

**The Lessons Appointed for  
Use on the  
Sunday closest to July 20**



**Proper 15  
Year C  
RCL**

Isaiah 5:1-7  
Psalm 80:1-2, 8-18  
Luke 12:49-56

**The Collect**

The Collect

Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace to receive thankfully the fruits of his redeeming work, and to follow daily in the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus

Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

*Amen.*

**Isaiah 5:1-7**

Let me sing for my beloved  
my love-song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.

He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
he expected it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and people of Judah,  
judge between me  
and my vineyard.

What more was there to do for my vineyard  
that I have not done in it?

When I expected it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield wild grapes?

And now 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.  
I will make it a waste;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and it shall be overgrown with briers and thorns;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.  
For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts  
is the house of Israel,  
and the people of Judah  
are his pleasant planting;  
he expected justice,  
but saw bloodshed;  
righteousness,  
but heard a cry!

**Psalm 80:1-2, 8-18**

- 1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; \*  
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- 2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, \*  
stir up your strength and come to help us.
- 8 You have brought a vine out of Egypt; \*  
you cast out the nations and planted it.
- 9 You prepared the ground for it; \*  
it took root and filled the land.
- 10 The mountains were covered by its shadow \*  
and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.
- 11 You stretched out its tendrils to the Sea \*  
and its branches to the River.
- 12 Why have you broken down its wall, \*  
so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?
- 13 The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it, \*  
and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.
- 14 Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven;  
behold and tend this vine; \*  
preserve what your right hand has planted.

15 They burn it with fire like rubbish; \*

at the rebuke of your countenance let them perish.

16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, \*

the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

17 And so will we never turn away from you; \*

give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

18 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; \*

show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

**Luke 12:49-56**

Jesus said, "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided:

father against son  
and son against father,  
mother against daughter  
and daughter against mother,  
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law  
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to

rain'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"



## SERMON

Last Sunday, we discussed the first of the six questions Session posed after meeting with the General Presbyter, “What is our mission?” This Sunday, we’ll take on question number 2, “What are we passionate about?”

Kathy and I are famous foodies. That’s our passion. For over 40 years, we have shared a passion for Rocco’s in Ceredo-Kenova. We courted there. We took our daughter there as an infant. We’ve hosted out of town guests and had family dinners there. We are passionate about the place. I have no doubt that a compelling argument could be made that we should have taken that money and fed the poor, but in our defense, our passion for dinner at Rocco’s does more than feed us. It has bound Kathy and I together for more than 42 years so

that we could step into the community in ways like Hope's Place, and the Neighborhood, and our ministry here. When we have a date night and head across the bridge, there are always smiles on our faces and a sense of anticipation for what we will be served. Contrast that with driving through McDonald's and you get an idea of the difference between a church eager to bring its passions to the mission of the church and one which holds services because it's Sunday. Question is: "When you got up this morning, did you head out as if you were heading for Rocco's, or did you putter over to drive through McDonald's? Did anything get your bell ringing?" Our passions are the energy which we bring to the church.

If you're waiting for me to tell you what our church's passion is you've got the question backward. Passions are gifts to each individual. God has granted to each of

us gifts of energy and commitment that we, in turn, bring to the mission of God's church. How do I know that to be true? I know it because of Tony and Margie Basco. Margie and Tony were married for 22 years before she was killed by the El Paso shooter. Tony has no other family. He and Margie were all each other had. Tony worried that no one would come to Margie's funeral so he invited the town. Four hundred people, strangers! filled the funeral home and 450 more waited outside in 99 degree heat, hoping to get in. Flowers filled the streets around the funeral home. Where did that passion come from, church? People from all over the country sent flowers. People went to great trouble just to comfort Tony, a man they had never met and who they might have walked right by without noticing before his great loss. They spent money! Where did that passion for a stranger come from if not as a gift of God?

THAT is the passion we are to bring to the mission of the church and show to God's children, wherever they are. It's a sacred promise. We have covenanted with God and with each other to bring God's gift of passion to the service of the mission of the church.

To answer question #2, then, we must identify the gifts of passion God has given us. We must individually ask, "What so grabs me that I will take endless trouble to make sure it is done right, and never give a thought to the cost?" That which engages our passion engages us body and soul and God demands no less. Isaiah used that image in his metaphor of the vineyard.

Let me sing for my beloved  
my love-song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.  
He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;

he built a watchtower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;

Endless care, with never a thought for the cost, for the beloved's vineyard engaged his passion and no amount of trouble was too much. But passion must bring forth fruit and in Isaiah's story, it did not.

he expected it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.

That puts us up against something we discussed last Sunday when we talked about our mission. I said,

**There has to be a clear, unequivocal reason to get up and go to church, and that reason has to be satisfactory to God and God alone.**

The same must be said about the passions we bring to the service of God. The passions which energize your efforts are a gift of God intended to empower you to go about God's assigned work. Our passions may be unique, but whatever they are, they must be sacrificed

to the mission of God's people. Your Father demands no less. What passions do you bring to the church's mission?

AMEN

## BENEDICTION

Boy Scouts, the Dressing Room, the canned goods collection, the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade and its gift of tradition to the community, Paul and Jeanette's music, Ron's mastery of all things geeky. All these and uncounted ones as well are the passions we bring to the church. You are, each of you, a blessing.

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

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Optional parts of the readings are set off in square brackets.

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