

SERMON FOR OCTOBER 8, 2023

TEXT: ISAIAH 5: 1-7

THEME: THE VINEYARD

Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. **2** He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. **3** And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. **4** What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? **5** And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. **6** I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. **7** For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness but behold, an outcry!

In the name of Jesus:

I belong to Valley View Golf Club and this past summer as I was golfing I was able to witness an amazing transformation take place. The owners of the golf course are turning a portion of the course into a vineyard and they are building a winery to go with it that is to open sometime next year.

As I saw the golf course being altered in order to plant the vineyard, my mind filled with questions. Why are they planting the vineyard where they

are planting it? Because it is a fertile place and the vines are planted in a certain direction, namely facing the southwest, in order for the vines to produce the most grapes. The vines needed to be placed 6-8 feet apart to allow ample space for growing. An irrigation system needed to be installed so that the plants would receive the appropriate amount of water. And after all of this, it would take three years from the first planting to for the vineyard to produce a crop worthy of producing wine. The bottom line is that it takes a lot of work and a great deal of time just to get to the point of having a yield of grapes to produce the wine.

Today's text is about a vineyard. It is about our Lord God who planted a vineyard and He loved the vineyard He planted. Like any vineyard, He spent a great deal of time and effort on this vineyard. Isaiah writes: Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. **2** He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes." Not what the Lord had in mind! He wanted good fruit and it produced wild fruit which was not going to produce the type of crop or wine He desired. And so Isaiah writes of the Lord saying this: "**3** And now, O

inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. **4** What more was there to do for my vineyard?"

The Lord had called Abraham from a life of idolatry into a faith relationship with Him. He promised that He would make Abraham's descendants into a great nation, and this is what the Lord did. He protected them, called them out of slavery, led them to the Promised Land, gave to them His Law and His Word, even sending prophets to proclaim the Word of salvation to His people. "I will be your God and you will be My people." But what happened?

The vineyard produced wild grapes. Did you ever plant anything in a garden that was so bad that you had to uproot it and destroy it? That is what the Lord had to do with Israel and Judah. And so the Lord proclaims through Isaiah: 'And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. **6** I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.' And that is exactly what took place. The Lord judged this nation He started, laying waste its cities and land, and uprooting the people from the Promised Land taking them into exile in Babylon. God's

people aren't satisfied to listen to the Lord or to follow Him, they want to live the way they want, they want to be like everyone else. And so the Lord says that He looked for justice, but behold, the people were violent and gloried in bloodshed, He looked for righteousness but the people turned their backs to God and lived as pagans.

Jesus in the Gospel lesson for today tells a parable that is probably based on the Old Testament lesson for today. In this parable, a man planted a vineyard and leased it out to workers to work the vineyard. But when the owner of the place sought to collect the return on his investment, the workers killed the owner's representatives. At the end of his rope, he finally sends his son, thinking that they would listen to his son, but they kill him. What is the owner to do? He will punish the workers and lease out the vineyard to other workers who will work so that the owner will get the fruit that he desires.

Isaiah isn't just telling this story to teach us how to plant a vineyard. He tells this story to inform us that God's people of old, ancient Israel, were God's planted people, that God loved Israel so much that He called them His pleasant planting. He planted them so that they would believe in Him and love Him and live as His people. They were to bear good fruit, bringing

justice and righteousness to those around them. But they did exactly the opposite. They lived as if God didn't exist, living for themselves and seeking their own advantage instead of the advantage of others. They didn't love the Lord their God with all of their heart, and they certainly didn't love their neighbor as God commanded.

God has sent His Son Jesus to be your Savior. He purchased you not with silver or gold but with His precious blood shed on Calvary's cross. You have been planted in His vineyard and made a member of His family. In Baptism the filth of your sinfulness has been washed clean in the blood of the Lamb of God. You belong to Jesus. You have been given faith in Jesus, and today He strengthens that faith through His Word and Sacraments.

For what purpose? That we might bear fruit for Him! **“8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **not** a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

You are God's pleasant planting. By baptism you have been given faith in Jesus, a faith that has brought you into His holy Christian Church. The Church is His vineyard. You are connected to Christ. For Jesus says: “I am the

true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser... every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. **3** Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit". You belong to Jesus, and Jesus is at work in and through you so that you may be fruitful in your life, to the glory of God and in Jesus' Name.

Amen