

Read Isaiah 5:1-7

In this passage, who is the vineyard owner and who is the vineyard?

From v1-2, what impression do you get of how God cared for his vineyard? What did this look like in terms of God's relationship with Israel?

In spite of God's care, what kind of fruit did Israel produce? Why?

The details of Israel's 'bad fruit' are described in v7, using Hebrew word-pairs:

Justice = *mishpat* (appropriate use of power to lift up those who are downtrodden and forgotten)

Bloodshed = *mishpah* (violence, shedding of blood).

Righteousness = *sedaka* (right living toward others—kindness, compassion, mercy)

Cries of distress = *se-aka* (cry of pain, oppression)

Looking at the words above, discuss examples today of what *mishpat* (justice) and *sedaka* (righteousness) look like. Give practical examples.

Discuss some examples of what *mishpah* (violence) and *se-aka* (cries of oppression) look and sound like today—in our world, nation, city and communities.

Read v4-5. Why does God react so strongly to the acts of injustice and oppression he finds among his people?

In what sense do *mishpat* and *sedaka* define the character of God himself? Think about how he has acted toward us.

In the New Testament, we (Christians) are the branches in God's vineyard, with Jesus himself as the vine (John 15:5).

What does it look like for us to act with justice and righteousness toward others (again, think practically). What would this mean for you personally?

What one step could you take this week to show love, kindness and compassion to someone around you who is struggling, hurting, lonely or disadvantaged?