in him there's no wickedness there's none of this that took place in the six woes of chapter five there's none of what took place in your life and mine before we came to Christ and what still marks out our path was stumblings!

none of it when God came he found the most precious fruit on his son and he pronounced it so this is my son whom I love with him I'm well pleased look at his love look at his joy look at his peace his patience his kindness his goodness his whole life can be summarized as one who went about doing good and then he lays down his life on the cross oh what self sacrificing love do you see him he's the true vine he's the fruitful vine and where Judah and all of us have failed to bear good fruit he succeeded and therefore he's qualified to save us brothers and sisters our salvation is found in this vine and our fruitfulness is found in this vine he tells us your fruitfulness comes from me so about 125 years ago in

[50:58] Montecito California close to Santa Barbara there was a mammoth grape vine it was one of the largest and most fruitful vines on record it's at the base of its trunk it was nine and a half feet around and its branches spread out and covered an area the size of half a football field one vine and this one vine produced 20,000 pounds of grapes each year not six gallons of wine 20,000 pounds and the whole vineyard was just one huge vine now that's the picture Jesus uses in John chapter 15 when he says I am the vine and you are the branches I'm this vine this one vine and you are the branches if a man remains in me and

I in him he will bear much fruit but apart from me you can do nothing now this is the new covenant vineyard of the Lord that replaced the Lord's worthless vineyard of Judah that bore him only bad fruit and when Messiah came and they still bore!

stinking fruit they were judged and destroyed and a newly constituted vineyard was begun with the Lord Jesus himself as the vine indeed the whole vineyard is found in him and many of you here are a branch on that vineyard you're connected you're growing off of Christ the vine you've been joined to him by faith and so you're producing much fruit oh hear me there would be no fruit apart from your attachment to the vine it would all be stinking!

grapes but because you're attached to the sap to Christ the vine his holy gracious sap flows from him to you and that's why you have any love why you have any joy any real peace patience kindness goodness gentleness!

self control why you have any holiness why you persevere in trials and don't just curse God and mock his ways with the rest of the world because you're attached to this wonderful vine the Lord Jesus and he is not only your salvation he is also your fruitfulness so remain in him abide in him

daily commune with him daily trust in him daily obey him daily rejoice in him and you will bear much fruit Jesus says it is to my father's glory that you bear much fruit because my father is the gardener he's the owner oh bear much good fruit to him do you see my friend if you've been bearing nothing but stinking rotten fruit the answer is not to try harder you'll just produce more stinking rotten fruit the answer is to come to Jesus and trust in his fruit of holiness and trust in his divine grace to make you holy and to teach you to have his life flowing in you teaching you to love him and to love your neighbor your wife your husband your enemy what a privilege to be united to such a vine so [54 : 56] Paul prays for the Philippian saints that they might be filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God let's pray our father we thank you for Isaiah chapter five indeed for chapter six and verse five and we thank you for our new testaments for John 15 that shows us these realities that we need to come face to face with first of all that we are these worthless vineyards that have not returned to you the harvest of holy life that you deserve for your kindness is to us but then that show us the Lord Jesus is the true vine and how it is through his taking our woes and our judgments upon himself and giving us his righteousness and a new heart and his new heart and his grace in our hearts that we might bear this fruit of holiness oh we thank you for the gospel make us more fruitful forgive us for the ways that we lean on our own understanding for the clever ways that we redefine our sins to them sound so bad for the ways that we live with greed and selfish indulgence the way we're so willing to compromise with this world oh forgive us wash us afresh in that fountain open for sin and uncleanness make us more like our beautiful savior now we thank you for him as we pray in his name amen