

The sweetest Muscat wine

Year C Second Sunday after Pentecost June 19 2022 MVLC

Translator (DJK) comment: Many translations describe the “juice” in grapes in the present tense and being ‘new’ as in the ESV: *Thus says the LORD: “As the new wine is found in the cluster, and they say, ‘Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,’ so I will do for my servants’ sake, and not destroy them all.* I find no evidence of the grapes being “new”. The account is also presented in the past tense predominately. I believe we are hearing about the juice that is left in old grapes, ie the sweet juice – the remnant of Israel - see NIV translation.

Isaiah 65:8-9 (NIV)

This is what the Lord says: “As when juice is still found in a cluster of grapes and people say, ‘Don’t destroy it, there is still a blessing in it,’ so will I do in behalf of my servants; I will not destroy them all.

Sermon: The sweetest Muscat wine



What do we have here? Muscat Grapes.

What are they used for? For making sweet Muscat wine.

Where would this photo be taken? Rutherglen Victoria.

And what does liquor Muscat from Rutherglen taste like? The Best!!

Isn't it good - we know all this information from a photo of some shrivelled up old grapes?

We know that the last drop in these old late season grapes is the sweet nectar used to make Muscat.

I was having a glass of Muscat with Ilona the other day. She seemed to be in a trance. She said, “I love you so much I don't know if I could ever live without you”.

I asked, “Is that the wine talking dear”? “No”, she said, “It's me talking to the wine”.

Listen to the text from Isaiah:

This is what the Lord says: "As when [SWEET] juice is still found in a cluster of [OLD] grapes and people say, 'Don't destroy it, there's still a blessing in it,' so will I on behalf of my servants; I will not destroy them all.

God sees the Good in us, the sweetness in us – and it's not a sweetness we have created ourselves – the sweetness is the promises God has made in us and in his people.

Here the chapter before:

The Lord has made a proclamation to the ends of the earth:

'Daughter of Zion, "See, your Saviour comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him."' You will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord; and you will be Sought After - You will be the City No Longer Deserted.

God sees so much in his people because **he** put those promises in us – so much hope. But these chapters are written to a people throwing away their hope and promise. It says they were throwing their hope and promises to he pigs.

What does he do – there are still bunches of dried up grapes with sweet wine in them? When he sees dried up old people – he sees the Muscat grapes of Rutherglen – there is nothing better than the muscat of Rutherglen.

What do we see in people dried up – people who on the outside seem to have no connection with God – we all know these people.

Do we see sweetness – I really doubt it.

Do we see bitterness – I really expect so.

If we see bitterness, it's only a stone throw away from throwing that bunch of grapes into the fire.

Do we condemn people to the fire because we don't see the sweetness?

It seems in the text that God is about to throw the dried up old vine into the fire but there are some people who cry out, "Lord please don't do it – there is goodness in those dried up grapes – there is sweetness – there is Muscat".

It says the Lord hears the call of those people and decides not to burn the old bunches of grapes.

Who are those people?

Who are those people who look at the worst of people and see the best?

I want to be one of those people. Do you want to be one of those people?

I want to be one of those people who look into the eyes of an evil person and see good in them.

Are you like that?

Let's not think for a moment that God doesn't know what's in our hearts – and that he needs someone to tell him.

He knows there is sweetness in those dried old grapes.

He is encouraging you and me to look at those old grapes and plead on their behalf: *'Don't destroy them - there is still a blessing in them,'* This is a wakeup call for us?

You know when you see the sweetness in someone it changes you – if it changes you it can change them.

This is not about God encouraging us to be "glass half full" people – phycology, looking for opportunities to be positive.

This is about ministry and mission in you home, street, among your friends.

When you look for the good in someone – you find yourself being forgiving – you discover there is a reason – not an excuse – but a reason that he or she are like they are – what’s the reason?

When you look for the good in someone – you find yourself in their shoes – I am like that – I could be like that.

When you look for the good in someone – your heart goes out to them.

When you look for the good in someone – the barriers start falling down all over the place.

You know there was a woman at a well. She was seen by all as bitter – she was rejected – they say she came to the well at midday to avoid the hate of the local woman and to be safe from the local men. She was a shrivelled bunch of grapes - young enough to attract the attention of men and old enough to have had 5 husbands and living with the latest man.

Jesus and the woman have a discussion – deep and meaningful – about her husbands, about her worship, about her beliefs. Jesus got to the nitty gritty of this woman’s life. He asked about things which would shame us.

It says she left her water jug at the well and went back to her village – there is excitement – she runs to those who previously saw only bitterness in her. What did she say to them?

“I just meet a man who knows everything I have done – he told me what I had done – and he never once judged me – I believe he is the Messiah – come, come and see”.

There is the principle of mission I want you to take home and use – it’s a blessing.

Jesus saw the sweet Muscat in the woman at the well. The way he saw her determined how he spoke with her – with sweetness. He didn’t overlook anything – but he saw the sweetness in that lady.

And she saw Jesus. There is a principle for life.

You see sweetness – they see Jesus. It seems like the KISS principal (Keep it simple stupid)

*“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;*

The stone that was rejected was Jesus – did they not see the sweetness in Jesus?

This is what the Lord says: “As when juice is still found in a cluster of grapes and people say, ‘Don’t destroy it, there is still a blessing in it,’ I will act for you.

Lord I we pray that from your life, from your words, from the way you love people, we have found a mission principle for life. Amen.