



# ShalomAZ Ministries

*In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption*

**"A Country Song by the LORD."**

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## **Devotion and Discussion Questions**

**Key Texts:** *Isaiah 5:1-7; 2 Samuel 12:1-13; Ezekiel 15:2-5; John 15:1-8*

Imagine Isaiah standing before the people during the Feast of Sukkot — the Feast of Ingathering — when everyone is celebrating the harvest and rejoicing in the abundance of God's provision. And there he is, strumming out what sounds like a happy country tune. "I've got a song about my beloved, about his vineyard," he begins. The crowd leans in, smiling. Who doesn't love a good song about wine and harvest?

But this isn't just any vineyard song. This is a prophetic song — a parable like Nathan told David in 2 Samuel 12. First, it disarms the listeners, letting them agree with its message. Then it flips the script and points directly at them. "You are the vineyard," Isaiah says. "And you are not producing what the Beloved hoped for." The song is both tender and piercing. It reminds us of the Lord's love and careful planting, His faithful presence, His eager expectation. And then it confronts us with this uncomfortable truth: the problem isn't with the soil, the vine, or the Gardener — the problem is with the fruit.

### **1. THE GARDENER HAS DONE EVERYTHING RIGHT**

Isaiah begins with a picture of the Beloved — the Lord Himself — planting a vineyard in the very best place possible: a fertile hill. He breaks up the soil, removes every stone, plants the choicest vine, builds a watchtower, and even cuts out a wine vat. This is no casual planting. This is intentional, careful, and complete. Everything about this vineyard says preparation, protection, and expectation. The watchtower means He lives there. The double-layered wall means He guards it. The wine vat means He expects fruit — not someday, but soon.

This is the heart of God toward His people. He spares no effort. He clears away obstacles. He gives every resource. He dwells in the midst of His vineyard, watching over it with love. When we look at the care of God over Israel — and over us — we have to admit that He's done everything right.

### **2. THE FRUIT IS THE PROBLEM**

But when the Beloved comes to taste His grapes, He finds not sweetness but bitterness — not justice but bloodshed, not righteousness but wailing. The Hebrew wordplay drives the point home:

*mishpat* (justice) becomes *mispach* (bloodshed);  
*tzedakah* (righteousness) becomes *tzeakah* (a cry).

The people listening to Isaiah's song would have had to agree: nothing more could have been done. The vine was good, the soil was good, the protection was good — so why the bad fruit? The vineyard represents the house of Israel and the people of Judah. The problem isn't with the Gardener — the problem is with the vineyard. This is a sobering truth for us today. When our lives produce bitterness instead of sweetness, we cannot

blame our circumstances, our upbringing, or our environment. The question that echoes is God's own: *"What more could I have done for my vineyard?"*

### **3. THE GARDENER'S PAINFUL RESPONSE**

Because the vineyard refuses to bear good fruit, the Beloved makes a heartbreaking decision. He removes its hedge, tears down its wall, and allows it to be trampled. He withholds the rain, letting the vineyard go wild. Why? Because security without fruitfulness is pointless. Protection without purpose is wasted.

This is not the act of a capricious God but of a heartbroken one. The purpose of His discipline is not to destroy but to bring His people to repentance — to clear the ground and start again with a remnant. God loves us too much to leave us unfruitful. This is a warning but also an invitation. The Beloved still longs for fruit from His vineyard. And the good news is that through Yeshua, the True Vine (John 15), we can bear the fruit of justice and righteousness that He desires.

### **CONCLUSION**

Isaiah's country song is not just about Israel's past but about our present. God has planted us, protected us, and poured out His love on us. He's given us everything we need for life and godliness. And He's still looking for fruit — for lives marked by justice, mercy, righteousness, and love. The question is simple: what does He find when He looks at us? Sweet grapes that bring Him joy? Or bitter grapes that break His heart? Today, let the Gardener tend the soil of your heart. Let Him prune what needs to be pruned. Let Him clear the weeds and restore the vineyard of your life.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. How does the image of God as a careful gardener shape the way you see His involvement in your life?
2. What are some of the "stones" God has cleared away to make room for growth in your own walk with Him?
3. How can we tell whether the "fruit" of our lives is sweet or bitter in God's sight?
4. Why do you think God ties security and protection so closely to fruitfulness?
5. How can we actively stay connected to Yeshua, the True Vine, so that we bear lasting fruit?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Abba, thank You for loving us enough to plant us in the richness of Your soil and to dwell among us. Forgive us for the times we've produced bitterness instead of sweetness, for the times we've resisted Your pruning. Lord, come and tend the vineyard of our hearts. Clear out the weeds, break up the hard ground, and teach us to abide in You. May our lives bear the fruit of justice, righteousness, and mercy that delights Your heart.

In the name of Yeshua our Messiah, Amen.