

SONG OF THE VINEYARD

Isaiah 5:1-7

Introduction: Harvest time is the reward time for the farmer. He has planted, cultivated, fertilized, watered, and cared for his crop. He has watched it grow from a seed to a fully mature plant, ready to bear its fruit.

There is a lot that goes into planting and harvest a crop such as joys, worries, disappointments which sometimes happen. This scripture is about a man who planted a vineyard and now it is harvest time. In ancient Palestine, the season of grape harvest was a season of gaiety. Everyone looked back to the springtime when the tiny buds first appeared and they remembered how they had prayed for a good season and then had cared for and watched over their vineyards all the season.

Now the grapes were being gathered, placed into the winepress and made into wine. Everyone was happy at this time of the year and our scripture starts out as a song...

I. A FRIEND HAS A VINEYARD

1. The vineyard was on a very fertile hill and in an ideal location.
 - The friend built a wall around it to protect it and to show ownership. How proud he was of his vineyard and he would never neglect such a fine vineyard.
2. He had cleared the ground and the Palestine area was mostly rocks and stones of all sizes and shapes. It was quite a task to clear the ground, but this was necessary to have the perfect vineyard he wanted.
3. He planted the choicest vine, a vine known for its heredity and had a long line of fine ancestors.
4. He built a watch tower in the middle of the vineyard which served at least two purposes. It was high and could protect the vineyard from any harm and the keeper even lived in the watch tower during the growing season, thus the watch tower was the protection of the vineyard.
5. In expectation of a good crop, the friend had built a winepress and was anxious for the grapes to become mature and ready for harvest. Finally, after all the worry and care, the expense and time had gone into the vineyard, the reward was in sight.
6. What else could have been done for the vineyard? The choicest grape had been chosen which had a long background of good production, the most favorable location, protected by the vineyard keeper day and night, cared for and watched over every moment, what else could have been done?
7. The owner anticipated a good crop of excellent grapes. What was his reward? **WILD GRAPES!** He got a crop of wild grapes! After all of his loving care, he was rewarded by stinking, useless, bitter and wild grapes.

II. WHAT IF YOU HAD BEEN THE VINEYARD OWNER?

1. Would you break down the protective wall and tower and let the animals destroy as they wanted?
2. Would you stop caring for the vines in fear of another, even greater crop of bitter wild grapes?
3. Would you let the weeds and grass take over and crowd out the grape vines?
4. Just what would you do?

III. GOD OWNED THE VINEYARD AND HE'S NOT LIKE US, THANKFULLY

1. The vineyard we are looking at belonged to God.
 - The vineyard was Israel.
 - Isaiah was the one who wrote this song about the vineyard.
2. Israel was guilty of:
 - The shame of drunkenness.
 - The shame of disrespectful indifference to God.
 - The shame of greed and covetousness.
 - The shame of iniquity and offensive sin.
 - The shame of moral blindness.
 - The shame of pride.
 - The shame of corrupting justice.
 - Israel's cup of shame was full and running over.
3. All of this sounds just like our own country of America.
 - God has been very patient with this vineyard, His American vineyard.
 - Who of us can tell what God is going to do with this country of ours? What would YOU do?
 - Will the greed, drunkenness, lust, indifference, iniquity, pride and corrupting injustices bring to this country the destiny it deserves?
 - The question is now, NOT what God is going to do, BUT what shall WE do? God's next move is going to be one of punishment. He has already warned our country.
 - We can either collapse in despair or rise in faith.
 - We can die in our sins or we can live by the grace of God.
 - We can repent and go up from death to life - or?
4. Look at our country:
 - How far is our land rising toward the intentions God, the founder of America?
 - Does our country produce the fruits of righteousness for which God intended?
 - The answers to these two questions will tell us whether we are secure or not, whether we may be proud of ourselves or ashamed.

CONCLUSION:

1. God's heart is weeping because He looked for justice and righteousness in this country and found instead bloodshed, hate and the frantic cries of distress.
- What a harvest to reap in return for all the love and sacrifice that has been given.
2. What about your own life as being the vineyard that God has cared for, blessed, protected and watched over. What have you rewarded Him with? Indifference and sin?
- Is your cup of shame running over as was the cup of Israel as is the cup of America?
3. All is not lost for there is still hope. ***"...For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength..."***
4. Christian, America, let God back into your life, listen to your heart. Judgment is coming. We can't treat God with indifference as we have and walk away with no corrective measures taken by God.
5. America, God's People, come back to the ONE who has given US birth.