

When holiness meets sinfulness

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Preacher: Steve Palframan

[0:00] Good morning. Today reading will be in the book of Isaiah chapter 5 and then we're going to read all the book.!

He dug it up and cleared it of stone and planted it with the choicest wine. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a wine press as well.

Then he looked for a crop of good grape, but it yielded only bad fruit. Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

What more could I have done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I look for good grape, why did I yield only bad? Now I will tell you what I'm going to do to my vineyard.

I will take away its edge and it will be destroyed. I will break down its roll and it will be trampled.

[1:24] I will make it wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and brayer and thorn will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.

The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vine he held, he delight in. And he looked for justice, but so bloodshed, for righteousness, but he a cries of distress.

Who to you who adds house to house and join field to field, till no space is left and you live alone in the land. The Lord Almighty has declared in my hearing, surely the great houses will become desolated, the fine mansion left without occupant.

And a ten acre vineyard will produce only a bath of wine, a homer of seed will yield only a half of grain.

Who to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. They have art and layer at their banquet, pipe and tambourine and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, no respect for the work of his hands.

[2:50] Therefore, my people will go into exile for lack of understanding. Those of high rank will die of hunger, and the common people will be part with firsts.

Therefore, death expands its show, opening wide its mouth. Into it will descend their noble and messies, with all their brawler and revelers.

So people will be brought low, and everyone humbled. The eyes of the arrogant humbled. But the Lord Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the Holy God will be proved holy by his righteous acts.

Then sheep will graze as in their own pasture. Lamb will feed among the rain of the rich.

Who to those who draw sin along with cause of deceit, and wickedness as with card rope, to those who say, Let God hurry.

[3:58] Let him hire on his word, so that we may see it. The plan of the Holy One of Israel. Let it approach, let it come into view, so that we may know it.

[illegible]

may Therefore, as the tongue of fire licks up through, and as dry grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust.

For they have rejected the law of the Lord Almighty and spun the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Therefore, the Lord's anger burns against his people. His hand is raised and he strikes them down.

The mountains shake and the dead bodies alike refuse in the streets.

Yet for all this, his hunger is no turn away. His hand still appraised. He lift up banner for the distant nation. He whistle for those at the end of the earth.

Here they come, swiftly and speedily. Not one of them grow tired of strumble. Not one stumbles or slips. Not a belt is loosened at the waist. Not a sandal strap is broken.

[5:50] Their arrows are sharp. All their bow and trunk. Their horses all seem like flint. Their chariot wheels like a whirlwind.

Their roar is like that of a lion. They roar like a young lion. They growl and they seize their prey and carry it off with no one to rescue.

In that day they will roar over it like the roaring of the sea. And if one look at the land, there is only darkness and distress. Even the sun will be darkened by clouds. Amen.

Thank you for reading for us, Alexandra. Let's pray as we come to God's word. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we come to look at your word and to listen to it together, we want to ask for your help and for your blessing.

Lord, we know just how difficult we find it. It's not simply just to understand what it is that you're saying, but perhaps even more to listen to it with open hearts that change, that are moulded by your spirit.

[7:07] So please be at work this morning. Help me. Help all of us, we ask, for the glory of your name and to do us good. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. I think one of the things that it will help you to know as we come to Isaiah 5, and have you got a handout?

Have you got the... have you got the... brilliant... that's great, I'm just checking you've got the worksheet. Great. What will help you to know as we come to Isaiah 5 is that really the first five chapters of Isaiah's book are an introduction.

Now, I think that helps because Isaiah, as you read it, is an unusual book. You might have thought that. It's not a history book. It's not a story book. It's not really even a poetry book. It contains history. It contains stories. It has poems in it.

But it's kind of more than just that. I think, really, as a reader, the best way to think of the book of Isaiah is to think that it is Isaiah as a preacher.

Isaiah is preaching to us. He is a prophetic preacher who is preaching God's word as it is revealed to him. But he's a preacher all the same. And in one sense, what you've got in the book of Isaiah is the kind of compilation of Isaiah's sermons.

[8:23] So Isaiah has, for us, put together the sermons that he has been preaching to Israel down the years. And he's not done it as in, like, this is the text of this sermon.

This is the text of the next sermon. He's not done it like that. What he's done, he's gone, a bit from this one. I'm going to take a bit from this one. I'm going to take a bit from that one. I'm going to take a bit from the other one. And he's arranged them for us.

So parts of his book are historical. And they will work their way through a progress of history. Other parts, like these first five chapters, he is pulling the themes from his ministry and putting them together so that you have an idea about what's going on and what it's about.

But then next week we'll arrive at chapter six, which is really the beginning of his prophecy and his book, where he tells you that in the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up.

He'll tell you. Now, it is a bit confusing, I grant you, and it is quite long, like most preachers, right?

So he goes on for 66 chapters. But Isaiah 5 is really helpful for us this morning because what you've got from the beginning to the end of Isaiah 5 is the full sweep of Israel's history, right?

[9:35] So it starts at the very beginning of the life of Israel and it ends with the exile at the end of the life of Israel or Judah and Jerusalem. And of course, Isaiah isn't going to kind of make this easy for us.

He's not going to go, right, this happened, then this happened, then this happened, then this happened, then this happened. Instead, he's going to tell you a story, a story about a vineyard first. And then, because he's a preacher, he's going to give you some bullet points.

Six woes he's going to give you and four therefore's. And so what we're going to do as we look through chapter 5 is just notice those two sections together and then come and try and work out its implications for us.

So we're going to start with a story. The story, verses 1 to 7, is the story of the vineyard. 1 to 7, the story of the vineyard. The point of the story, really, is to show us that beyond a shadow of a doubt, all the way through Israel's history, God is innocent of all that they have done wrong.

God is not to blame for the mess and the mistakes that Judah find themselves in. Jerusalem, the people of God, you and I, we cannot look and say, listen, the reason that I am in this mess of my own making is God's fault.

[10:51] You know, the sin that I commit, the wickedness of my heart is God's fault, not mine. We can't say that. And that's what this story is all about.

Sin comes from the inside, not from the outside. God is not to blame. Look down at verse 1. This is where it all starts. It starts with Isaiah singing the story of the vineyard. He sings it as a love song to God. In other words, Isaiah sings of God's innocence, which we might call God's holiness, out of love for him.

Isaiah is not scared by God's holiness. He's in awe of it and loves him for it. And so he starts, my loved one, that is God, has a vineyard, that is his people, on a fertile hillside.

And God did everything that could be reasonably expected for this vineyard. Verse 2, he dug it up. He cleared it of stones. He planted it with the choicest vines. He brought a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well.

But then, when God goes to look for fruit from these vines that he has planted and cared for and given everything that they needed, he finds it to be very disappointing. End of verse 2, then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.

[12:02] That seems as though the song ends there, right? Verse 3, the speaker changes. And in verse 3, the people of Judah are invited by God, it seems, to judge between the owner of the vineyard and the vineyard.

Now, you've heard the song, people, he says. So listen, verse 4. What more could I have done for my vineyard, people? What could I have done? Why, when I looked for good grapes, did I find only bad?

Of course, the answer is supposed to be obvious. Could I have done more for my vineyard, says God. No, of course you couldn't. And that means that the reason for the bad fruit is not about what God did or what God did not do, but what the people are like.

Bad fruit is a vine problem, not a farmer problem. And that means that the judgment of verses 5 and 6 and the rest of the chapter is supposed to be seen by us as being inevitable.

Right? If you are the owner of a vineyard who has done everything for his vineyard and you find only bad grapes, judgment is inevitable. It is inevitable that those vines will be destroyed. But it's not just inevitable, is it?

[13:06] It is also right. It's just, it's what should be done. In fact, if the owner of a vineyard who had planted it and done everything for it went to look for good grapes, found only bad, if that farmer did nothing, you would assume, wouldn't you rightly, that the farmer had something wrong with it.

Perhaps he expected bad fruit. Perhaps he knows really, actually, I did leave some stones in the soil. I'd failed to protect it. But of course he didn't. In case we're in any doubt, the meaning is explained by Isaiah in verse 7.

The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the nation of Israel and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. He looked for justice but saw bloodshed, for righteousness but heard cries of distress. A friend of mine who is the pastor of a church a long way from here tells the story of how he became a Christian. The story is on YouTube.

I can share it with you if you'd like to watch it. He was abandoned as a child by his alcoholic mother and he grew up in and out of care, abused by most of the adults who were meant to be looking after him.

[14:18] He was a bright kid but he left school with very little to show for it and started living on the streets at the age of 16. He got in with a crowd of older boys. He ended up using drugs, stealing and selling drugs and getting involved in violence.

He had a list of offences which were just growing and growing over the years and he eventually was put in prison after stabbing a couple of guys in a fight. While he was in prison, some Christians who

he'd met through a kind of community project came and visited him.

He was surprised they were there. He thought they were probably crazy. But they were kind to him and one of them provided him with a home to live in when he was released on parole.

You can't be released on parole unless you've got somewhere to go to. Now the story has lots of twists and turns and in the end what really got to my friend was reading the Bible and reading a different story about his struggles and violence than the one that he'd been told by his social worker and parole officer.

Until that point he believed that basically he was the victim of his circumstances, right? His violence and his drug addictions and dealing could be explained to him by the circumstances into which he'd been brought up.

[15:41] And he read the book of Romans and he heard something quite different. He was confronted the fact that despite all the horrors of his childhood and the abuse that he'd faced, his big trouble was not coming at him from the outside but from him on the inside.

The big trouble was the sin in his heart, not the sins of others that were committed against him. He was under God's wrath and his judgment for his own sin.

And if anything was going to change, he had to take responsibility for that. He could not blame God. He could not blame his abusers. God would deal with them.

But he would also deal with him. Now, Israel's story is like that, isn't it? God says, listen, it might be really difficult for you.

And things might be really hard. But what you need to understand, Israel, Judah, Jerusalem, is I have richly provided for you everything that you need. Your problem is you, not me, says God.

[16:53] And maybe your story is like that too. Or maybe it's not as stark as that. Perhaps you've been given many good things. But perhaps you do have a story like my friend's. And Isaiah's point stands for all of us, doesn't it?

God is innocent of our sin. God is holy. The bad fruit is the fault of the vine, not the vineyard owner. And so God in his goodness has every right to look to his people and look for justice and look for righteousness.

And when he finds bloodshed and distress, judgment is not only inevitable, it's right. It must come. It must come to Jerusalem.

It must come to Judah. It must come to London. It must come to me and you. Because the owner of the world, the owner of you and me, is God. And God is holy.

And he chases away sin. That's the story. Next comes six woes in the second part of the chapter.

Six woes. Now if the point of the first half of the story is that God is innocent of our sin, the point of the woes is that we are guilty for our sin, right?

[18:02] God is innocent. We are guilty. And more than just that, he also wants us to notice that there are consequences or therefores for their sins. So six woes and four therefores.

Now listen to me because this is important, right? This is going to take a little bit of time, but I want us to go through all the six woes and we'll pick up the four therefores on the way through. It's really going to help you to have a Bible in front of you before I do this, otherwise you'll get lost.

So if you've lost Isaiah 5, find it again. And let's work through these woes. We'll go through them reasonably quickly. The first woe, verse 8. Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.

This is woe number one and it's about materialism, right? It's about the idea that safety in life is about the accumulation of stuff, especially property.

Now we saw last week that some people in Jerusalem are very, very rich. And it seems as though the very rich are now buying up land and property and that the buying up of land and property has become for them the whole purpose of life.

[19:08] This is what life is about, the accumulation of stuff. And so Isaiah says that the city is full, not because of a large population, but because it's squeezed together by big houses and huge farms.

The accumulation of homes and businesses has taken over the city, driven by the desire of the rich to own land and property. They want to guarantee themselves a future.

And it's an intoxicating lie, isn't it? Oh, if only I have this, I will be safe. And God exposes the lie because in verses 9 and 10, he promises that the houses will be empty and the farms unfruitful.

Now, we just need to be careful here, don't we? Because the problem is not that people own property and land. The land is meant to be given to the people and they are meant to own it, right? Rather, the problem seems to be the injustice behind it.

So they are squeezing others out, notice, so the rich are buying up the property, knocking the houses together, and they live, notice, alone in the land. That's because they have organized a system of ownership which pushes the poor people out.

[20 : 13] That's part of the problem. The other problem is that they assume that the accumulation of those assets gives them all that they need. And that is the mistake. Pushing out the poor people, the accumulation of wealth at the expense of the poor, and assuming that wealth is the place in which to put your trust.

That's the problem. It's funny, isn't it, that despite that big problem, despite property being a bad saviour, you do not need me to tell you that this is a contemporary issue, right?

This could be London, couldn't it? You know, where the rich are buying up the property and squeezing the poor out? Don't you feel that? Don't you know that? But it doesn't mean, does it, that it's only the rich who fall for this lie.

In fact, you don't have to own a home to think that you would be better off if you did own a home. It can be, can't it, for those who don't have these things, that they still believe the lie, that they would be safer and more secure and better if they did.

And God looks at that and says, that's bad fruit. And therefore, in verse 13, tells them that they will lose their property and they will end up in exile. The people of high rank who owned houses and farms will die of hunger and thirst.

[21 : 29] That's the first woe. The second woe, we'll get more brief, is verse 11. Look at verse 11. Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine.

They have harps and lyres at their banquets, pipes and timbrels and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, no respect for the work of his hands. Woe number two is basically about living to party, isn't it?

It's about life being all about pleasure. It's hedonism. This is Jerusalem two and a half thousand years plus ago, right? And they're doing what I believe students do this, right?

They have what they call prees, which is the drinks that you have before you go out drinking. So that when you get out to buy the drinks, which are more expensive, you've already had enough for them to take effect. Well, these guys, they're not just having prees a few hours before they go out. They're starting in the morning. So by the evening, they are truly well lubricated. And in verse 12, the popular bands of the day are playing in the clubs of Jerusalem. And in the clubs of Jerusalem, God is forgotten about.

[22 : 31] He's not there. And the impression that Isaiah is giving here is that these people have become senseless to the kind of world they live in. They are party animals who are hedonists, who ignore the God they're made for.

Now, it's not, is it, that God is a killjoy. Psalm 104 tells you that God invents wine, but not to be used like this. Interestingly, in verse 14, in the second of the therefore's, God sees the grave as the party crusher, right?

The grave has an appetite that is never quenched, and it swallows the revelers down. You know, it's like, it's all fun and games at the party until someone dies.

Drowned in the pool when they fell in drunk. And that's what's going on in chapter 5, in the second word. The third word, verse 18. Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit and wickedness as with cart ropes.

To those who say, let God hurry. Let him hasten his work so that we may see it. The plan of the Holy One of Israel. Let it approach. Let it come into view so we may know it. This is the idea that God is slow.

[23 : 36] God needs a bit of help to get on with it. Yeah, God won't punish sin. You can drag your sin around with you. You can just pull it along and nothing's going to happen. It's interesting, isn't it?

Jerusalem are not completely ignorant of God. It's just that they think he needs a bit of encouragement to speed up. They see no evidence of him working. And it's a lie, isn't it? Verse 24 is the third therefore.

And it tells you that God's judgment will come like fire on dry grass. Now, you know, don't you, from this summer, that fire on dry grass spreads really quickly. You cannot outrun a grass fire.

The fourth woe is in verse 20. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil. You put darkness for light and light for darkness. You put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

Here the idea is that morality doesn't matter. Fourth woe. Morality doesn't matter. Notice the detail here. Light and darkness, bitter and sweet. Light and dark is public morality.

[24 : 33] That light and dark, that's what we all see, right? And the moral code is switched out in the public sphere. So in the public sphere, immorality is celebrated and morality is squashed.

Sin becomes the acceptable way to live. Even the church blesses it. They will march in its favour or stay silent in the face of its abuse. But it's also personal morality, right?

The bittersweet, that is your own taste. It is personal. As we give ourselves a free pass on our own sin. Oh, I know it's not that great, but it doesn't really matter that much, we say.

Again, it's undone by the third. Therefore, in verse 24, where the judgment comes on the rejecters of God's law. God's law will stand. What God says is right will stay as right.

Fifth woe in verse 21 is to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. Here's the lie that we all have the answers.

[25 : 34] We have all the answers. Woe number five. Self-sufficiency. I've got enough on my own. God is for the weak. God is for those who don't think they're enough in themselves.

I'm not like that. I know what I need to know. I'm all-sufficient. Cleverness here is discernment. It's not just the idea that you're smart, but the idea that you know enough to know what the future will hold.

That you can tell what will happen. That we can secure the future. And it goes hand in hand with the final woe. In verses 22 and 23. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks.

Who acquit the guilty for a bribe but deny justice to the innocent. Here it's not so much just about self-sufficient intellect, but about physical strength and prowess. I am strong enough.

That I am all that I need because I can do all that I want. I can get what I want at the bar and it will not affect me. And I can deal with people as I want because they can't get to me either.

[26 : 35] Now these last two woes are met by the fourth, therefore, in verse 25, where the Lord's anger burns down and strikes them. And the wise and the strong are defeated in a moment and their bodies are in the streets.

The rest of chapter 5 expands on this. Isaiah tells them about the exile when Jerusalem will be defeated and the people killed and taken away. You've gone from the beginning now to the end of Jerusalem's history.

In verse 26, God whistles for the enemy to come and conquer the city. An enemy who is swift in verse 26. Untiring in verse 27.

Full of modern weaponry in verse 28. Roaring like a lion in verse 29. And the destruction is total in verse 30. And if one looks at the land, there is only darkness and distress.

Even the sun will be darkened by the clouds. This is a brutal takedown for Jerusalem and Judah by the nation of Babylon. Who are swift. Equipped with modern weaponry.

[27 : 34] And destroy them in a moment. Now we've moved quite quickly through these verses. But I hope what is really clear to you is that Jerusalem's problem is not simply wicked actions.

But misplaced trust. The problem is not God. God is innocent. It's not imposed from the outside. And it's not just their behaviour.

But it is their trust, isn't it? That they're not trusting in God. They're trusting in their wealth. Their wisdom. Their strength. Their ability to buy property. Their ability to party and ignore the great realities.

They're not trusting in God because they're distracting themselves. Drinking to forget. And God. And this is what we were looking at with the children. Because of who God is.

Cannot tolerate that. The godness of God means that when it meets the sinfulness of sin. It says, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Therefore, therefore, therefore, therefore.

[28 : 35] It's summarised. If you're a bit lost. It's summarised in verses 15 and 16. So people will be brought low. Everyone humbled. The eyes of the arrogant humbled.

But the Lord Almighty will be exalted by his justice. And the holy God will be proved holy by his righteous acts. Sin defeated. And God's holiness, his godness, proved by his judgment.

Now, I just want to ask you as we finish. What do you make of all of this, right? As you listen to that, what are you thinking? What are you thinking this has got to do with you or me? I hope at one level you are challenged by some of those woes.

You know, I see myself in them. The idea that material possessions will secure my future. I mean, if you're like me, it's material possessions that I don't have. Which I think will secure my future.

And so I spend a lot of time thinking about how I might acquire them. It's the time that we spend distracting ourselves from the big questions or troubles in life. Maybe you don't drink in the morning to party in the evening.

[29 : 42] Perhaps you just distract yourself by scrolling your mobile phone. It's the same idea. It's good, isn't it, to be warned about those things. There is a safety in being warned about those kind of sins.

But as we close, I want you to see that there is something else here, right? There's not just two points in Isaiah chapter 5. It's not just about the wickedness of our sin.

It is about that, right? It's not just about the holiness of God. It is about that. The third thing is about the combination of those two things. What happens when they come together? The meeting of God's holiness and our sin means punishment, doesn't it?

Wrath, justice. The blood on the streets is what happens when God's holiness meets people's sin. This is the godness of God. God is not a liar, is he?

God will not lie about who he is or what his world is for or what you and your life are about and for. And so because it's about the meeting of my sin and God's holiness and the wrath and the judgment and the justice that comes, that the most terrifying part of Isaiah 5 is the end of verse 25.

[30 : 55] Look at the end of verse 25. This invasion by the Babylonians and the conquest of Jerusalem is inevitable, isn't it? It's the meeting of God's holiness and their sin. But notice what happens. End of verse 25.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away. His hand is still upraised. This is the terrible news of Isaiah 5, is that God not only punishes his people, Jerusalem and Judah, even though they're conquered and defeated, still his justice is not satisfied.

Wrath is not dealt with in Isaiah 5. Sin has not been dealt with by the day of the conquest. The day of judgment is not the day of the Babylonian invasion.

It is, says Isaiah, still a day to come. Still more wrath to see. God's holiness has more to say about human sin than you see in Isaiah 5.

Now, if that's right, if God's holiness is not satisfied fully and finally in Isaiah 5, if the problem is not solved here, then there is a mystery in Isaiah 5.

[32 : 03] And the mystery is in verse 1, which is that Isaiah sings in the context of God's holiness and right justice.

He says, I love you, God. What? I love you, God. I will sing of your loveliness.

How can he do that? Why is Isaiah not running in terror or bulking at the consequences, but instead singing, I love you, Lord? And in a way, Isaiah 5 leaves that question hanging.

Right? He's a great preacher and he's trying, I'm just going to leave that for next week. He says, and off he goes. But let's try and unpick it a bit more. Let me try and give you an illustration to try and bring this together.

Imagine that God's holiness is like a challenger tank. A challenger tank is bulletproof. It has massive firepower. It has great terror to all its enemies. Obviously, a challenger tank is bad news for everybody on the outside of the tank.

[33 : 06] And on the outside of the tank of God's holiness stands Israel, Judah, Jerusalem. They are doomed, aren't they?

The tank of God's relentless holiness is driving towards them and there is nowhere to hide. But Isaiah sees exactly the same tank, the same challenger tank, and he says, no, that's not bad news, that's good news for me.

That's really good news for me. What does that mean about Isaiah? Why can the tank of God's relentless holiness be good news for Isaiah? Here it is.

Because Isaiah is on the inside of the tank and not on the outside. That's why. Somehow, in a way that is not explained in chapter 5, Isaiah has found a way for God's holiness to be his protection and not his terror.

For God not to destroy him, but protect him, to fight for him and not against him. Now, in the rest of Isaiah's book, you're going to get hints at that answer. But we don't have to wait for that because we're New Testament Bible readers, aren't we?

[34:08] So we know John 15. And in John 15, Jesus, who is on the cusp of the cross, he says to his disciples this, it will come up on the screen, I am the vine, you are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing. This is incredible. We're going to skirt over some of the detail. But Jesus takes this picture of a vine and a vineyard from Isaiah 5 and all over the Old Testament.

And he says, listen, there's a new vine in town and it's me. This old vine that bears bad fruit is gone. There is a new vine that bears good fruit and it's me. I am God's people, says Jesus in effect. God's people are in me. The bad fruit and vine have come and gone.

I am the true vine. The vine that if you are in it will bear good fruit through you. Now, why can Jesus say such a thing? Well, it's because he's on his way to the cross.

[35:11] The cross is really the final fulfillment of Isaiah 5. In Isaiah 5, there is blood on the streets, but there is no final solution to the holiness and sin problem. But on the cross, there is blood on the cross and a final solution for God's holiness and his judgments.

Let me just try and put it as simply as I can. The tank of God's holiness is rolling through history. And it is bearing down on a final day. And all of us will stand in front of it.

And the only place of safety in the relentless role of the tank of God's holiness is inside it. And the only way inside the tank is through the cross of the Lord Jesus.

Because he will rid you of your sin. He will bring you into himself. He will plant you as a vine in him, grafted into him, that you might bear good grapes, not bad.

And then it becomes great news, doesn't it? Because God's holiness is his commitment to rid you of all your sin. Isn't that great?

[36:20] I long to be rid of all my sin. Don't you? God's holiness is his commitment to rid this world of all of its sin. Don't you long for that day too?

No more injustice. No more wicked abusers. No more vicious dictators. No more hostile nations. No more self-righteous, self-sufficient religious people.

None of that. Because God has come in his holiness and judgment. And we are safe in Jesus Christ. Let me pray. As I pray.

Amen. Amen. Heavenly Father, if we are really honest with you, we take both our sin rather lightly and your holiness rather lightly, so this problem of when they meet one another doesn't seem such a big issue to us.

And so we thank you that Isaiah 5 has told us a lot more about your holiness and a lot more about our sinfulness. So this problem of them coming together is much bigger than we'd like to think.

[37:40] And so we thank you that the solution in Jesus Christ and his cross is even greater than we imagined. Even more wonderful. Even more precious.

Even more beautiful than we thought. So that we, with Isaiah, can sing, I love you, Lord. Because your holiness is fighting for me and not against me.

That you will rid me, rid us as we trust in you of all sin. And you will remake this world by your power for your glory forever and ever. And there will be no more abusers, hardships, injustice, because Christ has come in his glory and his wonder.

So help us, we pray, to find our safety and security in the victory of Jesus Christ at his cross. In his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.