

Your Maker is your Husband

Isaiah 54:1-6

What would it be like to have God, the creator of heaven and earth, as your husband? What a strange idea! And yet, it is an image chosen by God to teach us something about Himself and how He sees us. Most OT prophets use the husband-wife imagery to help Israel feel the *ugliness* of their unfaithfulness to Jehovah. They were being encouraged to repent and return to the Lord, their offended husband.

But in Isaiah 54 the Lord uses the husband-wife image not to point Israel to its wrongdoings and adultery, but to highlight how wonderful God, as her husband, really is. Through Isaiah Jehovah wishes to *encourage* Israel.

To do so, Isaiah compares Israel with a barren and desolate woman still haunted by the 'shame of your youth' (memories of slavery in Egypt) and her 'widowhood' (her captivity in Babylon). He gives her hope and urges her to "burst into song" and to "shout for joy" (v.1) - reminding her that God, "the LORD Almighty", was her Maker, her Redeemer and her Husband – "For your Maker is your husband"! (v.5).

The NT also uses the husband-wife imagery. James uses it to encourage us to have a single hearted love for the Lord: "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God?" (James 4:4). Paul uses it to encourage us to be pure in our devotion: "I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him" (2 Cor 11:2), and as a model of sacrificial love, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph 5:25). In a prophetic symbolic vision the apostle John sees the New Jerusalem, "prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (Rev 21:2) – the husband-bride

image is also used to describe our future eternal joys.

In this chapter, Isaiah 54, the prophet draws our attention to the blessings of having God as *husband* by referring to six types of women in distress and showing what God, as her husband, can do for Israel. These six types of women point to different human needs that only Christ can truly satisfy.

1. Barren women: (v.1) In those days, as is still true in some cultures today, bearing or not bearing children defined the position of a woman in society. Without children she would feel useless. We also may experience those times of emptiness and uselessness. We may feel a failure if we perceive no fruit from our life and labours. In such moments it may be helpful to remember what Elkanah asked to his downhearted barren wife: "Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?" (1 Sam 1:8). We have a glorious Husband! Our friendship with Him can bring more joy into our life than any level of perceived fruitfulness. And yet we Christians are created to bear fruit. And we cannot bear such fruit by ourselves. But we have a glorious Husband. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). As we live in harmony with Him, He will ensure that our lives bear good fruit.

2. Unmarried women: (v.1) Here the prophet contrast the "wife" (the woman who has a husband) with the "desolate woman" (the woman who has no husband). Without a husband, a woman may feel unwanted or lonely. She may think she is simply not interesting, attractive or good enough. Scripture makes it clear that a single human being is *complete*. Jesus was single and complete. It also makes clear that *both* singleness and marriage are *gifts* from God – and God only gives good things. But here in this husband-wife imagery, God wants Israel to remember that she is *not* unmarried, that He is her husband. You and I as Christians also have a glorious Husband. We never need to feel lonely. Jesus has promised, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mat 28:20).

3. Ashamed women: (v.4) Memories of past failures can be the cause of great pain and deep shame. Israel was promised restoration. She would 'forget the shame of your youth' and as to the future, she need not fear any further disgrace, humiliation and shame. She had been forgiven. She had been redeemed. She had God as her husband! Neither do we need to feel ashamed of past sins or failures. The blood of Christ has washed away every sin. He has redeemed us. As to the future, we need not fear any shame, rejection or condemnation (Rom 8:1). Our glorious Husband knows everything about us; we are fully accepted and we are His forever!

4. Widowed women: (v.4) The death of a loving husband brings more than emptiness in the life of the new widow. Socially it may bring 'reproach'. She may well feel unprotected. She may feel insecure. What about the future? Who will provide for her? Who will stand up for her? Perhaps something big and bad has happened in your life. As you consider your future, you also feel insecure. But we have a glorious Husband! One who is strong and faithful, who "will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (2 Thes 3:3), a Divine Husband who "will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:13, 19).

5. Deserted women: (v.6) Sometimes husbands just walk out on their wife and family. Perhaps attracted by another woman or simply seeking a new adventure in life. Devoted women that have been forsaken by their husbands may feel guilty, non-attractive or insecure. Will he ever come to his senses and return home? When? How will he come? Do I really want him back? The future is now very uncertain. You feel your life is 'on hold'. You can't plan. You can't build. But we have a glorious Husband! He does not leave us guessing. At times we may *feel* deserted or *feel* that He is far away. But the reality is different. Our glorious Husband has promised, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Heb 13:5). And He stands by His word.

6. Divorced women: (v.6) Lastly Isaiah points to the sad predicament of "a wife who married young, only to be rejected". She gave her husband her best years but now she has

been divorced and replaced. Rejected, refused, despised, divorced women may feel angry, worthless and deeply hurt. But we have a glorious Husband! Once we choose to trust Him and give ourselves to Him we are saved, and we are saved for today and for eternity (John 5:24, Heb 7:25). Our glorious Husband has entered into a blood covenant with us, a covenant that can *never* be broken! That is why Scripture speaks of 'eternal life', 'eternal redemption', 'eternal covenant' and 'eternal glory' (1 Tim 1:16; Heb 9:12; 13:20; 2 Tim 2:10). We need not fear eternal separation. We are invited to trust our glorious Husband and find rest and enjoy in His everlasting promises.

Isaiah has shown Israel how God as their husband meets their needs. But God is more than a caring and responsible husband. The prophet also reminds them that this husband also *loves* them and loves them deeply: "my unfailing love for you will not be shaken" (54:10). The apostle Paul underlines this certainly when he asked, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and then concludes that nothing in all creation "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:35-39).

As a Christian, I am sure you know that your glorious Husband, *loves* you. But are you also aware the He *likes* you, that he *enjoys* you? A few chapters later Isaiah pushes the husband-wife imagery to a climax when he writes, "as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you" (62:5). He actually *enjoys* you! Yes, *you!* Take a moment to let that truth reach your heart! You will then begin to understand the joy of anticipation in the heart of our Lord Jesus when he told His disciples, "... I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:3). As an enthusiastic bride we may join the Spirit and joyfully say 'Come Lord Jesus!' (Rev 22:17). We have a glorious Husband. We can enjoy His presence now. We can also anticipate future joys. You and I also have a good reason to "burst into song" and to "shout for joy"!