

Small Groups – Isaiah 5

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Isaiah 5

In the Bible, there is a book called 'Song of Solomon' (or 'Song of Songs'). No, don't worry, it's not a terrible cheesy Christian song, it's an X-rated book. Back in the day, you sometimes had to be 30 before the Jewish religious leaders would let you even read it! But today you can see it in your own Bible. It has different meanings to it (between a man and a woman) but also showing how much God loves his people, Israel. We can also apply this to God's love for the church as well. Isaiah 5 starts off a bit like this.

Isaiah 5 is quite a looooooong chapter, but in 2 parts. The first half starts off like a love story and this is what we'll look at in this small group session. Don't worry, it isn't all soppy!!

Do you know who this 'love story' is between?

(Hint - verse 7)

Note - the person who loves is masculine. The vineyard he refers to is masculine, so it is clear that this love is not a sexual love - it is a deep love.

Why do you think the Bible talks about a vineyard?

(Hint - no, it's not about drinking wine, it's something more than that! See John 15. See also Jeremiah 18.5, talking about Jesus)

The Bible is an amazing book. It talks about things that were relevant to the people in the day, but also things we can understand today.

What do Verses 1 and 2 describe? List all the stages

Who do you think created the vineyard originally?

(Hint - verse 4)

If we are a Christian, does it happen because we are so good?

Write down / read Ephesians 2.4-5 and Ephesians 2.8...

The vineyard was 'fertile'. What does 'fertile' mean, spiritually?

(Hint - Psalm 1.3 and Jeremiah 17.7-8)

The vineyard was planted with the 'choicest vines'. What does this tell us about God?

What do you think 'digging' and 'clearing of stones' did for the vineyard?

How can we get rid of the 'stones' in our lives?

When we read about the stones being dug up, we get a picture of what Jesus did for us. He was the one that initiated things – he cleared the 'hill' of bad things when he died on the Cross and said 'it is finished' (John 19.30) to make a way between us and God.

Verse 2 says 'he looked for a crop of good grapes'. What does this mean?

How do we get 'good grapes' in our lives, spiritually?

(Hint – notice that God built a winepress but it was Israel that had to use the winepress. God will do his bit, we need to do our bit)

You know, so often we mess up. If you think about the people of Israel, God brought them out of slavery and was taking them into the Promised Land. But they kept moaning, despite all God did for them. Many times we are the same. In other ways, we let God down when we do wrong and disobey him. This must make Jesus sad, just as it makes our parents sad when we disobey them. God is like the perfect parent - he wants the best for us and knows how this can best happen.

Verse 2 continues, 'but it yielded only bad fruit' (talking about the vineyard). What does this mean?

What option does God give in the start of verse 3?

Sometimes people say, 'how can a loving God allow bad things to happen?' But people keep on doing bad things. You see, God gives us a choice and has given us guidelines in the Bible. When we disobey God and his Word, things go wrong. The Bible tells us that the price of our sin is death. We all deserve death. But if we accept Jesus, we live forever. What a gift! Verses 5 and 6 are quite scary and talk of God's judgement.

What does God say he is going to do to Israel / Judah?

God says that he is going to take away the protection – the 'hedge' and smash down the wall.

What does it mean for to have God's protection?

Verse 7 reveals that the 'vineyard' represents the house of Israel. It tells us that Israel are the "garden of God's delight". But God found only evil.

What 2 opposites does the Bible talk about in verse 7?

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How do you think God sees you? Do you think he 'delights' in you?

(Hint - see Psalm 147.11-14, which is also the opposite of Isaiah 5.5)

Very often we feel unworthy and messed up. But God doesn't see us like this. He knows what we're like and knew this before he called us into his Kingdom - he knew what he was getting and he wanted you anyway! His delight is in you. God delights in you! God loves you for who you are! He may not always love the things you do, but he loves you and has adopted you into his family through Jesus. Jesus has made you 'right' with God. Jesus became 'sin' so you could be made right with God.

Write down, personalise and learn 2 Corinthians 5.21

Write down and learn Ephesians 1.5
