

## Sermon #88 — *Isaiah Series*

Title:        **GOD OUR KEEPER**

Text:        Isaiah 27:2-3

Subject:     *God's Care of His Church*

Date:        Tuesday Evening — June 4, 2019

Readings:   *Jimmy Bowman and David Burge*

Introduction:

If you will turn with me to the 27<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, I want to talk to you for a few minutes about **GOD OUR KEEPER**. Our text will be verses 2 and 3 — Isaiah 27:2-3.

(Isaiah 27:2-3) In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. (3) I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

### **A VINEYARD**

The church of God is here compared to a vineyard, as it frequently is throughout the Scriptures. It is a vineyard of **God's planting**, a vineyard of **God's tending**, a vineyard of **God's care** (Psalm 80:8-15; Isaiah 5:1, 2, 7).

## **GOD OUR KEEPER**

- In Matthew 20:1-16, the Lord Jesus gave us a parable in which he described his church as a vineyard into which the Lord God sends his laborers.
- And in John 15 he tells us that he is the vine of which you and I are the branches.

## **A VINEYARD OF RED WINE**

Here it is called “*a vineyard of red wine,*” because **the red grape was the best grape grown in Palestine.** And God’s church to him is the best of the best, the most excellent of all the earth. He has made it so. His delight is in her.

**I have no doubt that the church is called “a vineyard of red wine” because it is the fruit of Christ’s blood,** symbolized to us in the red wine of the communion cup. All the plants of this vineyard spring from, and live in, and bear fruit from one Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## GOD OUR KEEPER

**And the “red wine” represents the fruit of the believer’s trials.** As the wine is squeezed from the grape in the winepress, so the believer brings forth fruit into God as he is pressed and squeezed by the well-ordered afflictions of divine providence.

- **A vineyard is a piece of ground chosen and separated from the rest of a man’s property.** So the church is chosen and separated from the rest of the world to be God’s vineyard.
- **A vineyard is fenced in to keep out the wild animals that would destroy it.** Isaiah tells us of this vineyard of God, that *“He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it”* (5:2).
- **A vineyard is deliberately planted.** It does not spring up by nature. And the church of God is deliberately planted by God. This vine is not the product of nature.

## **GOD OUR KEEPER**

- **And a vineyard requires constant care.** It must be pruned. Stones have to be gathered out of it. It must be watered with care. And it must be constantly watched over. In our text, the Lord God declares that this is his work. — *“I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.”*

**Without question, the whole church and kingdom of God is his vineyard. But every local assembly of his saints is also his vineyard.** Grace Baptist Church of Danville is the vineyard of God. He chose us, separated us, planted us, and fenced us. We are his vineyard.

**And all that is promised to the church as a whole extends to and is true of every individual believer.** The Lord God who keeps the whole vineyard keeps every individual branch of the vine. His care extends even to the small branches and to every leaf. So the promise of our text, while it includes the whole vineyard, the whole church of God, extends to every branch of the vine of our Father’s planted, every

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

believer, every member of the body of Christ — All who are in Christ.

- Bought with His Blood
- Grafted in by His Grace
- Drawing Life from Him by Faith

**The Lord God is the keeper of his vineyard. And we are his vineyard!** He says, “*I the LORD do keep it, I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*”

“Upon my leaf, when parched with heat,  
Refreshing dew shall drop;  
The plant which Thy right hand hath set,  
Shall ne'er be rooted up.

Each moment watered by Thy care,  
And fenced with power divine,  
Fruit to eternal life shall bear  
The feeblest branch of Thine.”

— *Augustus Toplady.*

## **GOD OUR KEEPER**

**Proposition:** The vine God has planted God will keep.

**Divisions:** The text will divide itself into four parts. This is what God has promised to his church and to every member of it.

1. *“I the LORD do keep it.”*
2. *“I will water it every moment.”*
3. *“Lest any hurt it.”*
4. *“I will keep it night and day.”*

## **KEPT BY GOD**

1<sup>st</sup> — **“I the LORD do keep it.”** — This is what God promised to his vineyard, to his whole church, to this local assembly, and to every one of us who are branches in Christ the Vine of his planting. We are kept, tended, protected and guarded by God himself (Psalm. 91:1-16; 121:). We are kept by the power of God. The Lord himself, our great God, the Triune Jehovah is our Keeper. And he neither slumbers nor sleeps.

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

(Psalm 91:1-16) He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (2) I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. (3) Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence. (4) He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler. (5) Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day; (6) *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday. (7) A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee. (8) Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. (9) Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation; (10) There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. (11) For **he shall give his angels charge over thee**, to keep thee in all thy ways. (12) They

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. (13) Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. (14) Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. (15) He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. (16) With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

(Psalm 121:1-8) I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. (2) My help *cometh* from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. (3) He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. (4) **Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.** (5) **The LORD is thy keeper:** the LORD *is* thy shade upon thy right hand. (6) The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. (7) **The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil:** he shall preserve



## **GOD OUR KEEPER**

thy soul. (8) The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Now, let me see if I can handle this subject in a practical way, that will benefit our hearts.

**I know that I need keeping!** — I trust that I am one of God's children, chosen by grace, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and called by the Holy Spirit. But I know that I need keeping. **My foes are many. And like a tender vine, I have no strength or ability to prevent them from destroying me.**

What can a vine do? — Nothing! **If I am kept, God must keep me.** Like a vine planted in the midst of the field, we are exposed to all sorts of perils and dangers. We need keeping.

**Satan, the arch enemy of our souls, does everything within his power to uproot the vine God has planted.** If he had his way, you and I would not possess a grain of grace or a spark of faith. He is

## **GOD OUR KEEPER**

a roaring lion, ever seeking to devour us (1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:13). He desires not only to sift us as wheat, but to burn us as chaff. **The fiend of hell would destroy us, if he could.**

- Well did our Savior teach us to pray, “*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,*” from the evil one (Matthew 6:13).
- If we really knew Satan’s power and his malice toward us, we would never cease to give thanks to know that Christ is praying that we might be kept from the evil one (John 17:15).

**Oh, how we need keeping!** If we had no other adversary than the devil, we could not stand even for a moment, but by God’s keeping. But we do have other adversaries!

**A vine planted in the wilderness is also exposed to the wild boar, that would dig it up and devour its roots. — The wild boar I am talking about is unbelief!** I have often said, “God’s people ought never to doubt.” And that is true. We should not doubt. But I also know that we do. I delight to sing...

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

“When I can read my title clear  
To mansions in the sky,  
I’ll bid farewell to every fear,  
And wipe my weeping eye.”

**But there are many times when I cannot read my title clear!** I do not doubt my Lord. But I often doubt my interest in him! Like Thomas, I sometimes will not believe because I cannot see. Like Peter, I often take my eyes off my Savior and start looking at the sea around me. Were it not for God who keeps his vineyard, the wild boar of unbelief would destroy this vine. **Worse yet, I often find myself look at myself!**

- Satan often raises Moses up before God’s Joshuas (Zechariah 3).
- The Accuser constantly throws our sin in our faces.
- When he cannot sink us with sin, he floods our minds with the horrid pride of self-righteousness!

## GOD OUR KEEPER

- When pride does not destroy, he hurls us to despair with a sense of spiritual numbness!

There are many small insects, unseen pests, and quiet worms that might as easily destroy a vine as the wild boar or the raging lion. In fact, it is far easier to detect the large dangers than the small ones. So the small ones can be far more dangerous.

- The aphid of indifference!
- The cankerworm of pride!
- The caterpillar of conceit!
- The grub-worm of self-sufficiency!

Nothing will more quickly destroy one vine or an entire vineyard than these subterranean devils that dwell in every one of us by nature! And they would destroy us, but for one thing. God says, “*I the LORD do keep it!*”

Besides these things, the vine of God’s planting is often attacked by nibbling little foxes, who do their work in the secrecy of darkness (Song of Solomon 2:15).

## **GOD OUR KEEPER**

(Song of Solomon 2:15) Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines *have* tender grapes.

- False Doctrine
- Neglect of God’s Ordinances
- Gossip
- A Contentious, Critical Spirit

God’s vines put forth tender grapes, which these little foxes would devour (Galatians 5:22-23). But, blessed by God, he will not allow these little foxes to have their way. He says, “*I will keep it night and day!*”

**Then there are those foul blackbirds that always arrive in droves, just as the grapes are ripening on the vine.**

- Worldliness — Worldliness is materialism, the love of this world.
- Selfishness
- Ambition
- Self-satisfaction

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

When we begin to say to ourselves, “well done,” you can mark it down that it is always ill done! Let us not be numbered with those whom **Habakkuk** describes, who “*sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag*” (1:16).

Never was there a vine that needed keeping like this vine does. I must be kept. We must be kept. Otherwise, this vine will soon be destroyed!

**But we cannot keep ourselves.** — Thank God, our text does not say, “I the Lord have planted it, now I will leave it to grow, and flourish, and bring forth fruit, and keep itself.” **I know that we must be watchful. But our watchfulness of ourselves is the result of God’s watchfulness of us!**

The fact is, in spiritual matters, you and I are our own worst enemies. **Augustine** used to pray, “Lord, save me from that evil man, myself!” We might quickly destroy ourselves. But not one of us can save

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

ourselves or keep ourselves! There is not a word of truth in Wesley's hymn...

“A charge to keep I have,  
A God to glorify,  
A never dying soul to save,  
And fit it for the sky.”

**Only God can save my soul and fit it for the sky.**  
**And he has done it in Christ** (Colossians 2:10;  
1:12).

(Colossians 2:9-10) For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

(Colossians 1:12-14) Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: (13) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

dear Son: (14) In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

**We are never so weak as when we think we are strong. We are never so poor as when we think we are rich.** — Let us learn to live in Christ, having nothing and yet possessing all things. He is our Strength and our Salvation. **Salvation is looking to CVhrist!**

(Colossians 3:1-3) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (3) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Read the next line...

**WATERED BY GRACE**

2<sup>nd</sup> — “*I the LORD do keep it; **I will water it every moment.***” — Watering is the essential part of the



## **GOD OUR KEEPER**

gardener's business. The corn and beans will not bear fruit without water. The flowers cannot be kept in bloom without being watered.

**As this vine must be kept by God, it must be watered by him as well.** There is not a single grace that we possess that can live without God's watering.

- His Word (Ephesians 5:26)
- His Spirit (1 John 5:8)

**The soil in which this vine is planted is very dry.** Tell me, you who are born of God, have you ever found anything in this world that was beneficial to your soul? You may think, "If I could just change my position, I would be better off." — It is not so. When you change your place, you only move from one set of troubles to another set of troubles.

**Mr. Spurgeon** said, "The God who gave you your present set of trials knew that they were the best for you. If all the crosses in the world could be laid in a heap, and I were told to take my pick of them, I would choose those that I have now,

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

for I know what they are, and God fits my back to them; but I do not know what the others are, and I have no proof that I could bear them. You had better not take my troubles, for they might crush you, while I can bear them through the divine grace that is given to me; but if I had yours, they might crush me, while you can patiently endure them through God's grace. But there is nothing in this world that will help you. We need to draw the life-giving water from God alone.”

**Frequently, even those things that are given to help us, yield no water to us. — There is no grace in the means of grace unless God gives grace!**

**The beauty of this promise is in the last two words.** — “*I will water it every moment.*” God waters his vineyard every moment. Sometimes he floods it. But he waters it every moment. — **His grace is perpetual.**

## **GOD OUR KEEPER**

You and I need the ordinances of public worship. But we cannot survive on that alone. We need the constant watering of grace.

- I once read about a man of whom others said, “He ate, and drank, and slept Jesus Christ.” — How I wish that were true of me!
- As we are commanded to “*pray without ceasing*,” God promises to water us with his grace without ceasing!

**Grant, oh my God, that I may experience that promise.** — Let my heart always be wrapped up in, baptized in, and draw life from Christ. — Let him ever be in my heart and on my heart. — Let me have my life full of Christ, watered every moment!

**Illustration:** Shelby’s Dad and His Puzzle

## **NO HURT**

3<sup>rd</sup> — “*I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it.*” — Nothing shall hurt

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

God's vine (Proverbs 12:21). No weapon that is formed against it shall prosper!

(Proverbs 12:21) There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.

(Isaiah 54:17) No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

(Exodus 11:7) But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

**NIGHT AND DAY**

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

4<sup>th</sup> — “*I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, **I will keep it night and day.***”

- In the Night of Adversity and in the Day of Prosperity
- In the Night of Trouble and in the Day of Peace
- In the Night of Sorrow and in the Day of Rejoicing
- In the Night of Temptation and in the Day of Deliverance
- In the Night of Indifference and in the Day of Devotion

Blessed be his name — “*He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps!*”

(Psalm 80:1-19) **Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.** (2) Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh **stir up thy strength, and come and save us.** (3) **Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.**

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

(4) O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? (5) Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure. (6) Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves. (7) **Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.**

(8) Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. (9) Thou preparedst *room* before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. (10) The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof *were like* the goodly cedars. (11) She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. (12) **Why hast thou then broken down her hedges,** so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? (13) The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

(14) **Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;** (15) And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch *that* thou madest strong for thyself. (16) *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

(17) **Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.** (18) **So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.** (19) **Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.**

That is my prayer. And this is God's promise.

(Isaiah 27:2-3) In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. (3) I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

**GOD OUR KEEPER**

- A Blood Bought Vine
- A Planted Vine
- A Watered Vine
- A Kept Vine

Amen.