



# STAYING ATTACHED TO THE VINE

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ISAIAH 5

GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

AUGUST 18, 2019

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## SCRIPTURE READING ISAIAH 5:1-7

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**“1 ¶ Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.**

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**3 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

**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?**

**“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.”**

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**5** **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!" (Isa 5:1-7 ESV)

6

**THESE ARE THE WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD**  
**THANK YOU FOR MAKING US AWARE OF THE**  
**IMPORTANCE OF STAYING ATTACHED TO YOU**  
**AMEN**

During the sermon, we are going to consider the importance of staying attached to the vine.

In John 15, Jesus tells us that he is the true vine and God the Father is the vinedresser. In that passage of Scripture, which is not the main Scriptures that we will use in the sermon today, Jesus tells us very clearly that the only way to bear fruit is to stay attached to him.

This is how we are to bear fruit (next slide)

Staying attached to the vine

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**“5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.**

**6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” (Joh 15:5-6 ESV)**

The history of the world from the time of Adam and Eve has been to live unattached to the vine except those special people God called to himself. Otherwise, he has let humanity live out in its own choice to live as if the true God did not exist.

Living independently has caused humanity to live lives full of problems, full of sufferings. Sins separate us from God. The prophet Isaiah put it in these terms as he was inspired by God. (Next slide.)

**8 “1 ¶ Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear;**

**2 but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” (Isa 59:1-2 ESV)**

This is what God describes in Isaiah 5. God compares Israel and Judah to a vine that he has worked the ground to produce good grapes.

We know from the words of Jesus that the Old Testament points to him. God says that he sings for his beloved, a love song concerning his vineyard.

He goes on to describe how the vinedresser work for the vineyard to produce good grapes. It produced only wild grapes and not cultivated grapes.

This is the story of the world functioning outside God. We do not have to go to world history. Let us take a quick look at the history recorded by God in his word.

**9 1 – Noah, who was a preacher righteousness, warned the world at that time to repent and to turn to God or else they would perish (2 Peter 2:5). They did not repent. They perished in the flood (Gen. 6).**

**2 – Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed in a flash of fire. God’s judgment on those cities had little effect. The people decided to continue living apart from God.**

**3 – God called the special nation to himself—Israel. They did not want to hear from God either. After Mount Sinai, they told Moses, “and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” (Ex 20:19 ESV)**

God intervened many times, in his grace, to deliver Israel from their wayward, errand, self-willed and rebellious ways. Every time God’s interventions were short-lived.

God had given them a choice, **“I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live.” (Deuteronomy 30:19).** They chose death rather than life. God respected their choice.

The Israelites rejected God and rejected his messengers. They killed many of them. They gave them a very hard time by persecuting them.

God enumerated some of the sins Israel fell into. Let us briefly look at them as see if it does not reflect our world today. (Next slide)

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**1<sup>st</sup> woe** Isaiah 5:8-10 “Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.” (Isa 5:8 ESV)

**2<sup>nd</sup> woe** 11-17 “11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them! 12 They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of his hands.” (Isa 5:11-12 ESV)

**1<sup>st</sup> woe: God addresses the covetousness of rich landowners. They wanted more and more. God told Isaiah that those beautiful homes would become desolate without inhabitants. Their crops would produce very little. They would plant much with very little returns.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> woe—11–17 in their wealth, there was a lot of pleasure. They started with strong drink in the morning and finish the day partying. In all of this, they did not recognize the hand of God. In their ignorance, God would cause them to be exiled. Many would die. The arrogant would be humbled. The RN would become occupied by strangers who would raise their flocks there.**

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**3rd woe:** “18 ¶ Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, who draw sin as with cart ropes, 19 who say: “Let him be quick, let him speed his work that we may see it; let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near, and let it come, that we may know it!”” (Isa 5:18-19 ESV)

**4th woe:** 20–21 “20 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! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!” (Isa 5:20-21 ESV)

**3rd woe:** 18–19 because they denied God, he became sarcastic and markers. They fell into lies and thought they could do anything without consequences. He wanted to see quickly with their own eyes the interventions of God and I suppose, questioning if you really existed.

Woe # 4 **The Israelites had so lost their way that they would call what God calls evil good and what God calls darkness enlightenment. Because they denied God, they had lost their moral compass. In other words, he began to do as they pleased following under passions.**

*Cynicism or sarcasm. These are people who delight in sinning, who seek out ways to do it more aggressively, all the while insisting that if such a course of action was so bad, the great God, this “Holy One of Israel” Isaiah keeps going on about, will certainly take some action against it. In the meantime, they intend to keep right on pleasing themselves at all costs.* Oswalt, John N.. Isaiah (The NIV Application Commentary) (pp. 114-115). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

**12 5th woe: “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!” (Isa 5:21 ESV)**

**6th woe: “22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, 23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!” (Isa 5:22-23 ESV)**

Fifth woe: **It is not a matter of simply picking and choosing, but a specific contravention of what had been declared right and wrong. This suggests that what is going on is not merely asserting one’s right to choose one’s own moral conventions, but is rather a revolt against any moral authority at all.** Oswalt, John N.. Isaiah (The NIV Application Commentary) (p. 115). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

What appears to be described here is a descent into anarchy, lawlessness and disorder. It is what is described in the book of Judges as, “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” when there were no kings in Israel. (Judges 17:6; 21:25)

The Israelites became an authority unto themselves. They had a “me first” attitude instead of looking to God for guidance and direction, they looked at what served them the best. They became egotistic, selfish and self-centered instead of God centered.

The two greatest commandment of loving God above all and loving our neighbour as ourselves became irrelevant. Loving sacrificially was not a priority anymore. Consequently, there was great injustice in the land. Justice became very perverted. Money, corruption and bribery became more important than administering justice.

They did not stay attached to the vine. Because they refuse to obey God, God took action and respected their choice. The apostle Paul describes it well when he said, **"24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen."** (Ro 1:24-25 ESV)

God, who is the ruler of the whole universe withdrew his blessings from them and they suffered. God, we are told in scripture, opposes the proud. **"5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, 'He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us?'" 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'** (Jas 4:5-6 ESV)

They did not remain attached to the vine. God has revealed to us who the vine is. In our modern church year, it is very important that we remain in Christ. The alternative is destruction.

God teaches us how to live in his grace. God has made us his adopted sons and daughters. We are to live and act as God's children being his ambassadors here on earth.

Living apart from God creates much suffering, as we see in our society today. It should not be surprising because after Adam and Eve decided to live apart from God, there was a murder right in their family when Cain murdered his brother Abel because of his greed and jealousy.

Can you imagine the suffering that ensued for Adam and Eve following this horrendous murder and all that followed?

In so many ways, we live in a broken society because we need to be attached to the vine, to Jesus, who gives us a new heart, a new life, a heart devoted to loving self and neighbour as ourselves.

We hear about personal tragedies not only in the news but also in our personal lives. We probably all know someone who suffers from alcoholism, or who abuses drugs or who puts pleasures and selfishness of before the needs of others. We know of people who lie and cheat at every level of society. We know the suffering that that brings. All of us see the fruits of living apart from God.

We are told to live in the world but not to be of the world. (next slide)



13 **“Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;” (Re 18:4 ESV)**

(praying for the apostles) **“14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.” (Joh 17:14-15 ESV)**

We have been called to live in the world but not to be of the world.

After he prayed for the apostles, he also prayed for all the others who would believe in him (Jesus) through their word. Jesus goes on to pray that as we believe in him that as the Father is in him and Jesus in the Father that we may be in God so that the world may believe that Jesus was sent to the earth by his Father (see John 17).

Will life be easy on this earth. Jesus said it would not be. There would be opposition.

***... because they didn't stay attached to the vine. This prophecy was for Israel, and it's for us today. When we stay attached to the vine, we can experience God's love, protection and provision. His desire is to hold us up as his beloved, to let the world see what it means when one walks with him—lives in communion with Father, Son, Spirit and each other. This does not mean a charmed life where nothing bad ever happens to us. Rather, it means a life of faith, hope and love even when bad things do happen.***

***He loves to share the stories of those who stay connected to the vine. Hebrews 11 is filled with stories of the faithful. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses are all mentioned. There are many more; let's read Hebrews 11:***

<https://equipper.gci.org/2019/07/sermon-for-august-18-2019>

**The more we chase happiness without God the more it eludes us. We just need to do a few Google search to get some stats and articles.**

## **14 CHASE HAPPINESS AND IT RUNS AWAY (from Experts: America's Happiness Obsession Is Backfiring Badly**

**We're bombarded by happiness advice all the time, so why are we getting objectively more miserable?**

***A pretty substantial pile of psychological research shows that actively pursuing happiness as a goal simply makes us more aware of all the ways we're falling short. Chase happiness, in other words, and it tends to run away. Or as Ruth Whippman, author of America the Anxious: How Our Pursuit of Happiness Is Creating a Nation of Nervous Wrecks, hilariously put it on Vox: "Like an attractive man, it seems the more actively happiness is pursued, the more it refuses to call and starts avoiding you at parties."***

Furthermore, significant [physiological research](#) shows pursuing happiness is self-defeating, because the more people value happiness, the more likely they are to feel let down when something doesn't go their way.

America's [self-help industry is worth more than \\$11 billion](#) and the increase in anxiety and mental health disorders indicates this number is only going to increase. In 2016 alone, the [U.S. spent \\$446 billion](#) on medications and [over \\$200 billion](#) just treating mental health conditions. This is almost half of the global spending. (from Google search, [outside-looking-in-americas-obsession-with-happiness/](#))

Paul learned to be content in all situations. He learned contentment not by seeking happiness or pleasure but by seeking God. He accepted that God was sufficient. His life was not easy (read the epistles of Paul). He considered his past as "dung". He did not focus on it. He focused on Jesus. He looked to the future glory of being in the Kingdom of God. United to Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, he worked hard to bring this message of hope, the good news of the Gospel to people!

We have the book of Hebrews which speaks of people with the right priorities in life as they placed their faith in our loving triune God. Life was not easy. They persevered in spite of it. Let us read a passage from Hebrews (Next slide).

**15** (Heb 11:32-38 ESV) **“32 ¶ And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—**

**33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,**

**34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.**

16

**35 Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life.**

**36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.**

**37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—**

17

**38 of whom the world was not worthy—  
wandering about in deserts and mountains, and  
in dens and caves of the earth.”**

These scriptures are real for some disciples in the world who live persecution, imprisonments, beatings and death rather than deny Jesus. For them, Jesus is real. They are willing to sacrifice anything rather than deny him.

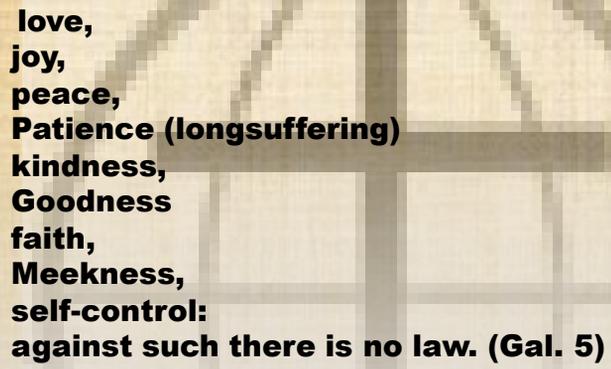
In our own society, we do not face that kind of opposition. Rather, we live in a society where the way of God is being seen as irrelevant. We face pressures which are real but are a different kind from let's say, Christians in India who are too often persecuted by the Hindus or again people living in Muslim countries where Christians are seen as enemies.

Whatever we face, we are to stay attached to the vine, to Jesus through his presence in our life by the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray to stay faithful to the end. Let us pray that attached to the vine, God will produce in us much fruit which is (next slide)

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18



**love,  
joy,  
peace,  
Patience (longsuffering)  
kindness,  
Goodness  
faith,  
Meekness,  
self-control:  
against such there is no law. (Gal. 5)**

Let us pray