

Pastor Daniel Waldschmidt – February 19th, 2017 – Isaiah 49:13-18

“But Zion said, ‘The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.’ ‘Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands’” Isaiah 49:15-16

We tend to worry a lot. We worry about all kinds of things. We worry about our health. We worry if we will have enough money for retirement. We worry if we will have enough money to pay the bills. We worry about our kids. We worry about work. We worry all the time. But today our Gospel Jesus tells us that we don't need to worry. And the reason we do not need to worry is that the Lord never forgets his people. So today we will consider that theme: **The Lord Never Forgets his People.**

The people of Isaiah's time thought that the LORD had forgotten about them. Our Isaiah lesson says: **“But Zion said, ‘The LORD has forsaken me, the LORD has forgotten me’” (Isaiah 49:14).** Do you ever feel the way the people of Israel felt? Do you ever feel like God has forgotten about you?

But today God says to you: I could never forget about you. You are far too precious to me. God says, “I feel about you the way a mother feels about her newborn baby.” God says: **“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?” (Isaiah 49:15)** There is perhaps no greater human emotion than the love a mother feels for her newborn baby. The mother has been carrying the baby in her womb for 9 months. The baby is literally connected to her and receives nourishment from her. The mother can feel the baby kick. Soon after the baby is born the nurses want the baby to have skin to skin contact with the mother. How could a mother ever forget the first night in the hospital with her new baby? The way a mother feels about her newborn baby is the way that God feels about you and even more so. The wonderful truth is that as much affection as a mother feels for her newborn baby, God feels even more affection for you! God says: **“Though she may forget, I will not forget you.”** Even if it could happen that a mother could forget her baby, God will still not forget you.

God says: **“See! I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.” (49:16)** If we want to make sure that we will not forget about something, we write it down. We write down a grocery list so that we will not forget something when we go to the store. We write down an appointment on our calendars so that we will not forget our appointment. But you might lose the piece of paper that you wrote your grocery list on or you might not have your calendar with you. And so a couple of times I've seen people, if they really don't want to forget something, they actually write it on their hand. You can possibly forget. Every time you look at your hand it's a reminder, “I need to pick up milk at the grocery store” or whatever it may be.

Well God says, **“I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.” (49:16)** Your name is written on the palm of God's hands. Every time God looks at his hands, your name is written there. Of course this is picture language. It is a vivid way of saying that the Lord never forgets his people.

But one thing that is literal is that when the Bible describes the resurrection body of Jesus, the Bible says that Jesus right now still has the nail marks in his hands. After the resurrection Jesus said to doubting Thomas, put your finger here where the nails were. When we get our resurrection body it will heal all our wounds. But Jesus decided to keep the nail marks. Why? Because it is a constant visible sign of his love for us. We have no reason to doubt Jesus' love for us. He loves us so much he had nails driven through his wrists. He loves us so much he hung on a cross for us to take away our sins. Someone who showed that kind of love for us is not going to forget us.

And if Jesus loved us enough to take away all our sins, then he's definitely going to take care of all our other needs as well. That's why he tells us in our Gospel for today: **"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? (Matt 6:25-26)**

And did you hear what Jesus said right before he told us not to worry? He said, **"No one can serve two masters. ... You cannot serve both God and money." (Matt 6:24)** He tells us, "You can't serve both God and money." And then he tells not to worry about money. I heard someone say once, "If you want to know what's in danger of becoming your god, ask yourself, 'What do I worry about?'" Whatever consumes you with worry, that thing is in danger of becoming your god. What do you worry about? Are constantly worried about money? Then money is in danger of becoming your god. Are you constantly worried about your job? Then your job is in danger of becoming your god. So the next time you are worried about money say to yourself, "Money is not my god." The next you are consumed with worry about your job, say to yourself, "My job is not my god." The next time you're worried about your health, tell yourself, "My health is not my god. God is my God and he has promised to take care of me. He takes care of the birds. He's going to take care of me." It doesn't mean you don't work hard. It means at the end of the day those things don't need to keep you up at night, because those things aren't your god, and your true God has promised to take care of you. So don't worry about anything.

We are people who worry a lot. But the truth is we don't have to worry about anything. Because our God has written us on the palms of his hands. He has even more affection for us than a mother has for her little baby and he will never ever forget about us. Amen.