

**Introduction:** In the spring of 2021 Pew Research Center surveyed Americans to ask them what made life meaningful to them. At the top of the list were relationships with family, children and friends. In second place was material well being. Next was occupation (probably vocation). Last on the list of highest priorities was faith. Financial security and the specific job a person held had fallen way down the list in just four years. The conclusion was the COVID pandemic had resulted in less emphasis on money and work (as opposed to vocation or calling) as a source of meaning. \*\*\* So, if this is true, in twenty-twenty-two Mother's Day will be specially celebrated by those who were blessed to have good mothers. It will be less about showering material blessings on mothers; but people will make a point of being with their mothers for most of the day. They will enjoy them and express their gratitude for all the care they received from them over the years. Also, they will remember how their mothers modeled for them what true love is: God-like, Christ-like love. \*\*\* Our passage from Isaiah addresses the issue of barren women who have not had children. This arises from what had happened in the decade the prophecy was given. As a result of national UN-faithfulness and indifference to their God and Savior, He had sent Assyria to devastate the ten northern tribes of Israel and disperse the remnant of survivors throughout the Assyrian Empire. \*\*\* The nation of Israel had been chosen by God to bring the knowledge of Him to all the nations of the world; however, their UN-faithfulness had made them barren, they had not produced children for God. But, in the midst of all their failure, God promised them that in the future they would bear many children for Him throughout the world. \*\*\* Over seven hundred years later Jesus took a teachable moment to say how His Father God would do this.

**I. Barren women will have children because they are married to The Holy Redeemer of Israel; and, though the mountains will be removed, Yahweh's LOVE will not. (Isaiah 54:1-10)**

A. Barren women will have many children. (Verses 1-3)

1. Give a ringing singing cry, barren one, who did not bear / break forth into ringing singing and cry aloud thou who have not travailed // for more are the sons of the desolate one / than the sons of her having been married says Yahweh. (Verse 1)  
**Barren and desolate:** Yahweh is addressing the remnant of the ten tribes of Israel after Assyria destroyed Israel (2 Kings 17:1-15, 34-40). They are barren and desolate with no children.  
**Joy of numerous sons:** However, Yahweh commands them to break forth into songs of joy because He can and will give His barren people a multitude of children.

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2. Enlarge the place of thy tent / the curtains of thine dwelling place will be stretched out // do not hold back / lengthen thy cords and thy stakes strengthen // for to the right and the left thou will break forth / and thy seed will possess the nations / and the cities being made desolate will be made inhabited. (Verses 2-3)  
**Command-promise:** These three poetic lines are another example of the command-promise theme that goes throughout God's Word. On the condition His people obey His commands through faith in Him, God will fulfill His promises.  
**Fourfold preparation:** Barren Israel is commanded to: Enlarge her tent, not hold back, lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes.  
**Worldwide:** Yahweh will stretch out her dwelling place, so she will break forth in both directions, and her children will possess the nations, and her desolate cities will be full of people living in them. She will have many children living in her homeland and possessing all the nations on earth as God's people.

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B. The barren woman is married to The Holy Redeemer of Israel who with great LOVE will have compassion on her. (Verses 4-8)

1. Thou will not fear for thou will not be ashamed / and thou will not be humiliated because thou will not be put to shame // for the shamefulfulness of thy youth thou will forget / and the reproach of thy widowhood thou will remember no more. (Verse 4)  
**Fear not:** If she humbly and reverentially fears God for His awesome holiness, nothing in her life can make her afraid.  
**Four blessings:** And God will bless her so she will not be ashamed, confounded, or put to shame, and she will forget her past shamefulfulness and the reproach given to her as a widow.
2. For The One being thy husband and master / Yahweh of hosts (is) His Name // and your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel / The God of the whole earth He will be called. (Verse 5)  
**Husband:** The Covenant God is barren Israel's husband.  
**Redeemer:** He is therefore her close relative who may purchase her redemption (kinsman redeemer).  
**Called:** He is known by name as God of all the earth.
3. For as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit / Yahweh has called thee // and (like) a wife of youth when she is rejected / says thy God // in a small moment I have forsaken thee / and with great compassion I will gather thee. (Verses 6-7)  
**Hosea:** Yahweh commanded the prophet Hosea to marry an adulterous woman so the prophet would model before God's people how they had been UN-faithful to their very good husband (Hosea 1-3). As the grieved Hosea bought his wife out of prostitution, so Yahweh would purchase His barren bride.  
**Compassion:** After a brief time of deserved separation, He would do so because of His compassion.
4. In overflowing wrath / I have hidden my face from thee for a moment // and in LOVE everlasting I have had compassion on thee / says The One redeeming thee, Yahweh. (Verse 8)  
**Restatement:** Again Yahweh says He has compassion on His UN-faithful barren wife. But He strengthens His repetition of His compassion by declaring it is based on His eternal strong and steadfast LOVE for them.

- C. As with Noah after the (flood) waters, though the mountains will be removed, Yahweh's LOVE will not. (*Verses 9-10*)
1. Like the waters of Noah this is to Me / when I had sworn that should go over the earth / the waters of Noah no more // so I had sworn to not be angry with thee / and not to rebuke thee. (*Verse 9*)  
**Discipline-restoration:** After Yahweh disciplines His people, He has sworn to restore them to Him.
  2. For the mountains will depart and the hills will shake / and My LOVE from thee will not depart // and the covenant of My Peace will not be shaken / says The One having compassion for thee, Yahweh. (*Verse 10*)  
**LOVE:** Yahweh's second statement of His strong steadfast LOVE, first expressed as eternal, is now expressed as that which will never depart from His people. The same truth is put first positively then negatively, both intended to create security in His people.  
**Peace:** This is a basic, fundamental covenant relationship peace, 'And I ... will be your God, and ye shall be My people' (*Leviticus 26:12*).  
**Fruitfulness restored:** With the relationship between God and His barren wife Israel restored, she will now receive His promise of becoming the mother of many children worldwide.

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## **II. While Jesus is teaching a crowd, His mother and brothers had been waiting, desiring to talk to Him; but, He says His disciples who do His Father's will are His family. (*Matthew 12:46-50*)**

- A. As Jesus is talking to a crowd of people, His mother and brothers have been standing outside desiring to speak to Him. (*Verses 46-47*)
1. Still He is talking to the crowd, behold, the mother and His brothers had been standing outside desiring to speak to Him. (*Verse 46*)  
**Teacher:** Jesus was verbally teaching a large crowd of ordinary Jewish people.  
**Family:** His family was not able to get close to Him because of the large tightly packed crowd of disciples hanging on His every word.
  2. But a certain man said to Him, 'Behold, Thy mother and Thy brothers have stood outside desiring to speak to Thee'. (*Verse 47*)  
**Behold:** The intense interjection 'behold' has been used both by the narrator of this account (Matthew under the influence of The Holy Spirit) and a random man who had made his way through the crowd to inform Jesus about His family.  
**Mission:** Jesus is intent on His Mission to both proclaim The Kingdom of God and to heal people.  
**Family:** But His family is being kept on the outside and all God's people are to honor their father and mother (*Deuteronomy 5:16*).  
**Balance:** The sinless Jesus perfectly balanced family responsibilities with carrying out His mission.
- B. He responds to news of this with a rhetorical question, then having stretched His hand to His disciples He said, 'Behold! My mother and brothers, because whoever may do My Father's will, My family is being'. (*Verses 48-50*)
1. Having answered, He said to the one telling Him, 'Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?' (*Verse 48*)  
**Rhetorical question:** As He often did, Jesus begins His answer with rhetorical questions designed to focus the attention of the one asking Him questions.
  2. Having stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold, My mother and My brothers'. (*Verse 49*)  
**Disciples:** Jesus is pointing out those who are following Him to learn from Him what God requires so they can do what God requires.  
**Paradox:** Jesus has His blood family, those the man asked Him about. But He is now calling His disciples, coming from every walk of life, His family – those desiring to share His Mission.
  3. For whoever may do the will of My Father in heaven, the same My brother, sister and mother is being. (*Verse 50*)  
**God's will:** Whoever can do God's will is in Jesus' family and will be given grace to do the humanly impossible balancing of the responsibilities of family and mission. The only way people can do what God desires is by becoming disciples of Jesus by His grace through His faithfulness. But, before this, people must be made aware of, and repent of, any UN-faithfulness to God concerning things they may put above Him, even for a short time. This would include all the Americans surveyed who put faith at the bottom of their priorities of finding meaning in life.  
**Both-and:** All who do this will both know what God's will IS and be empowered by The Holy Spirit to DO God's will.

### **Members of God's family do His will**

**Last words:** May we all greatly desire to know and DO the will of Father God to be in His family as spiritual siblings of Jesus and spiritual mothers. (*Romans 16:13*)

**Conclusion:** God's people had become barren because of their UN-faithfulness to Him. He declared through His prophet that His wrath and rejection would be replaced by a future of great fruitfulness because of His compassion flowing from His strong LOVE. Then, Jesus took advantage of a teachable moment to tell a bystander that any who do His Father's will are in His family and women become spiritual mothers

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Jesus called all His disciples to bring children of God into His Kingdom. His Mission is the mission of all His disciples.