

The Barren Woman Has Reason to Sing!

Isaiah 54:1-17

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Introduction

In the Bible, barren women do not sing, they cry.

- There was, in Israel, a very strong sense of the blessing that God had promised to Israel through its future seed.
 - God had made it very clear from the start that the blessing by which they would all somehow be blessed would come to them in future generations.
 - It was necessary for the nation to continue and not be cut off if that blessing were to come.
 - Everyone wanted to have children that participate in it.
 - They all wanted to bring forth children for the kingdom of God.
 - And God had promised to make them fruitful.
 - For this reason, there was a strong desire to bring forth children and great stigma if one's line were cut off.

- Many of the greatest women in the scriptures struggled with barrenness for a time...
 - Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, Manoah's wife, and Elizabeth are all examples of women who struggled with barrenness.
 - And the Lord used these barren women as a picture of His people's total helplessness to bring forth the child of promise.
 - In particular He did this with Abraham and Sarah,
 - After promising that *the child* of promise would come through them,
 - He made Sarah barren so that she and Abraham and all who would come after them would see that bringing forth children of righteousness is not something flesh can do—
 - It is supernatural!
 - It is only by divine grace and power.

And as we come to Isaiah's day, we find that the whole nation is shown to be barren.

- Isaiah had told them in the early days of His ministry that the Northern kingdom (Israel) would be cut off and they were...deported to Assyria.
- Then He had told them that Judah also would be cut off because of their sin and carried off to Babylon.
 - From all appearances, they had no future as a nation.
 - No longer would they have their own land...
 - No longer would they have the temple that God has appointed to represent His presence with them.

- But most perplexing of all, no longer would they have a son of David on the throne—
 - Psalm 89 struggles with this—
 - You have promised that David's throne and seed will be forever...
 - Ps 89:38-39: But You have cast off and abhorred, You have been furious with Your anointed. You have renounced the covenant of Your servant; You have profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.
 - The whole nation had become the barren one who seemed to have no prospect of a future seed that would inherit the promised blessing.
 - The barren woman (all Israel) saw no reason to sing—only to weep.

Yet, Isaiah 54 (our text for today) opens with a vibrant call to the barren woman to sing!

- Isa 54:1: "Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not laboured with child!
 - Notice that three imperatives are used...
 - She is commanded: to sing; to break forth into singing; and to cry aloud!
- Something marvellous has happened so that the barren woman has reason to sing!
 - She can sing because the Son that God promised has come!
 - Not that He had actually come when Isaiah wrote these words—Judah had not even gone into exile yet...
 - But Isaiah is speaking with reference to the prophecy He has just made about the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53!
 - He is calling the barren woman to realise that in Christ, she has brought forth the true child of promise.
 - He has made His soul and offering for His people's sins,
 - And the Father has accepted His offering.
 - The barren woman is no longer barren!
- I. She can sing because now she is no longer barren, but fruitful!
- II. She can sing because now she is forever united to Christ as her husband!
- III. She can sing because now she is lovely and safe!
- All of this is the result of the Son offering Himself in her place!
 - It is only fitting that after having shown us about the Son and the work that He did for His people in chapter 53,
 - Isaiah should now turn to the Servant's bride, the church, and call her to rejoice!
 - So that is what he does in chapter 54...
 - He is especially speaking to Israel as a nation.

- She is the barren woman who was supposed to bring forth salvation to her own people and to the entire world...
- She was called to bear much fruit...
 - And now, because of what Jesus has done, she who was barren is called fruitful!
- When we get to Isaiah 55, we will see that all peoples are called to come and partake of the blessing she has obtained in Christ...
 - They are to repent and join themselves to this blessed bride—to become one with her through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Many of you have done that.
 - You have trusted in Jesus Christ.
 - And if you have, then this call to sing belongs to you just as much as it belongs to Israel...
 - because you also partake of the blessing of Christ.
 - You have become part of this bride of Jesus that was once the barren woman, practically buried in exile.
- And so now as we look more closely at the blessing that we have through His offering,
 - I am going to change the language to reflect your union with this once barren woman.
 - Instead of saying,
 - “*She* can sing because now *she* is no longer barren but fruitful,” to
 - “*We* can sing because now *we* are no longer barren but fruitful.”
 - Instead of “*She* can sing because now *she* is forever united to Christ as her husband,”
 - “*We* can sing because now *we* are forever united to Christ as *our* husband.”
 - And instead of “*She* can sing because now *she* is lovely and safe,”
 - “*We* can sing because now *we* are lovely and safe.”

TRANS> So let’s get on with it...let’s look at the details of our blessed condition now that Christ has come if we are of His people...first, I want you to see that...

I. We can sing because now we are no longer barren but fruitful

- The great thing here is the change—
 - To see the change, we must first look at what we once were...

- A. Apart from Christ, we were unable to bring forth any fruit for God.
1. The church is here described under three terms: barren, refused, and a widow!
 - Terms are piled on top of each other to show just how desolate this woman is!
 - She is barren so that even if she had a husband, she would not bring forth a child...
 - She is like a refused woman—a woman that nobody would have for a wife—so there is no hope of children even if she were not barren...
 - And she is like a widowed woman—it is as if her husband is dead.
 2. The point is that there is no way this woman can bear fruit...
 - a. This is, in fact, what became of the whole world when we fell in Adam.
 - We were created with the most amazing privilege and ability—
 - the ability to bring forth the very image of God!
 - When God made us, we were united to Him and it was His will that we should be fruitful and multiply...
 - filling the earth with children who were made in His image—who were like Him in holiness, goodness, righteousness, truth, and wisdom.
 - b. But what dreadful things we did and what dreadful things came upon us.
 - In eating the forbidden fruit, we ruined the image of God—we corrupted ourselves so that we are a mangled image of Him...
 - an image that distorts and misrepresents Him.
 - He who is so lovely, so perfect, so holy, so full of love and wisdom
 - is now portrayed by His image bearers as
 - vile, corrupt, unclean, full of bitterness and folly...
 - c. And all we can bring forth is children like ourselves...
 - children that are defiled, corrupted images of God just like us...
 - children that are sentenced to death and condemnation as unfit representations of our glorious God whose image we so badly bear.
 - The only place suited for the likes of us is the Lake of Fire.
 - We are utterly unable, in ourselves, to bring forth fruit for God.
 - We are as barren as a desert of salt.
 3. But God, in His rich mercy, came with the promise of restoration!
 - He came to Adam and Eve and promised the seed of the woman who would come of the woman and crush the head of the serpent...
 - The serpent was the one who had started the rebellion.
 - And God, in His mercy, singled out Abraham in later years as the one through whom this child of promise would come...

- And at that time God had demonstrated to Abraham that the child of promise would not come by natural means,
 - but by supernatural power and grace.
 - God made Sarah, Abraham's wife, barren into her old age, and then brought forth a son...
 - He was showing very clearly that we (the whole church represented by Abraham and Sarah) are barren.
 - He was showing us that only God can bring forth fruit from us.
 - But God promised to do it! He promised that He would bring forth fruit!
 - In Genesis 28:14, He told Abraham that he would not only give him his own children, but also bless the families of the earth through him...
 - Gen 28:14: "'Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'
 - Understand, this was not just any children—
 - these are children of promise who somehow are to be renewed so as to be God's true image bearers—
 - children of promise, children of life, children of blessing...
 - children of righteousness in a world of sin and death...
 - All this is promised to a people who, like all other people, could only bring forth children of wrath who are vile and corrupt!
4. Yet, what had happened?
- Abraham was given this most excellent promise,
 - But Israel (his descendents) had not brought forth children of the promise.
 - In fact, in Isaiah's day, she had become so corrupt that God was sending her away to exile!
 - Now David would have no heir upon the throne!
 - These were the people to whom the promises had been made!
 - This was the only hope for fruitfulness in all the world!
 - Oh yes, there were a few children of the promise that had been brought forth over the years—children who had life...
 - but now the nation as a whole was so corrupt that they were being sent to exile...
 - as a woman barren, a woman refused, a woman widowed...
 - How could Israel, cut off from God, ever bring forth fruit?
 - It was impossible!
 - She is, in herself, utterly barren!

- She is so reduced that if God had not left her a remnant, she would have become like Sodom and Gomorrah!
- Utterly destroyed—
 - But she is still there—
 - it is just that being cut off as a nation, Jerusalem being destroyed, being carried off to Babylon,
 - What future does she have—only that of barren widow.
 - No future at all!
 - How can she bring forth children of promise?

TRANS> But Isaiah declares that when the Suffering Servant comes, the woman will no longer be barren!

- Now you can see why the barren woman sings!

B. She who was cut off is told that she has more children than the married woman!

- Verse 1 says:
 - Isa 54:1: "Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not laboured with child! For more are the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman," says the LORD.
- 1. These are not natural children—
 - They are not children born through marriage according to the flesh—
 - They are children given by God to the barren woman who has no husband!
 - It is God's doing now that Jesus has been offered in the place of guilty sinners!
- 2. She is told to make room for all the children that God will give her...
 - Look at verse 2:
 - She is instructed to make her house bigger to accommodate all the children of promise that God will give her.
 - Isa 54:2: Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes.
 - As was promised to Abraham,
 - The children of promise are going to fill the whole earth!
 - Isa 54:3 says: "For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited."
 - In her rejection, it looked like there could be no more image bearers of God...

- but there will be—they will inherit the nations—they will fill the desolate cities!
 - It is a gradual expansion that is in view here...
 - A peaceful expansion that will fill the whole earth!
3. And note well, the barren woman who expands is Israel.
- There is only one fruitful woman—
 - It is the expansion of her household that is in view.
 - When Christ came, He went to Israel first, to the Jew first, and then the nations were grafted in to her.
 - They became the children of God through faith, but in doing so, they were grafted in to the believing remnant of Israel.
 - Gal 3:28-29 says: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
 - What I am saying is that God did not take a new bride when He began to gather the Gentiles—
 - He made the barren woman Israel fruitful.
 - When you trust in Christ, you become part of the woman who was once this barren woman.
 - By nature, you too were unfruitful, but now in Christ, you are grafted into this vine that bears fruit for God by God's grace.
 - Some of the natural branches were indeed cut off, but you are not a new vine. You are grafted in to Israel, to the seed of Abraham:
 - Romans 11:17-18 says: And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.
 - A remnant was restored in Christ and then became fruitful so as to spread into the earth.

TRANS> So you see, my brothers and sisters—all you who are trusting in Christ...

- You are now baptised into the seed of Abraham—
 - You are part of the once barren woman who is now bearing fruit—
 - It is for you to sing praise to God who has made you fruitful.
 - We can sing because we are no longer barren, but fruitful.
- But that is not all...
 - Consider secondly that...

II. We can sing because now we are forever united to Christ as our husband

A. There will be no shame for you, not that you are in Christ, ever again!

- Verse 4 speaks of two kinds of shame...future shame and past shame...
- 1. First, it says that you will never have cause to be ashamed again...
 - Isa 54:4: “Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame;”
 - This speaks of shame that arises in the future from disappointment and embarrassment when you expect one thing (and even publicly announce it) and receive another!
 - This is what happened to Israel in the past when, because of their disobedience, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed and their king carried off.
 - They had wrongly thought that could never happen, even though Isaiah and Jeremiah had assured them that it would happen.
 - They were ashamed when it did happen...
 - And so was Jeremiah and those who believed His message even though they had anticipated it.
 - They were ashamed that their behaviour has brought such reproach upon the Lord.
 - So you see, they all had to bear the shame and the reproach.
 - And even after the exile, the shame and reproach did not go away...
 - There was still not true Davidic King on the throne.
 - The covenant people were still under the rule of oppressors as one world power after another rose...
 - Daniel was terribly disappointed when he saw this future.
 - The reproach did not end with the Babylonians—it continued under the Persians, then terribly under the Greeks, then under the Romans...
 - All this time, there was no son of David on the throne.
 - And then even after Jesus did come, there was at first, the most terrible reproach of all—when He was crucified!
 - Here was the Son of David, cut off and cast away—or so it seemed.
 - But we know the rest of the story—
 - We know that He was making His soul and offering for sin.
 - We know that God accepted His offering.
 - We know that He was raised and seated at God’s right hand to reign forever on David’s true throne.

- And now, there will never be shame again!
 - Never again will the kingdom fail!
 - Never again will the king be cast off the throne!
 - He will reign until all His enemies are made His footstool!
 - There is no more shame for the once barren woman now that Jesus has come.

TRANS> But what about the shame of her history...

2. Isaiah tells us that the shame of the past will be obliterated...forgotten!

- Verse 4 goes on to speak about this past shame:
 - Isa 54:4: For you will forget the shame of your youth, And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.
- This is the marvellous thing about being in Christ.
 - Of course we are ashamed of what we once were, but we no longer bear that shame because where sin abounded, grace abounded far more!
 - What we were in our barrenness is certainly a shameful thing,
 - but the forgiveness we have in Christ puts us in a position where we can almost boast about what we were before!
 - As Paul, we can say, "I was a wicked and insolent man, but the Lord had mercy."
 - Yes, we were a barren desert, rejected, cast off—
 - but the Lord has so changed things for us (now that Jesus has come to bear our transgressions) that we don't even care about what we were!
 - We don't care because we are not that anymore and the present has overshadowed the past!
 - There is a sense in which you can laugh at what you were because Christ has made all things new!
 - We are something like the kid that people made fun of on the sports field that became an Olympic champion!

TRANS> But what is it that takes away our reproach as a barren woman?

- This brings us to very heart of the matter...

B. Our reproach is gone because Jesus Christ has become our husband!

- Verse 5 says,
 - Isa 54:5: For your Maker is your husband,

1. This is completely amazing!
 - “*Your Maker is your husband!*”
 - Jesus Christ!
 - All things were made by Him and without Him nothing was made that has been made...
 - And even more than that, He is the One who has made us to be His people!
 - Isaiah goes on to describe Him so there can be no mistake about who He is!
 - “The LORD of Hosts is His name!”
 - He is Yahweh, the self-existing one who has being in Himself from all eternity—who is in need of nothing—who does not change...
 - All things in heaven and earth have their being from Him—as the LORD of hosts—hosts of angels, hosts of stars, hosts of armies, etc.
 - All are by Him and for Him!
 - And He—this one who is so high above us—has become our *husband!*
 - Isaiah calls Him “your Redeemer”
 - The Redeemer is the near relative who comes to meet our need, to set us free from bondage, to pay our debts!
 - Jesus Christ is the One who gave His life a ransom for us!
 - He is the kinsman who comes near to take care of everything!
 - He has come so near to us as to marry us—to take us as His own bride and to pay all our debts and to rescue us from all our enemies!
 - Our powerful, capable, gracious redeemer has become our husband!
 - Isaiah also calls Him “the Holy One of Israel”
 - This is the One whose holiness Isaiah saw in his vision back in chapter 6 when He saw him exalted on the throne.
 - You will remember that Isaiah, one of the holiest men who ever lived, was terrified when he saw Him.
 - He felt that he was going to fly apart—
 - He said,
 - Isa 6:5: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."
 - Isaiah had to be cleansed even to remain before Him.
 - But we are told here that *this One—this holy one*—is our *husband!*

- How can this possibly be so?
- It seems absurd—crazy—but this is what Isaiah is saying to us!
- Finally, He calls Him “the God of the whole earth.”
 - At the time Isaiah wrote this, some thought He was just a local deity like the many other local deities that were worshipped in their blindness.
 - This notion had been encouraged by the exile so that he attitude was, “my God beat your God.”
 - But Isaiah makes it clear that the God He is talking about is **the** God of the whole earth.
 - All the nations are under His dominion as King Nebuchadnezzar learned when He said:
 - Daniel 4:34-35: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

TRANS> Isaiah is telling you that *this One* has become your husband!

- That is why there is no more shame about widowhood or barrenness or being a desolate castaway!
 - The God of the whole earth is your husband!
- 2. And as your husband—He has pledged His love to you *forever!*
 - a. Yes, God did cut us off and He did forsake us for a time—
 - We were, as it says in verse 6,
 - Isa 54:6: called you Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, Like a youthful wife when you were refused,"
 - When Israel was taken to Babylon, He showed us how unworthy we are of His love—
 - He showed us the depths of our barrenness and how unfit we are in ourselves to belong to Him.
 - And He often does that for us personally...
 - Sometimes He turns us over to wickedness and despair before He calls us to Himself, to reveal to us what we are.
 - Sometimes, He surrounds us with privileges and we grow up in a Christian home with the knowledge of Him from our earliest days,
 - and we see how cold and ungrateful we are and feel even more wicked than the one who was turned over to vileness.

- But most of all, He shows us what Christ had to do to pay the penalty of our sins...
 - That He, the LORD of glory, the Holy One, our Maker, had to be pounded for our sins, crushed and bruised, and put to grief...
 - forsaken and cast away from the Father for our transgressions.
 - He was cut off because He had joined Himself to us, and in this we see God's wrath and our unworthiness even more than the exile shows us.
 - This is why it ought not to be necessary for covenant children to go wild in order to learn of the depth of their sin...
 - All they have to do is see what Christ had to bear for us!

- b. But even though we were cut off to be punished, the Lord came to us with His mercy to take us as His wife and to love us forever!
 - Verse 7 & 8 say: For a mere moment I have forsaken you, But with great mercies I will gather you. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you," Says the LORD, your Redeemer.

- 1) The *mercy* spoken of here is that tender compassion such a mother has for her own child who needs her...
 - It is most often stirred up by *need* rather than merit—pity for one like us who is helpless and can do nothing to save ourselves.
 - Oh brothers and sisters, don't come to God presenting your virtues to Him—come to Him stripped and naked, asking Him for His mercy!
 - He saw His people, groaning under the oppression in Babylon and He had mercy!

TRANS> But look at what His mercy prompted Him to do!

- 2) He sets His *everlasting kindness* upon us!
 - The word *kindness* translates that wonderful Hebrew word *chesed*.
 - The word that speaks of God's loyal, covenanted love, steadfast love!
 - The kind of love that a husband pledges to His wife!
 - That kind of love that causes Him to lay down His life for her on the cross so that she may be saved.

 - And here it is not just *chesed*, but **everlasting chesed**.
 - Your maker is your husband and He has set His steadfast love on your **forever!**

- What an amazing position you are in as His wife!
- Nothing can go wrong for you!

TRANS> Surely, this ought to be enough to assure you that you are loved by Him forever...

3. But He goes on to furnish us with an additional assurance of His unfailing love.
 - a. First, He swears to us that He will not be angry with us or rebuke us in the same way He swore to Noah that He would not send another flood.
 - Look at verse 9
 - "For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.
 - Now you know about the flood—
 - It was a time of extreme judgement when God covered the whole earth with water and spared only Noah's household and the animals that were taken on the ark.
 - God had taken out His war bow to destroy the world,
 - But after the flood was over,
 - He hung His bow up in the clouds and promised to Noah that He would not destroy the earth again in this way.
 - He says, I will put my bow in the clouds as a sign to you!
 - So also with the exile to Babylon...and the casting away of the seed of David.
 - It was only to happen once.
 - Never again would God blot out His people like that—so that they were all carried off from His ordinances and ceased to be a nation.
 - Never again, at least, after Jesus came!
 - Remember that Isaiah is speaking of the future, and the greatest, most shameful judgement that ever fell upon His church was the cross—
 - When Jesus was crushed for our transgressions.
 - Isaiah is not talking merely about the exile.
 - He is talking about the cutting off of Jesus that he has just described for us in chapter 53.
 - After that great event, all was done!
 - After that, there was no more judgement ever to be borne by the church.
 - Yes, there would be tribulation for God's people, but our king will never be taken off His throne.

- He will never be cast out again.
 - He will never be cut off from the transgression of God's people.
 - The promise is as sure as the promise concerning the waters of Noah!
 - God Himself has sworn!
 - "So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you."
 - Christ has received all the rebuking that the church will ever have to receive.
 - Yes, Jesus chastens us as His people and tests us, but the penalty of sin has been paid.
- b. Secondly, to make the promise even more sure, He compares the stability of His love to that of the mountains and hills...
- In verse 10, He says to us in Christ:
 - Isa 54:10: For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.
 - Here He speaks of two very sure things that are more lasting than the mountains and the hills--
 - His kindness and His covenant of peace...
 - His kindness is *chesed* that we saw a moment ago—His steadfast love that caused Him to lay down His life for us.
 - He mentions it once again—it is so certain in Christ!
 - If He did not spare His own Son for us while we were yet sinners, it is certain that His love will never be removed.
 - His covenant of peace is the peace that Christ secured for us according to Isaiah 53:5 where it says
 - "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him."
 - Peace is *shalom*.
 - It is God's promise to bring us a full orb'd blessing that omits nothing for our happiness.
 - The blood of the covenant that Jesus shed by His own offering has secured it for us...
 - What can take it away?
 - Absolutely nothing! The full price has been paid.

TRANS> Brothers and sisters, what cause you have for singing!

- You were barren and rejected, but now you are fruitful!
- You were cut off, but now your Maker is your husband and He has promised to love you forever!
- But there is yet another reason for us to sing that is given to us in Isaiah 54...

III. We can sing because now we are made lovely and safe.

- His love, you see, is a love that works for us—to change us.
 - It works in us to transform us and to protect us.

A. See first of all how He promises to make you lovely...

1. After taking us as His bride, He goes to work in us so that He may at last present us to His Father without spot or wrinkle—as a lovely bride...
 - He is at work in us for edification—to build us up in Himself.
 - To deepen our love for Him and our obedience to Him.
 - And you see that He does not build with wood, hay, and stubble, but with precious stones that are both lasting and beautiful...
 - Look at verse 11-12:
 - Isa 54:11-12: O you afflicted one, Tossed with tempest, and not comforted, Behold, I will lay your stones with colourful gems, And lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, Your gates of crystal, And all your walls of precious stones.
 - We are so unstable, tossed about by every wind of doctrine, but He builds us up in our faith so that we may stand in His truth and walk in His ways.
2. He uses His word to transform us in each generation.
 - a. In verse 12, Isaiah says that our children will be taught of the Lord.
 - Isa 54:12: All your children shall be taught by the LORD,
 - The true see will be taught of Christ and the salvation we have in Him.
 - Jeremiah uses this same language when He speaks about the difference that there will be after Jesus is revealed—in the New Covenant...
 - *They shall be taught of God.*
 - It is not that Abraham and Moses and David were not taught of the LORD, but that there is a much greater outpouring of teaching after Jesus comes.
 - It is then that we see the glory of God in Him!
 - It is then that we see the Father's grace and love like never before, who spared not His only Son but gave Him for us all!
 - It is then, with all this glorious revelation, that God pours out His Spirit as never before so we can learn of Him.

- Jesus quotes this in John 6:45,
 - John 6:45: “‘It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.”
 - The teaching that is in view is that which brings us to Christ for salvation so that we become His true disciples.
 - It is the doctrine of Christ and His sufferings and His resurrection that all the elect are taught—by God’s Word and Spirit...
 - And when they are taught it by God, they believe and they are transformed into a new creation in Christ by the word...
 - They delight in God’s law and they abide in the word and the word abides in them...
 - God’s Word becomes a part of them.
 - This is always a thing that characterises God’s people!
 - They believe the word,
 - They receive the word,
 - They love the word,
 - They obey the word,
 - They embrace the word.
 - Have you?
- b. If you have, instead of being afflicted and tossed about without comfort (as verse 11 speaks about)
- You are given great peace!
 - Verse 13 says:
 - Isa 54:13: All your children shall be taught by the LORD, And great shall be the peace of your children.
 - The gospel is the gospel of peace because it answers the problem of sin and guilt.
 - It is the only message that gives a satisfactory answer to the problem of every human being...
 - We are cut off from God, we are under the curse of death, we are sinners...
 - But the gospel teaches us that all we like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord has laid on Him (with terrible force) the iniquity of us all...
 - When we look to Jesus as our sin bearer, we have perfect peace and hope!

- From then on, instead of running and hiding from God, or instead of trying to push Him away,
 - we come to Him to serve Him and to receive His grace.
 - The gospel gives us such peace and such assurance of His love, that we continue to be taught of Him...
 - And He continues to build us up so that we become more and more lovely.
 - The gospel makes us beautiful because it restores us to our God and Maker.
 - He renews us in His image.
- c. Verse 14 describes the foundation of our life in Christ—
- It says,
 - Isa 54:14: In righteousness you shall be established (or founded).
 - This is reason we don't have to run and hide, though we are sinners.
 - Righteousness in Christ is our foundation, so we don't have to run around looking for answers all over the place.
 - Jesus has procured righteousness for us through His life and death for us so that we are established upon Him.
 - His righteousness is imputed to us so that we can come to the holy God before whom Isaiah was terrified...
 - We can come to Him on the basis of Jesus' work and we are free to be taught of Him and to learn His ways that bring us out of our wretched condition.
 - There is no condemnation, so we can come with our sin to be instructed and changed.
 - His transforming grace then works in us to renew us again into His image so that we bear fruit.

TRANS> That is how the LORD makes us lovely...

- That is something to sing about!
 - He doesn't leave His bride as an old ugly hag—He beautifies her by His grace.

B. Now see secondly how He promises to keep you safe...

1. This promise begins in verse 14 (after the statement that we will be established in righteousness).
 - It says:
 - Isa 54:14: You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; And from terror, for it shall not come near you.
 - This is a command which is a blessing—

- You know, like when you are visiting somebody and they tell you to “Make yourself at home.”
 - It is a command, but it is a blessing conferred on you...
 - Or like Adam and Even in the garden when God said, “Be fruitful and multiply”
 - He was conferring upon them a blessing—that they *would* be able to be fruitful and multiply.
 - So v. 14, this could be translated like this...
 - *Isa 54:14: Be far from oppression, for you shall not fear, and from destruction, for it shall not come near to you.*
 - God is blessing you with freedom from oppression and terror...
 - all grounded upon what we saw a minute ago...
 - Because we are established in Christ as our righteousness, nothing can harm us or unsettle us!
 - If He has died for us, who can harm us?
2. Verse 15 says that enemies will surely assemble...
- But no longer will they be sent by God to overthrow the kingdom as in the Babylonian exile or as when Christ was crucified!
 - God raised up those enemies with the purpose, in both cases, to overthrow the kingdom on account of His people’s sins...
 - But now that Jesus has finished His work and been raised to sit at God’s right hand,
 - God will not send anyone against King Jesus ever again.
 - He will not be with them when they rise up to destroy Him.
 - Those who try to shake His kingdom will always fail!
 - The gates of Hades will not prevail against the Church!
 - You see, those enemies have no power of their own—only what God has given them.
 - Like Jesus told Pilate—
 - “you could have no power over me at all if it had not been given to you from above...”
 - Isaiah gives us a very helpful illustration of how powerless the enemies of Christ and His people are in verse 16:
 - Isa 54:16: "Behold, I have created the blacksmith Who blows the coals in the fire, Who brings forth an instrument for his work; And I have created the spoiler to destroy.
 - Do you see what He is saying?

- The LORD made the blacksmith who makes weapons for war, and He also made the spoiler (the fighting man) who comes to destroy.
 - God created them.
 - They have no power to resist His will or to fight against Him or to overthrow Him or His kingdom!
 - They are powerless, so you, if you are in Christ, are secure!
 - God has finished judging His anointed One.
 - Our king and His kingdom will never be brought to ruin.
3. Because this is so, all the enemy's efforts to destroy us will fail.
- Verse 17 says whether He uses weapons or his tongue, he will not succeed.
 - Isa 54:17: No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn.
 - Satan and all his minions cannot hurt you...
 - He will try to destroy the church with the sword, but we have the power of an endless life in Jesus Christ...
 - The more He slays us, the more we increase.
 - He will try to destroy us with deception, with the tongue, with false teaching,
 - And while many will be lead astray who were never really taught of God—who never truly embraced the gospel,
 - it will be impossible for him to deceive the elect because they are all taught of God.
 - God's word and Spirit has taken root in them and it cannot be rooted out.
 - They are sealed for the day of redemption.
 - They know the truth and the truth has set them free.
 - "This," the LORD says (v 17), "is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their righteousness is from Me."
 - This is our rightful inheritance in Jesus Christ...
 - We are as safe and secure as we can be!
 - God has sealed the saints on the earth so that no one can harm them.
 - It is our inheritance as those who belong to Christ and no one can take it from us.
 - Our foundation is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, a righteousness not wrought by us or done by us, but by Christ alone.
 - There is no greater safety than this!
 - The wicked one cannot touch you!

Conclusion: So you see that you have good reason, *very good reason*, to sing if you are in Jesus Christ!

- You are no longer barren, but fruitful!
- Christ Himself has pledged His love to you forever as your husband
- He is at work to beautify you and to keep you safe.
 - That is why the barren woman sings!
 - She has everything in Jesus Christ!

So what about you?

- Do have reason to sing?
- Are you in Christ?