

## ISAIAH 5:8-12, 18-23     **THE GOOD LIFE**

<sup>8</sup> Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land. <sup>9</sup> The LORD Almighty has declared in my hearing: "Surely the great houses will become desolate, the fine mansions left without occupants. <sup>10</sup> A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a bath of wine, a homer of seed only an ephah of grain."

<sup>11</sup> Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. <sup>12</sup> They have harps and lyres at their banquets, tambourines and flutes and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD, no respect for the work of his hands.

<sup>18</sup> Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit, and wickedness as with cart ropes, <sup>19</sup> to those who say, "Let God hurry, let him hasten his work so we may see it. Let it approach, let the plan of the Holy One of Israel come, so we may know it."

<sup>20</sup> Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

<sup>21</sup> Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.

<sup>22</sup> Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, <sup>23</sup> who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.

There is a temptation in every generation, even in the church, to view everything through the lens of "What's in it for me?" Popular preachers proclaim that adhering to the teaching of Jesus will result in prosperity and power. In a consumer culture, evangelism has often devolved into a matter of scratching where we itch. As consumers, the good life is about what and how much we possess. In God's economy, the good life is defined in terms of what you do with what God has given you stewardship over.

The greatest gift we have as Christians has to do with the blessing of having God's nature revealed to us through Jesus Christ and Scripture. Our greatest responsibility is taking that blessing and using it to bless the world. The blessing is not about us; it is about God and the world.

Advent is the season during which we are reminded that we are stewards and not owners. It is the time when those in the church are given the opportunity to remember who it all belongs to and who it is that will one day ask us what we did with it all.

**Lord, protect me from making the mistake of confusing the things I have in this world with who I am. Free me from relating to you as my ticket to prosperity. Help me to be a disciple with my life and a steward with my possessions. Amen.**