

## Introduction to Second Isaiah

### Second Isaiah

We read, study and pray with Scripture as a couple to encounter God, to allow Scripture to correct us and shape our worldview, to see how our marriage and family fit into the true story of the world, and because God speaks through men in human fashion, we must work to understand what the sacred authors intended and what God wanted to manifest through their words. That work deepens our appreciation of the mystery of the Incarnation, that is, Scripture is God's word and man's word at the same time.

#### Historical Situation:

559B.C.-539 B.C. saw the rise of the Persian empire. Cyrus II, the king of Persia defeated two of the three major powers of the time, Media and Lydia. In 539 B.C he conquered the third, Babylon. According to 2 Chronicles 36 and Ezra 1, Cyrus issued an edict in 538 B.C. that allowed for the slow return of the Jews from Babylon and the rebuilding of the Temple. Most scholars think that sometime before this edict an anonymous prophet announced that Israel's long time of punishment was over.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. Isaiah 40:1-2.

The return to the land was slow and complicated. Many of the exiles remained in Babylon and founded a thriving Jewish community there. The refugees return slowly, a little at a time. Those who returned faced hardship and resistance from those who had been left in the land, especially the Samaritans in the north. Their struggles are recounted in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Between 520 B.C.-515 B.C. they rebuilt the Temple. However, there was no story of the glory of God returning to the Temple.

#### The Book of Isaiah

Most Scholars believe that the book of Isaiah is the work of at least two and possibly three different authors. Isaiah of Jerusalem who lived at the time of Ahaz and Hezekiah 742-688 B.C. was the author of Chapters 1-39. Chapters 40-55 seem to be addressed to the Jews in Babylon prior to the Edict of Cyrus. In that section are the oracles of consolation and the servant songs, (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12). Chapters 56-66 seem to be addressed to the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem and were living there.

In this section we will meditate on the themes of reconciliation, forgiveness, tenderness, new creation, new heaven and new earth, a mother's love, God as our husband, we the bride. Vindication after suffering, and great banquets with exquisite food and fine wine.



## Isaiah 40:1-5

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup> A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

### Meditation

Remember the times when we forgave each other? How we reconciled after a big fight? Remember how tender that reconciliation was? The healing words, the touch, the intimacy that followed genuine reconciliation brought new life and freedom. Now imagine an entire exiled nation has been forgiven. It is time to be comforted, it is time to go home. Make a straight road from Babylon to Jerusalem. That road would have to pass through an inhospitable desert. Imagine the enormity of the construction project—before earthmovers and road graders to level the mountains and fill in valleys. Imagine too that it will burst with trees and flowers (42:18-19) because there will be rivers in the wilderness (43:15). When our personal exile ends our sins will be forgiven, all our shame will be removed. Our relationships will be healed. There will be peace, because the Lord will take back his wayward spouse, forgive her and love her once again.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Isaiah 49:13-18

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Isaiah 49:13-18

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones. <sup>14</sup> But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me." <sup>15</sup> Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. <sup>16</sup> See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me. <sup>17</sup> Your builders outdo your destroyers, and those who laid you waste go away from you. <sup>18</sup> Lift up your eyes all around and see; they all gather, they come to you. As I live, says the LORD, you shall put all of them on like an ornament, and like a bride you shall bind them on.

### Meditation

I remember many sleepless nights when our children were infants. I would try to ease my wife's burden by walking and burping them until they fell asleep. But the duty of feeding them in the middle of the night fell to her when she was nursing them. If because of sheer exhaustion they hadn't found their way into our bed, I would see her rocking our son or daughter in the dimmed light of the bedroom. It is hard to image a more love filled scene. I have always thought of that as the kind of love that the New Testament calls *agape*, or deeply committed covenant love. It is the kind of love that can best be described as a mother's love for her child. It is the love of Mary standing helplessly at the foot of the cross while her only son hung between heaven and earth. Her mother's heart was with him to the very end. When it seems that God has not heard our prayers or has forgotten us, remember that his covenant love is even stronger and more tender than that of a mother for her child.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

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## Isaiah 52:1-15

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 52:7-15

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." <sup>8</sup> Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion. <sup>9</sup> Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup> The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. <sup>11</sup> Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the LORD. <sup>12</sup> For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard. <sup>13</sup> See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. <sup>14</sup> Just as there were many who were astonished at him -- so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals -- <sup>15</sup> so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

### Meditation

What a wide range of emotions we experience in these eight verses. From the joy and beauty of the announcement of the "good news" to the description of the Suffering Servant who would both bring and be the "Good News. We know from history that the "holy arm" of God that has rescued his people from exile, is the arm of a small child reaching out for his mother from an animal food box. God's ways, as he will say in a couple of chapters, are not our ways. The mystery of the Incarnation reveals the power of ordinary family life. As we know, ordinary life is full of the same joy, beauty, sorrow and suffering that this passage proclaims. And it is here, in the framework of ordinary life, that we find God day after day comforting us, speaking to us, nudging us, rescuing us and through us his rescue of the world.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

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**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Isaiah 54:4-8

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 54:4-8

Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; do not be discouraged, for you will not suffer disgrace; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the disgrace of your widowhood you will remember no more. <sup>5</sup> For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. <sup>6</sup> For the LORD has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like the wife of a man's youth when she is cast off, says your God. <sup>7</sup> For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you. <sup>8</sup> In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer.

### Meditation

In one of the more direct references to marriage, God refers to himself as our husband. His name is the Holy One of Israel our Redeemer and he is the God of the whole earth. He had for a moment abandoned Israel to their folly. He let them experience the bitter taste that comes from worshiping a false god. They had suffered enormously because of their sin. In a world where honor and shame were paramount, they had been shamed and disgraced. In that world, the story would have ended right there. Israel should have ceased to exist. However, God loved his bride with an everlasting love, a love that could not be broken—at least from his side because a covenant once made by God made lasts forever. He is a God of infinite compassion and he is always ready to forgive. If we are to model for the world the love of God for his people, his church, then we must beg him for the grace to model for the world tender, compassionate, merciful, covenant love in our marriages.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

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### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

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### Reading: Isaiah 54:10-17

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you. <sup>11</sup> O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, I am about to set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires. <sup>12</sup> I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of jewels, and all your wall of precious stones. <sup>13</sup> All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the prosperity of your children. <sup>14</sup> In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you. <sup>15</sup> If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you. <sup>16</sup> See it is I who have created the smith who blows the fire of coals, and produces a weapon fit for its purpose; I have also created the ravager to destroy. <sup>17</sup> No weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, says the LORD.

### Meditation

We are familiar with geological time. We know that the movement of tectonic plates can cause mountains to rise and fall, that continents can shift over millions of years. But we do not see that sort of geological change in a lifetime or even in three or four lifetimes, which is the limit of living memory. So, the prophet was suggesting the unimaginable. But even if you could imagine that sort of change, the steadfast love of the Lord and his covenant of peace will not disappear. But in our living memories we know what it means to be storm tossed and un comforted. We understand the uncertainty of life and its suffering. What the prophet is suggesting is that our vindication, the proof of God's mercy will come on the other side of suffering, sometimes intense suffering. For Jesus, his vindication, the proof of his mission and identity came on the other side of the cross. In the resurrection he was vindicated. In the storm-tossed season of our life, we cling to the promise that the Lord's love is everlasting.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.*

*Share one idea with your spouse.*

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## Isaiah 55:1-7

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 55:1-7

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. <sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. <sup>3</sup> Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. <sup>4</sup> See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. <sup>5</sup> See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. <sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; <sup>7</sup> let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

### Meditation

Even during the years when we had to be incredibly careful about our finances, we found a way to have a feast on Thanksgiving and Christmas. We splurged and served our favorite foods. And there were always leftovers! Here is something more magnificent. Here is an invitation to a party at God's house. But this is not a once in a lifetime offer, or even a couple of special occasions each year. We are invited to eat daily at his table. It is the banquet of the Messiah complete with daily bread, living water, fine wine – all that you could ask or hope for. All we need do is seek the Lord while he may be found. All we need do is accept his invitation, receive his forgiveness and rejoice in his everlasting love. Our feasts, our willingness to reconcile, our hospitality, our marriages, the peace and healing in our homes signal to the world that the Messiah's banquet has begun. We are places where God's steadfast, sure love are breaking into this world. We are also the invitation to the world, "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

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## Isaiah 55:8-13

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 55:8-13

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. <sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. <sup>10</sup> For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. <sup>12</sup> For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. <sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

### Meditation

God is not like us. He chooses to take us back rescue us even after we reject him. His love knows no limits. It is beyond our comprehension. What is it like? It is like rain that waters a desert causing green grass to come to life. It is like a word that goes out to heal and save. It is like the moments of tenderness, love and affection that overflow when we reconcile with our spouse. His is a word that will accomplish what it was sent out to do before it returns to the speaker. It is a word that will bring joy to all who hear it. It is a word, spoken by the creator himself to transform creation. We know this word because he became flesh and dwelt among us. We know Jesus and that says it all. We rejoice with all creation.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

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**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*





## Isaiah 60:1-4, 9-22

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 60:1-4, 9-22

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. <sup>2</sup> For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. <sup>3</sup> Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. <sup>4</sup> Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. <sup>19</sup> The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. <sup>20</sup> Your sun shall no more go down, or your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. <sup>21</sup> Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever. They are the shoot that I planted, the work of my hands, so that I might be glorified. <sup>22</sup> The least of them shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will accomplish it quickly.

### Meditation

Do you remember the order of the days of the creation? Remember how God made light on the first day, but did not make the sun, the moon, or the stars until day four! That initial light is the light of the glory of the Lord and all creation is full of the glory of the Lord (Psalm 19:1; 72:19). In the book of Revelation, John describes the time when there will be no more night, no need for lamps or for the light of the sun because the Lord God will be the light and he will reign forever (Revelation 22:5). Until that day, we make the light of the Lord shine brightly in the world. Our love, our compassion for one another, our hospitality, make God visible in the world. We are God's work, for the sake of the world.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Isaiah 61:1-3

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 61:1-3

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup> to provide for those who mourn in Zion -- to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

### Meditation

Filled with the Holy Spirit after his baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness and was tempted by the Devil. Upon his return from the wilderness, he went to his hometown of Nazareth. On the Sabbath he stood up to read in the synagogue and opened to this passage. He read it and concluded with, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:18-19). The Holy Spirit had anointed Jesus for mission. When the Spirit came upon us in a new way on our wedding day, what happened to us? The Spirit gave us a new heart and made it possible for us to love as Christ loves us. It prepared us for mission.

Pope Francis puts it this way, "when a man and a woman celebrate the sacrament of marriage, God is, as it were, 'mirrored' in them; he impresses in them his own features and the indelible character of his love. Marriage is the icon of God's love for us. Indeed, God is also communion: the three Persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit live eternally in perfect unity. And this is precisely the mystery of marriage: God makes of the two spouses one single existence." This has concrete daily consequences, because the spouses, "in virtue of the sacrament, are invested with a true and proper mission, so that, starting with the simple ordinary things of life they can make visible the love with which Christ loves his Church and continues to give his life for her". (*Amoris Laetitia*, 119-120.)

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*Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

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**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Isaiah 61:8-11

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 61:8-11

<sup>8</sup> For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup> Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. <sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

### Meditation

My wife made her own wedding dress. I remember seeing her in it for the first time at the back of the church. She was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She claims to have made her own dress to save us money since her mother had been recently widowed and my father was out of work. But what really happened was she wove love into ordinary fabric and made an incredible gift of herself to me. Every stitch, each piece of lace, announced her love for me. As I have reflected over the years, making her own wedding dress was very much in keeping with her most prominent love language, acts of loving service.

The wedding garment of the bride of Christ is also made from acts of love, which St. John calls “the righteous deeds of the saints” (Revelation 19:8). This fine linen, this beautiful fabric is composed of the kinds of deeds that people do when they are filled with gratitude to God for his saving work. They act in ways that are just. They show mercy and compassion to the outcast, the weak, the orphan and the widow. Note too how the prophet puts it, “he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.” God acts and we respond. We live one life with him and each other.

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**Lord’s Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.*

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**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Isaiah 62:1-5

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. <sup>2</sup> The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. <sup>3</sup> You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. <sup>4</sup> You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. <sup>5</sup> For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

### Meditation

This passage echoes the image we found in chapter 52. Our builder/maker marries us. It is possible to miss just how stunning a statement this is! It is an occasion of great joy. It is the promise of unity, of living one life together. Things may be difficult at times, but on the other side of suffering everything will be made right, and our joy will be inexpressible! Let this text shape how we think about the world, about our story. God's love is so intimate and tender that only the language of a young man and young woman deeply in love does justice to the nature of God's love. He rescues us, his love changes our very nature. We know that Baptism has changed our very nature. We are no longer "Forsaken" or "Desolate." We are loved. God delights in us, as we delighted in each other on the day of our wedding. That love that vindication, that change in our very nature is on display for the whole world to see. We make God shine more brightly in the world and he makes us shine more brightly as well.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Isaiah 65:17-25

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 65:17-25

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. <sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. <sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. <sup>20</sup> No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. <sup>21</sup> They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. <sup>22</sup> They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. <sup>23</sup> They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD -- and their descendants as well. <sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. <sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent -- its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD.

### Meditation

When I was younger it was popular to talk about the end of the world. Bookstores and movie theaters were filled with the likes of *The Late Great Planet Earth* and the *Left Behind* franchise. Doomsday predictions about the end of the world produced anxiety and fear. But they failed to tell the whole story about God and his good creation. God's intention was never to destroy the earth, but to transform it, to renew it. It would be the place where God and his people would dwell together. It would be like the garden was in the beginning. The authors of most of the Old Testament did not yet have a doctrine of resurrection, but they believed that on that day their lives would be long and full of joy. The land fruitful and creation would be at peace. Predators and prey would peacefully coexist. This like many other passages in the Old Testament provided the language and images that would one day become their belief in the resurrection. Resurrection will add a deeper and new understanding to the promise that what we do is not in vain (see 1 Corinthians 15:58).

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Isaiah 66:1-2

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Isaiah 66:1-2

Thus says the LORD: Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is my resting place? <sup>2</sup> All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word.

### Meditation

The author of Genesis invited us to imagine the whole cosmos, “the heavens and the earth,” as a house grand enough for a God of infinite power and glory. What building could we fashion that would compare the cosmos? Imagine a building in which the whole earth, upon which we live, is a mere footstool! And that house becomes a home when God rests in it and fills it with persons. His intention was always to share that grand home with us, persons created in his own image and likeness, persons capable of having a relationship with him. He is looking for persons who are humble and contrite. That is the fundamental criteria for being in right relationship with him. And that, as we have seen, is what it means to be righteous.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

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