
Meditation on Isaiah 5:1-7

'Yielding Wild Grapes'

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [Phil 1,2] Amen.

∴ ONE ∴

My dear sisters and brothers,

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

What a wonderful opening to a prophetic word.

It's an emotional and in the same instance picturesque opening.

Just a few words and you can already see this vineyard in your mind's eye.

*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;*

What a marvellous place this vineyard must be.

::: TWO :::

You can imagine how much work had to be done to further cultivate the vineyard.

And no word is mentioned about any help the owner of the vineyard had sought.

So far it is a story with a great beginning. It is a story full of expectation.

Remember the fox from our story earlier. He saw those juicy grapes in front of him – and he was so much looking forward to getting and tasting them.

Expectations.

I remember being a child – maybe about nine years old. And every autumn my grandpa would take me to the Cannstatter Volksfest. And it was so different with going there with my parents. You can imagine...

And I remember being absolutely nervous and fidgety. So desperately longing for the moment when the doorbell would be ringing and I could head off to the Volksfest with my grandpa.

Expectations.

::: THREE :::

But then... disappointment.

*he expected it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.*

This moment when you see your hopes, your expectations dash.

All the work – in vain.

All your efforts – for no result.

All the work, all the labour, everything prepared so thoroughly – only the best choice vines planted.

And the result is wild grapes: tart, sourish.

What a disappointment. And actually, an event of sheer impossibility.

Something went wrong here, beyond every understanding of then winegrower.

Because: You never ever get wild grapes from a choice vine. This is impossible.

And yet, it happened.

::: FOUR :::

And now the question to the audience:

³ *[And now,] inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people 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?*

Of course: The answer is: “Nothing”.

The audience, captured in this rather tragic story,
can only answer: “nothing”.

One more question to the audience:

*When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?*

The answer of course is: “We have no idea”.

Nothing can possibly explain how wild grapes
grow where choice vines are planted.

There’s question marks all over the place.

::: FIVE :::

And now, the emotional reaction of the wine-maker:

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 it shall be overgrown
with briars and thorns;
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 people of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
he expected justice,
but saw bloodshed;
righteousness,
but heard a cry!*

The prophet had thrown out a net to the audience – to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah.

They consented with the point of view of the Lord of hosts against themselves.

Now, the framework of the parable is left and the whole situation is rendered in the actual historic situation.

Israel and Judah have spoken their verdict against themselves.

The Lord of hosts had provided for justice, but saw bloodshed; he had prepared everything for righteousness, but heard a cry of distress!

How impossible, how disappointing.

::: SIX :::

One can understand that in such disappointment emotions become overwhelming.

But behind these emotions there is still this deep desire that the people of God bear good fruit.

As we can read in the Second Testament, where Jesus says in John's Gospel, chapter 15:

^{5a} "I am the vine; you are the branches.

⁷ If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit;¹ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love."

::: SEVEN :::

And this now is the word for us today:

With what we have as a church, as the fellowship of Peace Church God has provided everything for us.

And now we are the ones bringing fruit.

¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 15:5.

And wherever each one of us lives – in our houses and neighbourhoods, God through us, through his church is present and wants to bring fruit – for all of the people.

Wherever we go, we are to bring justice and righteousness, we are to bring fruit.

And if we think it might be too complicated and we can't achieve, we will not turn away like the fox.

We have a wonderful fellowship with people who can help us – the fellowship of Peace Church and moreover the fellowship of all of God's children, the whole church of Jesus Christ.

So, go forth into this world, bring fruit, wherever you go, wherever you live – God will be with you and provide for all that you need.

Amen.