



# St Mary the Virgin Baldock



*"Building with Christ"*

## Rector's Blog – day 47

Dear Friends

**Isaiah 5: 1,2**

*1Let me sing for my beloved  
my love-song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.  
2He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watch-tower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
he expected it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.*

This is the first two versus of what is commonly known as the Song of the Vineyard. Isaiah is prophesying to the people of Israel that their lifestyle is not conducive to a settled nation and not sustainable in the long term (yes, this happened even in Ancient Israel!). It's not difficult top see that 'My beloved' is God, and the vineyard is Israel. Nor will you be surprised by the decision of 'My beloved' about how to deal with his vineyard (read the next 11 verses to find the colourfully poetic way in which judgement is prophesied). And within a few years or so of these words being written, judgement had arrived in the form of the Assyrian army who ransacked the nation.

I don't believe that God sent the marauding invading forces, but I do believe that actions and decisions imply consequences. The Israelite nation had got used to a society in which the rich and influential pleased themselves rather than working for a settled and harmonious society. (Listen to verse 11 and 12: 'Ah, you who rise early in the morning in pursuit of strong drink, who linger in the evening to be inflamed by wine, whose feasts consist of lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine, ...') They had taken their eye off the ball and believed all their goals should be handed to them on a plate by a loving God instead of having to tackle hard, pass and work as a team in order to score the goal themselves. They were not looking further than the borders of their properties, and on the borders of their nation temperatures were rising politically. Looking at it from a distance it is easy to prophesy the result. They had brought judgement upon themselves.

Looking at it from the point of view of an Israelite it is rather different. The rich landowners, who I am sure believed in God and sacrificed at the temple, almost certainly were upset with God, for allowing it to happen. "What have we done to deserve this? We're good people. We sacrifice regularly at the temple. We give livelihood to lots of slaves and don't ask for much except an easy life which we are sure we deserve!" Well ...

Are there analogies with today? And if so, are you and I the rich landowners or the poor slaves? And how might the Church be a prophetic voice so that people might listen? (They didn't listen to Isaiah.) Do you think Isaiah enjoyed a drink, or do you think he was teetotal? If he was alive today, would he drive a car? Would he catch a plane to proclaim his message to more people? If one is so much part of society that one appears tainted by it (as we all are), can one honestly object to its practices? I like Big Macs!



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**Here is a prayer reflection**

It's difficult to live with uncertainty.  
However bad a situation,  
knowing what you have to face  
means that you can start coming to terms with it,  
facing your fears,  
planning your strategy.  
When the 'big picture' is too big or too blurred  
and indistinct,  
it's easier to focus on small details,  
to try to control what you can.

The world has changed,  
how does that affect our living in the meantime?  
How do I need to change?  
How do I want to change?  
Is it possible to live each day as a new opportunity,  
while knowing that it feels the same as yesterday?

I need your help, God,  
to listen for you in the clamour of voices calling for my attention,  
to focus on you in the midst of competing priorities,  
to trust you in this time of uncertainty.

Amen.

**Here is a rather nice setting of the hymn Will you come and follow me.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HNR1fdAbi0>

**There's no Zoom Evening Prayer today but we'll be back tomorrow!**

**The times for Evening Prayer for the rest of the week are**

Tuesday 4.30pm  
Wednesday 5.00pm  
Thursday 4.30pm  
Friday 5.00pm  
Saturday 5.00pm  
Sunday Morning Worship and 9.30am and Evening Prayer at 6.00pm

Every blessing

Andrew