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BISHOP'S DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

# GOD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN YOU

*"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! 16 See, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands; your walls are ever before Me." (Isaiah 49:15-16)*

Let us begin by appreciating the context of our text. Jerusalem has been overrun by the enemy, its walls knocked down, its temple destroyed, its leading citizens deported. If you looked at the ruins of that once great city, "godforsaken" might be the adjective that came to mind. The people Isaiah is addressing are living in Babylon, in the capital of the evil empire, and for them the Temple is their World Trade Centre – gone, and too painful to contemplate.

What other explanation can there be, but that God has turned his back on us? In their prayers, the Jews are not afraid to say it. Psalm

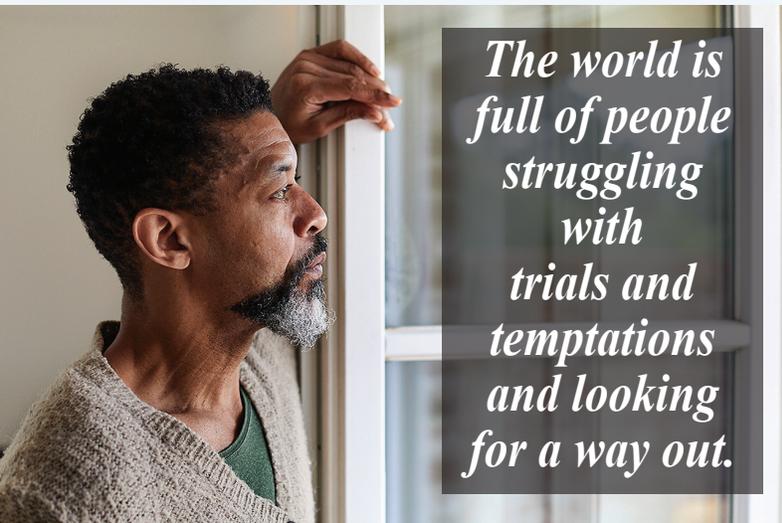
31 begins, "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" Psalm 42:9 says, "I say to God – the one I have called my Rock – „Why have you forgotten me? Psalm 44:24 asks, "Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression?" Psalm 77:9 raises the question, "Has God forgotten to be merciful?"

Sometimes it gets hard when you cannot see what God is doing. Would you agree? It is that feeling that maybe He has forgotten about you. Or the sunk feeling in your spirit or the doubting question, "Will it ever happen?" Or the heartfelt cry, "Lord, help me to endure, until you move." Have you ever felt this way before? And have you ever asked yourself, "Does God know where I am?"

Well, I can assure you, that He knows exactly where you are. And me for that fact! He knows what you're feeling, thinking, saying, crying, and worrying about. And He cares. But He wants you to come to Him

and talk to Him about where you are. He already knows how you feel and what you've been thinking and saying, but He wants you to bring it to Him and keep the relationship and dialogue open.

Even Jesus talked to God when He was struggling with accepting the process of the cross and dying for us (God's will for His life) in the Garden of Gethsemane. He also had a moment when He thought His Father forgot about Him. He said these words as He hung on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46) He thought God had forgotten about Him in His suffering. But He had not forgotten about His only begotten Son. He just wasn't finished the work yet.



*The world is full of people struggling with trials and temptations and looking for a way out.*

And that's the same way it is for you. He's just not finished the work yet. Remember, we are the clay, and He is the potter. (Isaiah 64:8) God has not forgotten you. He's just still working out the whole plan. And in the end, it will be so worth it all! Jesus is our great example of that! God is faithful to fulfill His promises! Don't forget, He raised Jesus from the dead and now He LIVES! Hallelujah!!!

There is a mystical love between a mother and child. The child came from the seed of the father. But the child was a part of the mother. They were one as the baby formed in her womb. Everything a pregnant mother does affects two people. When the child is born, it comes back to the mother to feed on her breasts.

- A child's bloodline goes through the father.
- A child's lifeline goes through the mother.

We have to cut the baby from the mother! In 1 Kings 3, the Lord

tells Solomon to ask what for whatever he wished. Solomon asked for wisdom. 1 Kings 3 then illustrates the wisdom of Solomon. Two prostitutes came to the new king. They were both sleeping with their babies. One died in bed with her. In the middle of the night, she switched babies. Both mothers claimed the living baby. Solomon said cut the baby in half and give each a portion. The birth mother said let the other have the baby. Solomon knew that a real mother wants the best for her child. This is the picture of love God paints to say to Zion that he would never forsake and forget them.

Verse 15 asks, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?" The presumed answer is the incorrect answer. Verse 15b answers, "Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." It is said, "A mother loves at all times." That is not always the case. A woman may forget or forsake her child. When the news reports a mother abusing or abandoning her children, it is shocking because it is not natural. For the same reason, abortion is not moral, even though it is legal. A mother's instinct is to nurture her child, not slaughter it. Yet verse 15 says, "Even these may forget."

The question of God's love is answered in verse 15. God will not forget those who trust in him, even if a mother forgets her nursing child. After proclaiming his love, God proves his love. If the language of verse 15 is not dramatic enough, verse 16 is even more graphic. The love of God is illustrated in verse 15. The love of God is incarnated in verse 16.

**God works with love-stained hands.** Verse 16 says, "Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands." "Behold" is a call to attention. With outstretched hands, God says, "If you think I have forgotten you, look at my hands." This is an anthropomorphism. John 4:24 says, "God is spirit." God does not have physical hands. God beckons us to examine his metaphorical anatomy to prove his loyal love. It was customary for the master to be written on the servant's hand. In condescending grace, the servant is written on the master's hand.

This is an accomplished fact, not a future promise. You did not write your name on God's hand. God has engraved you on his hands. You can never be erased from God's memory. Leviticus 19:28 says, "You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves. I am the Lord." Yet God says, "I have engraved you on the palms of

my hands." This is more than a tattoo. God has "engraved" you on his hand. You are not painted on his hands. You have been carved into his hands.

Your name is not engraved on His hands. You are engraved on His hands. On the palms of His hands, not the back of His hands. Both hands! When the sheep are placed on His right, you will be included because He has engraved you on His hand. When the goats are placed on his left, you will not be included because He has you engraved on His hands. The figure is literal. When Jesus was nailed to the cross for your sins, God engraved you on the palms of His hands. John 20:20 says, "When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord."

**God sees with love-filled eyes.** Verse 16 says, "Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me." In the ancient world, major cities were surrounded by walls. The walls marked the border of the city. Moreover, the walls were the primary defense strategy. The city wall represented strength, stability, and security. This section of Isaiah's prophesy addresses the time when the people of God were in Babylonian Captivity. The city walls of Jerusalem were broken and burnt down. This is why Zion claimed the Lord had forsaken and forgotten her. The Lord replies, "Your walls are continually before me." Not just the temple, but the walls were before him.

God is concerned about the spiritual matters in your life. God is also concerned about everything else in your life. He does not see things as they are. He sees them as they will be. Isaiah 66:13 says, "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem." If you are lost in sin, true comfort is only found in the Lord. If you feel forgotten, true love is only found in the Lord.

It is easy to get discouraged during difficult times and allow fear to control our thoughts and actions. It helps to remember that no matter what I'm going through, I can trust that God is there leading the way and will be with me each step of the journey. Noah and his family were in the ark for a very long time as they waited for the rain to stop, waters

to recede, and the ground to dry. According to Genesis 8, it was about 370 days. That's a long time to be stuck on a boat with wild animals, livestock, and a handful of family members.

No matter how large that Ark was, you know it was not quite big enough to escape the smell of so many animals or to find a moment of peace and quiet! As they waited for the ark to stop drifting, they may have wondered if the huge sea of water would ever disappear or would they be stuck in the ark forever. Once the boat settled on the earth and they still had to wait for God to open the huge door, I'm sure they must have wondered if He had completely forgotten them.

## ***God is concerned about the spiritual matters and everything else in your life.***



The world is full of people struggling with trials and temptations and looking for a way out. If you have ever felt pressed on every side and couldn't find a way out or confused and didn't know what to do, you know what a desperate and lonely feeling that can be. God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

The Word tells you God is faithful and He will provide a way for you, but He doesn't always show us the way immediately. That is when you must wait... and trust. Waiting on God purifies your faith and builds character in you. You don't like waiting, but God's way is perfect! So be assured God has not forgotten you. Trust Him, and in His time, He will reveal His perfect plan for you. From this devotional thought rest assured, **"GOD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN YOU."** SHALOM!