**I Will Never Forget You**

**The Word**

Read together Isaiah 49:8-16

**The Big Idea**

In a season when Israel was feeling forgotten by God, God reminds them that he has a mother’s heart of tender affection and compassion for them, and he could never forget them. As God’s people, we need to be reminded of his tender compassion for us, and we need to reflect his heart of compassion for the forgotten people of our world.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Consider the picture of God offered in this week’s passage: like a mother who has a tender affection for her children. How does that square with your own felt experience of God? And how does that fit in with the picture of God we saw in the Ezekiel series?

2. Share a time in your life when you were feeling forgotten, lonely, or troubled and when someone remembered you and came alongside you in a way that was meaningful and memorable to you.

3. Consider the question posed at the end of Sunday’s message: How are you being called to reflect God’s heart for the forgotten people around you? Are there any specific people or circumstances that come to mind? How can your home group be praying for you in that?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. The Context of Isaiah

 A. Isaiah was a prophet of Israel writing about 150 years before Ezekiel.

B. There is a consistent theme of warning: Israel is disobeying God and will reap the consequences of that disobedience

C. There is a consistent theme of promise: even though he will discipline, he will never forsake his people and will restore them in the land.

II. The Passage

A. Israel’s complaint: “God has forgotten us!” (v. 14)

1. The reality is their suffering is a result of their own disobedience, but their felt experience is of God having forsaken them

2. We can all relate to the painful feeling of being forgotten from time to time.

B. God’s response

1. He is like a loving mother with her young children (v. 15)

a. “compassion” (v. 15) refers to a deep inward feeling of tender concern often for someone in a more helpless state

b. Mothers have a unique role in offering tender, unconditional love for their children

 c. Mothers never forget their children

1) Fathers tend to more easily forget and tend to love more based on performance

2) When the world forgets us, when we are failing and losing, mom is usually there to remember us and love us just as we are

d. God is using this wonderful image of tender affection at a time when Israel was disobeying and running from him. He would never abandon his children.

2. God had engraved his people on the palm of his hands (v. 16)

a. This is a way of saying to Israel: “you are always with me, always on my mind. You can try to push me away, but I will always hold you close to my heart.”

3. God exhibits this kind of motherly love for the forgotten people throughout the Bible

a. Consider the story of God’s loving pursuit of Hagar in Genesis 16 (“the God who sees me”)

 b. God’s pursuit of Israel; a forgotten people living as slaves in Egypt

c. Consider the description of God in Psalm 68:5-6

d. Consider Jesus’ pursuit of those forgotten in 1st century society (poor, blind, deaf, lepers, etc.)

III. Conclusion

A. Where do you need to be reminded of the tender compassion of God?

Consider Psalm 56:8

B. How are you being called to reflect God’s heart for the forgotten people around you?

Consider Matthew 25: 34-36