

Beyond the surface of mothering

Forgive us when we assume that what we see on the surface is all there is to your story. We know in our midst there are women and mothers who:

Like Eve, have children with serious rivalry.

Like Hagar, have been discarded for a new family and are mothering alone.

Like Naomi, have tasted the bitterness of a child's death.

Like the mother of Leah and Rachel, knows what it's like to have one child favored over another by society.

Like Hannah, have been separated from your child at a young age.

Like Mary, have a complicated pregnancy story or

Like Tamar, have tried multiple ways to become a mother or

Like Rachel, have counted the months and years while other women in your family and circle of friends become pregnant.

Who like Rebekah, are drawn to one of your children more than the others.

Like David's mother, is raising children after God's heart and though you rejoice in watching them, don't want to rub it in friends' faces.

Like Ham's mother have children whose substance abuse can cause problems.

Like Bathsheba, have sick children who may die.

Like Joseph and Benjamin, experienced the death of their mother.

Like Mary, have children with public legal situations and all you can do is watch.

Like the Shunammite woman when told by Elisha she would become pregnant, replied, "No, please do not mislead your servant!" Like her, not wanting to open doors to hope, only to have them slammed in your face.

Like Hannah, have known the provoking of a family member.

Like many, watched their mothers age and waste before their eyes.

Like Moses' mother, reluctantly gave up her child because it wasn't safe for you to bring her child up herself. Or

Who like Pharaoh's daughter, were called to love and nurture children that weren't yours by birth.

Like Timothy's mother and grandmother, are steadily and without much fanfare or recognition teaching your children about the truths of God, sowing seeds for eternity

Like the unnamed women who never quite fit into the norms of society, either never marrying or having children, yet wanting to.

You are in our midst.

We are called to be a people who rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn. Today our stage is big enough to do both.

For the seen and known joys of motherhood, we rejoice and smile and celebrate with you. For the seen and known suffering in motherhood, we ache with you.

For the private unseen and unknown joys of motherhood, like Mary, may you treasure them in your hearts. **And for the private unseen and unknown sorrows and suffering of motherhood, may you know you don't always have to be happy in our midst.**

You are engraved on the palms of God, both the seen and unseen, held together by Him.

By Amy Young (<http://messymiddle.com>)