

# The Glory of Motherhood – *Gal 4:21-31, Isaiah 66:5-14*

*Children of the Conquest #9*

**Introduction** – Many of you are mothers and so Happy Mother's Day to you. Many of us are not mothers, but here is an undeniable truth – each one of us here has a mother who gave us life. This is reason enough - although for most, there are a myriad of other blessings you have received from and through your mother - to honor your mother; to honor her on a particular day, but also to honor her throughout your life and by giving of that life she gave you to the world around you. Every glorious thing you ever do redounds to the glory of your mother. She can always look upon every achievement of yours and rightly say, "I made that."

**Honor Your Mother** – The Word instructs us as children to honor our mothers in order that life would go well and long for us on this earth (Eph 6:1-3). Children, your mother is a God-given source of the fear of the Lord, of knowledge and wisdom, and you are to bind her law, her counsel, and her admonitions like a spiritual pacemaker on your heart and like precious jewels around your neck (Prov 1:7-8, 6:20-21). While these passages also speak of our fathers, there is something distinct about how we receive life and law/wisdom from our mothers. Never forget that in Proverbs, wisdom is a noble lady.

But all of this points to something greater. It all reflects something more true, more lasting. For this is all teaching us about our Mother, the church, as well. The Father of the New Humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ, brings forth life through His bride, our spiritual mother, the church. It is in the church that we receive the life of Jesus in Word and Sacrament. And it is in the nurturing ministry of the church that we "grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ" (Eph 4:15).

**The Church, Our Mother** (Gal 4:21-31) – Paul is correcting false teachers who believe that the law is a source and sustainer of life as opposed to the Spirit. Trying to be under the law, they are not listening to the law (v21). What did "the law" teach? Abraham had two sons, Ishmael born of a bondwoman and of the flesh, and Isaac, born of the freewoman and of the promise (vv22-23). Paul says this is an allegory and we are to see Sinai and the law and spiritual bondage all corresponding to Hagar (vv24-25), and Sarah, who was barren, corresponding to the heavenly Jerusalem (v26), and the mother of us all (by the promise, by the Spirit). The barren woman is now more fruitful than the other woman (v27) and we are the children of promise (v28). We are to listen to our Mother and live in the freedom of Christ (vv29-5:1).

Back in verse 27, Paul quotes Isaiah where the prophecy is given in the language of a barren woman where God promises that many children will come. It will be as miraculous as a woman who is not even in labor bringing forth a baby. One can see Mary in her virginity in this passage, but even she is a type of what God is doing with this New Jerusalem, the bride of Jesus Christ, who is the mother of all in the New Covenant.

**A New Family from a New Mother** (Isaiah 66:5-14) - As Isaiah closes out his writing ministry, his prophecies remind his contemporary readers that those who are faithful and trembling at the Word of the Lord are but a remnant and scorned (v5). Even though there appears to be no hope of fruit, a voice resounds of God's vindication (v6) and before it seems even possible, this "barren woman" gives birth and this is an amazing thing (vv7-9). This is Jerusalem, for out of her downfall the New Jerusalem is brought forth and a new creation and a new people. The language of vv10-14 all center around a mother bringing forth life, and yet far more. She is the place of nurture and comfort, of abundance, protection, encouragement and understanding. She is the place of rest and peace, and so even the Gentiles flow to her, like abandoned neighbor-kids. So also, born-again Israel is the place of peace and rest, given by God to her, and the church is promised to become this kind of life-giving mother to the scorned, abused and abandoned world around her.

**The Glory of Motherhood** – And so, honor your mother, yes and Amen. But our honor of mother and motherhood would radically change if we honored our Mother Kirk. What glory the church is going to share with Christ, for she is His bride. From Him and through her will come the salvation of the world, for God has promised this to Abraham (Rom 4:13, Gal 3:26-29). How should we honor her? Believe the promises of God which she proclaims. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). This New Jerusalem possesses the glory of Almighty God (Rev 21:23), and "the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it" (Rev 21:24). The church will look at all the glory that redeemed mankind accomplishes and will rightly say, "I made that." Do you see? The church is not like a mother. The church is our Mother. Earthly mothers are like the church, and the church is glorious, ever fruitful, ever conquering, ever sowing and reaping, ever victorious. Solomon turns to her and says, "...lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners" (Song of Songs 6:4).

**Lies of the World** - Mothers, real mothers, and godly motherhood are mocked and ridiculed in this unbelieving world. We live in a land where, in some cities, the plague against motherhood has as high as a 30% death rate. Moms are told and tell their children that having children means conceding their higher aspirations and dreams.

**Listen to your Mother:** *“Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband”* (Gal 4:27). The children of the free woman will overrun the earth. That’s us, the church – and so this message is for us all.

**Applications for Today’s Mothers of Little Ones** - Having children, and then in the grace of God and according to His promises, caring for, loving the little ones, including missing much of the sermon because you have to take care of all the squirrels sitting in your row, educating them in the fear of God in all things, training and equipping them with knowledge, wisdom, and skill according to their frames and giftednesses, laughing around your tables and heading off to the room in your home where spankings are administered when necessary – these are THE MEANS God will use to bring about the changes we are praying for in our country and this world. And so, this is the army of God meeting around His throne and at His Table. Parents – and especially moms of little ones – you need to hear this and you need to hear this with faith – the faith which Jesus gives by means of His Holy Spirit. What you are doing, that mundane work that most of the world tells you is worthless and a waste of a real career you could be pursuing – is some of the most important work of world transformation and God-glorifying missions you could ever do.

Do you want to see the world saved? Listen to your Mother.