

“He plowed the land, cleared its stones, and planted it with the best vines. In the middle he built a watchtower and carved a winepress in the nearby rocks. Then he waited for a harvest of sweet grapes, but the grapes that grew were bitter.” Isaiah 5:2 NLT

## lectio // Isaiah 5:1-7

The heartbreak of the one who plans, invests and builds for a purpose of yielding GOOD fruit and it just doesn't happen. This owner did all the necessary work, the hard work. He even found and planted the best vines, maybe purchasing them from a known, quality vineyard. Then tended and waited. Results: sour 🍇. Some might think to start over, and today, one might hire a consultant team to do a mineral evaluation on the soil itself, investing thousands of dollars into getting the soil "fixed." And also today, maybe someone wouldn't even buy the land FOR a vineyard without doing a soil test. But this man was crushed, and not in a good grape-to-wine way! He spent time, much shorter I'm sure, destroying the work he had dreamed would give good grapes - "Now let me tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will tear down its hedges and let it be destroyed. I will break down its walls and let the animals trample it." Has this happened to you? Not with vineyards but with relationships? You've dreamed, planned, invested and built up to help and even serve someone and they end up hurting you, being ungrateful and disloyal - and produce bitterness? God said, this is what Israel DOES. This is what WE do sometimes. But, it's worse when it's done TO US. At one point every leader has to make a hard decision with relationships. Do I continue to throw GOOD after BAD? Oh, the person may not be bad, but the effort, expenses, time and energy is not yielding good fruit, in fact it's just making their life more bitter - sour to them, their friends and their family. Until the soil changes, there's no chance of producing good out of that investment. Isaiah writes, "The nation of Israel is the vineyard of the Lord of Heaven's Armies. The people of Judah are his pleasant garden. He expected a crop of justice, but instead he found oppression. He expected to find righteousness, but instead he heard cries of violence." It's the fruit that matters if you're wanting results. If you don't want fruit, don't plant fruit seeds, just plant pretty wildflowers that more easily bloom and take zero effort to look nice.

## oratio

Dad,

The soil really matters here, right? My soil matters to how much you can do in my life. You set up protections, and tend to my care. You even plant the best vines to make sure the fruit I produce will be delicious! Ah, but the soil of my heart matters. The conditions of my life and allowing the good vines to grab those good nutrients which you have tilled into my soul, to cause those grapes to be strong and sweet. Oh, how I want to be good soil thus producing good fruit. I don't want to make thorns, thistles or even wildflowers. I want to give deliciousness.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root