

## One

There once was a land  
that rested in the Lord God's hands.  
All blessings it had  
So its fruit may make the Lord glad.

What more could he sweeten  
in the Garden of Eden?  
There was no sin, no death  
when Adam and Eve took first breath.  
Please permit me pardon  
say, where was this fine garden?  
We do not truly know  
'cept that the rivers did flow.  
This could be a pastor's wild imagination  
but could a vineyard on a hill be that gem of God's  
creation?

Eve was told not to eat it  
but the cluster looked so divine.  
She only just nibbled a bit  
maybe a bite from fruit of the vine.  
Where was Adam to save Eve?  
Did they know what the serpent had won:  
a world full of sin and death to grieve.  
Did she realize what she had done?  
God wouldn't allow it so away they went.  
The garden ran fallow and the thorns and thistles were sent.

There once was a land  
that rested in the Lord God's hands.

What more could He do  
to make it abundant and true?

## Two

There once was a man  
who rested in the Lord God's hands.  
All blessings he had  
So his fruit may make the Lord glad.

Noah heard a word from God:  
"Mankind is wicked and flawed.  
The world needs a new start  
This grieves me to my heart.  
But go and build a boat  
by my directions it'll float."  
The flood came and it went  
Noah left and set up a tent.  
They lived near a mountain, could you even believe that?  
Noah's first action? To build a vineyard, perhaps with a  
wine vat.

Big trouble in paradise:  
Our hero Noah drank way too much wine.  
Sweet grapes led Noah to sour vice.  
A fresh world yet old sin in this vine.  
The more we set out to purge  
The more we find the sinner within  
We are left to sing a dirge:  
"we're the sour grapes, we're full of sin.  
Destroy the whole world; save a few "good" men.  
Then prepare yourself to hear old Noah's story again."

There once was a man  
    who rested in the Lord God’s hands.  
What more could he do  
    to make him abundant and true?

### Three

There once was a land  
    that rested in the Lord God’s hands.  
All blessings it had  
    So its fruit may make the Lord glad.

As a white church steeple  
    Israel was God's people  
To show justice and grace  
    to the entire human race.  
Miracles God showed them  
    His law he bestowed on them  
The Lord even did save  
    them from a watery grave.  
The Lord took them from Egypt to the promised land.  
    They settled on a mountain, Jerusalem, just as he had  
    planned

Instead of justice, bloodshed  
    Instead of righteousness, outcry  
Forsaking god they were dead  
    Israel betrayed their true ally.  
“Have it your way,” says the Lord.  
    “Live your life without my protection.  
Go, find your own room and board.  
    watch the nations bring insurrection.”  
The hedge was torn down and then the foreigners did reign.

Israel fell to pieces, and has it ever come back together again?

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    that rested in the Lord God’s hands.  
What more could He do  
    to make it abundant and true?

### Four

There once was a man  
    who rested in the Lord God’s hands.  
All blessings he had  
    So his fruit may make the Lord glad.

come and sing to me my  
    beloved of a hill high  
a very fertile hill  
    where sweet red water did spill  
not a vineyard, dear  
    —but with three trellises drear.  
There the one good man hung,  
    arms like a twisted vine strung  
Our tale goes to another mountain: Calvary  
    There the Lord again used wine, but to free us from  
    slavery.

This man is Jesus the vine.  
    His Father threw him to the sour grapes  
That He make a vintage fine  
    out of dread sinners of all shapes.  
Instead of bloodshed, justice  
    Instead of outcry, righteousness

That's what we receive from Him:  
Jesus Christ, our Savior, Lord, and King  
It was fruit that got us into this trouble, but by His fruit we're free.  
On the day that the Lord asks us for our fruit, in Christ we have a perfect plea.

There once was a man  
who rested in the Lord God's hands.  
What more could he do  
to make him abundant and true?

## Five

There once was a land  
that rested in the Lord God's hands.  
All blessings it had  
So its fruit may make the Lord glad.

Come, see your place, friend  
Then this can come to an end.  
We're his pleasant planting,  
in Christ truly enchanting.  
In Christ we bear much fruit,  
in Jesus *alone*, to boot.  
Surely daily we sin,  
but forgiveness enters in.  
Christ's forgiveness turns sour grapes into fine wine.  
The grapes that brought so much mischief now bring us, the Church, back in line.

Was it grapes that caused Eve's fall?  
Noah drank too much wine like a fool.

Israel's evils did appall.  
But from Jesus' trellis flows a pool  
of his blood, a sweet wine to  
undo all that Satan has misused.  
Drink Christ's blood; his body chew.  
At this altar have all wrongs excused.  
In this Holy Meal, Christ takes away our sins, the Father only sees our good deeds.  
In Christ He's able to look past sour grapes and thistles  
to see flowers in these weeds.

The Church is that land  
that rests in the Lord God's hands.  
His body and blood  
Washes us in a righteous flood.

Perhaps you've never quite heard a sermon like that before. Maybe you wondered what you got yourself into attending today's service. Isaiah brings us a poem for today's Old Testament, and I wanted to write you a poem in a similar fashion.

Isaiah sung you a song of the vineyard, and I wanted to sing you a new one. But it isn't really new because the song remains the same. Isaiah's song of the vineyard is our song. The Lord gives us every advantage: clears us of stones, choice vines planted, a watchtower, a wine vat, the whole nine yards. Yet things fall apart. We saw this in the Garden of Eden, we saw this with Noah right after the Earth was purged of wickedness, Noah brought sin into the brave new world after the flood. The nation of Israel ultimately disappointed God as they fell into idolatry and all forms of unrighteousness. We ourselves daily sin much and are in need of forgiveness.

The result of sin is sour grapes. The result of mankind's fallen nature is a vineyard that can't produce good wine but bad, and God's only choice is to say, "Have it your way," and tear down the hedges and let in the thieves, the weeds, and the wild animals. The things we desire more than the kingdom of God can often become our undoing.

Grapes, vineyards, and wine are a thread that runs through scripture. Now, the Bible never tells us what kind of fruit the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil was but play with me for a bit. Imagine for a moment that it was grapes. Noah felt the impulse to plant a vineyard as soon as he got out of the ark. Perhaps he thought he was planting a new Garden of Eden. When the Israelites sent spies to the promised land, they found a cluster of grapes so big two people had to carry it. Grapes, vineyards, and wine are a common theme throughout the Bible.

If a forbidden fruit got us into this mess, wouldn't it stand to reason that God sends fruit to get us out of this mess? Jesus Christ says that He is the vine, and we are the branches. We can bear good fruit only in Him. When we are grafted into this healthy vine, we no longer produce sour grapes, but good ones.

Is it any surprise that the vine offers us His fruit? Eating from the forbidden fruit caused death, but drinking from Christ's blood in the form of wine, the fruit of the vine, causes life. It is in Christ alone that we can produce good fruit and works pleasing to God.

Communion delivers us the gifts won for us at the cross. From His vineyard to ours Christ gives us forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation in this meal. It is in these gifts of Christ that our vineyard song has a happy ending because as He lived, so will we. He rose again on the third day and invites us to this eternal life. He is calling us to another meal, the marriage feast of the lamb in His kingdom. Come, let us eat for now the feast is spread! Amen!