

INTRO: David Wells has written that we live in an age when God seems weightless to us. It's not that most people have become atheists. Belief in God is still alive and well; but God rests lightly on us. People are at a loss to explain the God they believe in, so that when you ask them who He is, they quickly retreat into talking about God being beyond explanation. Modern man believes in God; but the man on the street no longer believes that God poses any threat. God is there...somewhere...out there..., but he no longer has the power to compel us to live in any certain way, nor is He interested in doing so. People believe in God; but the God who is there has become a god in here, inside us. If God is, he must be inside us, not outside us. God is still there, but parties and sports and sit-coms and technology seem far more interesting. People believe in God; but our idea of Him isn't very sharp or clear. We like our sports and movies in high-definition, but God has become blurry; and we have come to like it that way. After all, if God is blurry, if His expectations are unclear, then He can remain relatively unimportant. So we can consider ourselves "believers," on good terms with God, because we haven't totally dismissed Him; but He does not matter much. He is there...or here...or somewhere...or everywhere; but he is inconsequential. And so, as David Wells puts it, "Those who assure the pollsters of their belief in God's existence may nonetheless consider him less interesting than television, his commands less authoritative than their appetites for affluence and influence, his judgment no more awe-inspiring than the evening news, and his truth less compelling than the advertisers' sweet fog of flattery and lies." (Wells, *God in the Wasteland*, 88).

Of course, we like to think that modernity is unique in experiencing this weightlessness of God. But modernity is not unique. The Israelites of the OT believed in God and yet treated him as relatively inconsequential to their everyday lives, and that was in 730BC. Turn with me if you will to Isaiah 5:1-30. The point of the chapter is that **God will judge all who ignore his works (12b), assume his indifference (19), and despise His word (24c)**. In other words, God will judge those who believe in Him, but treat Him as weightless, matter-less, unimportant. In Isaiah 5, **God illustrates, vindicates, and executes His judgment**. And I hope this morning that by the end of our time together, you will not only believe in the reality of God's past and future judgment, but that it will weigh heavily on you,

1. GOD ILLUSTRATES HIS JUDGMENT (ISA 5:1-7)

Isaiah starts with a love song for "*My beloved*." This chapter is full of strong words, but they're borne out of love for God. The courage to speak against a sinful status quo in the church does not come from loving God's people above all. It comes from loving God above all. But Isaiah doesn't come out and denounce God's people as his first move. He tries to get them to see their situation from God's perspective. It's like Nathan giving David the story of the rich man taking the poor man's only sheep in 2Sam 12 (Oswalt, 1:151). Nathan gets David to be outraged at a situation that matches his, and once David agrees, Nathan says "You are the man!"

Isaiah sings the love of a Vinedresser for his vineyard. The Vinedresser's love is proven by what He had done for the vine in vv.1-2. He chose prime real estate – a fertile hillside that would give it lots of sun. He dug it out and cleared away the limestone. He chose a choice vine. He built a watchtower where he could keep an eye on it. He dug out a wine vat to catch the juice as it flowed from the winepress down to the base of the hill. Then, at the end of v.2, he waited. He looked for grapes. He had done all the painstaking work. He made every right decision. He gave it plenty of time. He had every right to expect good fruit. But the vineyard produced sour grapes. So in v.3, Isaiah puts the question to Judah. You judge, he says. And he begins to speak in the first person, in the Vinedresser's voice. What else could I have done? Was it my fault? Now remember, Isaiah was preaching to wealthy landowners here, people who had added field to field (v.8). They would have sympathized with a landowner who had gotten no return on a real estate venture.

In v.5, now that Isaiah has their attention, he pronounces the sentence in the Vinedresser's voice. "*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.*" He will remove His hedge of protection, and the wall that kept out the wild beasts, and he will let his vineyard be trampled by wild animals (Isa 63:3; cf. Rev 19:15). Then in v.6, he will neglect the vineyard – no more pruning, no more cultivating, no more weeding out the thorns. An un-pruned vineyard

can't be healthy, because dying branches sap nutrients away from fruitful ones. When a branch in a vineyard is dying, the vinedresser cuts it off so that it doesn't waste nutrients that more fruitful branches could use. And when a whole vine is producing bad fruit, the vine itself becomes useless, because vines are either good for fruit or good for nothing. And at the end of v.6, Isaiah says, "*I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it,*" which implies that is no ordinary Vinedresser. Story time ends in v.7. **God** is the Vinedresser, and the fruitless vineyard is Israel. The fruit God looked for was righteousness, but what he got was injustice. And so **God** is the one who will do all these fearful things to His own people; and if Isaiah's sermon had its intended effect, then Judah's leaders had just agreed that God was right to do these things. They had pronounced their own sentence. God will abandon his vineyard, because his vineyard had abandoned him.

The image of Israel as a vine planted by God goes all the way back to the Song of Moses in **Ex 15:17** "*You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain*" (cf. Ps 44:2). And when God makes his covenant with David, he says in **2Sam 7:10** *I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they may dwell in their own place.*" Yet after centuries of Israel's disobedience, Jeremiah prophesied about Israel's sin and judgment in the imagery of an arboretum gone wild. **Jer 2:21** "*Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?*" Hosea prophesied God's judgment and the reason for it using vineyard imagery. **Hos 10:1** "*Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built; as his country improved, he improved his pillars.*"

Even after this judgment happened, probably during the exile, Asaph the Psalmist wrote a song lamenting God's judgment. **Ps 80:8-11** "*You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River. Why then have you broken down its walls so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it. Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.*"

But judgment would not have the last word. The prophets also saw a time when God would again plant His vine. **Jer 24:6** *I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down. I will plant them, and not uproot them.*" **Amos 9:15** *I will plant them on their land and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them,' says the Lord your God.* Even Isaiah himself will say in **Isa 27:3-4** *A pleasant vineyard... Would that I had thorns and briers to battle... In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit.* Yet the idea of fruitfulness is not original with the prophets; it goes all the way back to Adam in **Gen 1:26**, *Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.* Adam fails, and so part of the curse in **Gen 3:18** is on the land itself, "*thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you...*", just like in Isa 5:6. Israel was supposed to be a new and fruitful Adam, a new corporate son of God. But just like Adam, they failed to be fruitful. We'll come back to that idea in the conclusion.

For now, we need to keep listening to Isaiah. God expects His people to bear good fruit. He's looking for it. He expects love for God and for others.. He's looking for obedience to his law. **Bad** fruit is not acceptable to God; and **good** fruit is not an optional extra that we add to our Christian life, like a spoiler on a sports car or mud flaps on an SUV. We're not going over and above the call of duty to produce good fruit as Christians. We're simply doing what God designed and expected us to do as branches in the Vine. And Jesus doesn't come along to soften the message. John 15 "*I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*" Jesus stands by the Vinedresser of Isaiah 5. There is no such category as an unfruitful, or as they say today, carnal Christian. You're either a fruitful Christian in for pruning, or you're a dead branch to be cut off.

Transition: But what exactly was all this bad fruit Israel was bearing? Isaiah answers that question in vv.8-25, which is a series of woes on the people for their sins. The word "woe" expresses both judgment and sadness. So

the tone of woe passages is righteous indignation mixed with sorrow for the fate of the people concerned. After these woes, God pronounces judgments that fit each crime. And the structure of vv.8-24 is like a fireworks show. Woe and judgment in vv.8-10, woe and judgment in vv.11-17. Then the section ends with a grand finale of four woes in vv.18-23 followed by a grand finale of judgments in vv.24-25.

2. GOD VINDICATES HIS JUDGMENT (ISA 5:8-25)

We said in the introduction that **God will judge all who ignore his works (12b), assume his indifference (19), and despise His word (24c)**. God rebukes each of these 3 kinds of sin here in vv.8-25. The Law said that the land would always belong to God. **Lev 25:23** *“The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me.”* But the wealthy people had become greedy land-grabbers. They were coercing the poor to sell them their land, with no thought for how it affected anyone else or society at large. *“You join house to house, and field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.”* The rich had absorbed so much of the land of their poor neighbors – their private property had sprawled out so far – that it was now like living alone, because their neighbors were so far away. And so the punishment will fit the crime. You ended up living alone in the country; now your houses will be living alone, *“desolate and without inhabitant,”* because I’m taking you out of them. And instead of the great harvest planned by the rich who added field to field, they would have a pathetic harvest. An ephah was a tenth of a homer. God would make it so that they would reap only a tenth of what they sowed.

Now that language should have sounded familiar to Judah. Again, Israel was to be a new and fruitful Adam. **Lev 26:9** *“I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you.* If they obeyed the covenant, then God would make their land fruitful. **Lev 26:4** *“I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.* But if they disobeyed, then God had promised to bring curses on them for their disobedience, one of which we read in **Lev 26:20** *“Your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.”* **Dt 28:39** *You shall plant vineyards and dress them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm shall eat them.* And now, here God is, making good on that covenant threat. The bad fruit of oppression would lead to little fruit in the harvests. (cf. Hag 1:6; 2:16).

In vv.11-12 we get another “woe.” These are wealthy but nominal Jews getting drunk, living for Friday night and expecting absolution at Saturday morning temple service. They had made it their purpose in life to maximize not only their property, but their pleasure. And in v.12 Isaiah contrasts it with meditation. The culture of Judah had become marked by preoccupation with music, and levity, and wine, and feasting, all to the neglect of meditation on the deeds of the Lord and the works of His hands. Sound familiar? And I don’t mean secular American culture. I mean the culture of the American church. So many of our churches have become marked by preoccupation with party music, levity, wine, and feasting, all to the neglect of meditation the deeds of the Lord and the works of his hands. Music and feasting are not wrong in themselves; but when they lead to the neglect of regard for God’s word and works, they become nauseating to God. Examine yourself, Christian. You are surrounded by a culture that deifies leisure. Have you become part of that culture?

God’s people were ignoring God’s works. The great works of God in Scripture are creation and redemption. These are the two great works of God that modern man, and now even many so-called Christians, want to ignore. The reason is simple. If God is creator, then we owe Him our lives and He has authority over us. If God is Redeemer, then that implies both that we are in danger and that we are helpless to avoid that danger unless God saves us from it. We do not want to believe that God has authority over us, because that would take away our freedom. And we do not want to believe we are dependent on God for anything, because that would take away our power. Modern man wants nothing to do with either of those implications. And so he ignores the works of God in creation and redemption as if they are beneath his dignity, and he goes to work constructing an alternate reality that coddles his ignorance, affirms his assumptions, and excuses his sin. And all this is to say, that modern man, just like pre-modern man before him, becomes wise in his own eyes, which means he ends up

a fool, because whether he likes it or not, he is still thinking and working in the world God created, thinking his own thoughts against the God who created Him, and trying to destroy the only God who can redeem Him. That is the tragedy of fallen man. It is not unique to modern times; but it certainly is noticeable today, isn't it?

Again, the punishment fits the crime. Look there in v.13. The very people who were joining house to house and field to field, the very ones who felt most secure in their property, would be evicted and exiled themselves. In place of feasting, their honored men go hungry; in place of wine and strong drink, their multitude is parched with thirst. And here's the most ominous part of all. Instead of the rich feasting on the fruit of someone else's land, the grave enlarges its appetite and opens its mouth to eat Jerusalem's upper crust and the party crowd. The party is over (Motyer). And the shame of it all is that they should have known better. "*My people go into exile for lack of knowledge.*" Why did they lack knowledge? Had God not revealed Himself clearly enough? Sure he had. He had given them the Law, and now He was giving them the prophets. But according to v.12, they lacked knowledge because they **ignored God's works**. The party was just too much fun. They were living a lifestyle of distraction. All they cared about was **property, profit, and pleasure** (Oswalt). The works of God came to seem either boring or irrelevant, or both. How does that happen? It happens when your soul gets drunk on pleasure and high on property and profit. Your spiritual senses become dull and unreliable, your soul's appetites get distorted, and after a while, all you can think about is where you're going to get your next hit. And remember from Isa1, they were all still going to church. They had all their sacrifices lined up. They observed all the feasts, burned all the right incense...and God was sick of it. He was both saddened and outraged. "*Woe to you.*"

In vv.15-16 God takes these drinking and feasting parties as celebrations of man's pride. "*Man is humbled, and each one is brought low.*" Pride is what drives us to an inordinate love of property, profit, and pleasure, because each one of those pursuits is about me. Property is about building my kingdom and extending my control. Profit is about ensuring my security and ease. Pleasure is about gratifying my appetites. Pride is really what drives the human heart to ignore God's works and celebrate our own instead. So God will not only bring man low. God will exalt Himself. Verse 16 is a great prayer to pray. *But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.* This is really what Jesus tells us to pray at the start of the Lord's Prayer. "*Hallowed be your name.*" Show yourself as holy. Here, he does it in His judgments. God displays His otherness, His transcendence, His separateness from sin, by executing judgment. And the judgment fits the crime. Verse 17 is a reversal of the feasts in v.12. Instead of the wealthy people feasting, it will be sheep grazing on what used to be their backyard. And all this prepares us for **Isa 32:12-13** "*Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine, for the soil of my people growing up in thorns and briers (like in ch 5), yes for all the joyous houses in the exultant city. For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks; until the spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.* Only God's Spirit, poured out, can end the desolation and produce the fruit that God requires.

In 5:18-19, Isaiah moves on to the second category of people God will judge (still 2nd pt) – those who assume God's indifference toward their sin. In v.18, Isaiah sees God's people as dragging sin first with cords and then with cart ropes. They're loaded down, pulling it along like a big dumb ox. And v.19 is the lie that Satan wants all of us to believe: that God will never do anything about *my* sin. It's the presumption that I'm OK, you're OK, and God must be happy, because look at how wealthy he's made me. Look at my property, and my profit, and my pleasure. (cf. Ezek 12:22). This is the OT version of **2Pet 3:4** "*They will say, where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.*" Mankind – God's people included – assumes that God is morally lethargic. The Bible says God is slow to anger, so we assume that His slowness to anger is indifference toward sin. Let this passage correct that notion. God is not morally lethargic. He is patient, and his patience will one day come to an end.

Now the church loves to read the prophets, especially verses like 5:18-23, and then look around at American decadence and say, Aha! How relevant the prophets are to our time. Non-Christians are the ones who presume

that God will not do anything about their sin like in v.19. Non-Christians are the ones who call evil good and good evil. They're the ones who pervert justice and rewrite the moral code to excuse their own sin. Non-Christians are the ones who are wise in their own eyes, heroes at drinking, and corrupt in their execution of public justice. But Isaiah is preaching to God's people. God's people had become just as decadent as the culture around them. Justice had miscarried in the church. They had lost their credibility to critique the culture because these sins now characterized them. That's the relevant point of the prophets for the church in America today. The church's prophetic voice toward the culture will be muzzled until God matters again to Christians.

Now, after this whole litany of sin, who can argue that God is wrong to judge? If we have read Isa 5:1-24 – if we have read Isaiah 1-5 – then by the time we get to “therefore” in 5:25, there can be no question about why God is angry. He has every right to be angry. He's not being erratic or irrational or unpredictable. Any land-owner would do the same thing to an unfruitful vineyard. God is not unfair. He is not over-reacting. **All these woes vindicate God's judgment.** They prove that God is right to remove the hedge from around his vineyard. God is right to break down its wall and make it a waste. It all comes down to verse 24 “*for they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.*” They despised their Bibles. And isn't that a sin that has swept our churches? Despising the word of God. Higher critics treat its miracles as dubious and its authorship as questionable. Pop culture dismisses its morality as quaint and irrelevant. Humanists can't believe God would do such bad things to such innocent people. Rationalists prosecute the Bible for being full of errors. Pluralists treat it as just another religious book among many. And evangelicals often treat it like a self-help book to maximize their own property, profit, and pleasure. And if a preacher can't prove how the Bible does those things for us, then we'll stay home on Sunday morning and leave the Bible on the shelf... or we'll just go someplace where we can hear what we want to hear. “*They have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.*”

In Isaiah's day, God had been more than patient. Israel's rejection of God's law goes all the way back to the golden calf of Exodus 32, which was 500 years before Isaiah's time. God is not being impulsive. He has every right to say these things, and to make good on His threats. And what of our day? It has been four times that long since Jesus came and died and rose from the dead to prove that God will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom God has appointed, vindicated as judge by the resurrection from the dead. Israel had 500 years. We've had 2,000. And do you think that God has no right to be angry over sin today? God is vindicated in His judgments. And Isaiah now shows us what it will be like when God executes His judgment.

3. GOD EXECUTES HIS JUDGMENT (ISA 5:26-30)

Isaiah tells us in v.26 that **God's judgment is sovereign.** He will judge His own people by sovereignly using the pagan nations around Israel. He will whistle for nations from the ends of the earth. What an image! God whistles and the most powerful, even the most pagan and wicked nations on earth, fall in line to do His bidding. God controls the nations. The God of the Bible cannot be co-opted, controlled, or cajoled. He is Lord of heaven and earth, of the seas and all the deeps. He is king of kings. His dominion is everlasting, his kingdom is eternal, all the residents of earth are accounted as nothing before him. He does his own will in heaven and on earth, and no one can stop Him or call Him to account. He owes an explanation to none of us, and to think that he does is to be guilty of the very pride that Isaiah has been denouncing. God's judgment is sovereign, and it is serious.

God's judgment is serious. Look there in vv.27-30. Isaiah begins by talking about multiple nations, but he never specifies exactly which nations he's talking about. There might be a multiple fulfillment here. He could be talking about the attack from Israel and Syria in chapter 7. Or he could be talking about the Assyrian invasion described in Isa 8. He may be looking even further into the future toward the invasion of Babylon later in 587BC. More than likely, though, what we have here is a telescopic prophecy. IF you asked Isaiah which attack he was talking about: Syria, Assyria, or Babylon, he'd probably say, YES! And what he describes is a well-disciplined, superbly trained, superbly-equipped army. They are fast, agile, nimble, and alert. There is no chink in the armor. There is no unstrung bow. Not one arrow is dull. There will be no equipment malfunction.

There is no weakness to exploit. This is a well-oiled war machine, and the sound of their running is the sound of a hurricane. When they go to battle, it's like a pack of lions hunting down a zebra: no contest, no hope, no rescue. And in v.30 he changes the metaphor. It will feel like being on a storm-tossed sea, no light at the end of the tunnel, and the only land in sight is quickly disappearing beyond the horizon under a blanket of thick clouds and darkness and mist and gloom and uncertainty and helplessness. And if this is what God's judgment is like when he is limited to a human instrument, how terrifying will it be when He is not so limited at the end of time?

Now if you are listening to this sermon as a scoffer, let me remind you that these armies came even though people in Judah were saying in v.19 *"let him be quick, let him speed his work that we may see it; let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near, and let it come, that we may know it!"* IF that is your attitude toward God's judgment, then friend, this is your warning, and it may be your only one, so listen closely. God's judgment is coming whether you believe it or not. You can make fun of it all you want, but you will come to regret it on that day, and you will regret it for all eternity in hell unless you repent of your rebellion now. Don't ignore God's works just because there's always a party downtown and it's always 5 o'clock somewhere. Don't assume that God is indifferent to your sin just because he has been amazingly patient in giving you time to repent. And don't despise His word right now by making light of it. God's has illustrated his judgment for you, and He has vindicated it for you. Do not provoke Him to execute it on you.

CONCLUSION

So God will judge all who ignore his works, assume his indifference, and despise His word; and God shows us the illustration, vindication, and execution of His judgment in Isaiah 5. We saw, though, that God's intention for His people to be a fruitful vine is not unique to Isaiah. It originated with Moses in Ex 15, it continued with David in 2Sam 7, and Asaph developed it in Psalm 80. **So where does this vine imagery go in the NT?** Jesus applies vineyard imagery to Israel in Matt 21 in the parable of the tenants. A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased out to tenants, and went into another country. He sends two servants to collect the fruit, but the tenants beat the one and killed the other. The twist, of course, is that the owner finally sends His son, and the tenants say *"this is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance."* So Jesus, just like Isaiah before him, asks his Jewish audience to judge for themselves. What will the owner do? They play right into Jesus' hands. *"He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."* And the conclusion of the matter comes when Jesus says *"Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits"* (only occurs in Mt 21, not in para. Mk 12 or Lk 20). How could Jesus NOT have had Isaiah 5 in mind when he told that parable? Isaiah 5 was happening all over again in Jesus' day, and God would again judge Israel for it. The leaders would be deposed, the temple would be destroyed, and the vine would be expanded and transformed, with the Gentiles grafted in.

Jesus also seems to allude to Isa 5 in **Luke 6:43-44** when he says *...no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn-bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush* (cf. grapes in Isa 5:2, thorns in Isa 5:6). One of the main things Jesus does in his ministry is to denounce Israel and her leaders for their fruitlessness. So what is the answer to the spiritual barrenness and rottenness of God's people? It's a new vine altogether. And so Jesus says in **John 15:1-5** *I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit... As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. Jesus is the solution to the spiritual barrenness and rottenness of God's people. Jesus is the fruitful vine that Israel failed to be. Jesus produced the fruit that Adam and Israel could not. And if Jesus is the true vine, then that can only mean one thing – **Jesus is the true Israel**. "Jesus fulfills Israel's destiny as the true vine of God" (so also *CNTUOT*, 72, 298, 491). And that is why it's only in Jesus can we recognize God's works, revere God's moral judgment, and appreciate God's word.*

Jesus obeyed the whole law for His people, and then suffered the punishment due for our sins. And because he was innocent of every charge brought against him, God raised Him from the dead to prove that Jesus is the one who deserves to execute God's final judgment at the end of all time. But if we confess that God is our Creator and Judge, that we have sinned against Him; if we confess Jesus death as the substitute penalty due for our sins, and if we turn away from our self-indulgence and self-reliance, then God will graft us into His True Vine, Jesus Christ. And as we abide in Him, we will begin to live like true branches and bear the fruit of His Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. And it is this fruit that proves that we really are part of God's true vine, and not dead branches. Look at the end of your own branch. Are you bearing good fruit? Or does that question seem...weightless?