

November 11th 2007 Psalm 17:1-8

I want you to take a moment and think about the people in your life whom you most cherish? Your husband or wife, your partner. Your children, your grandchildren, your parents, your nieces and nephews your siblings, a close friend. And I know for many of us this might be hard. For many of us have lost people whom we cherish. Whom we love dearly. Think about your love for those whom you cherish just for a moment. **(PAUSE)** Think about those joyous occasions. Think about how you hold those people as the apples of your eye. Your love for them is enormous, your love for them is strong and unbreakable it's unchangeable.

Now I want you to take that feeling of love you have for those cherished people and I want you to imagine God loving you in the same way. I want you to just soak that in for a moment, let God's love permeate you just for a moment. Sometimes imagining God's love for us is hard to do. We think we don't deserve it, we think how God can love someone like me. Someone who has done the things I have done. We think of all that we've done and we wonder does God really love me?

The psalmist wondered if he implored God to keep him as the apple of God's eye. It's natural to wonder has God forgotten about me, has God cast me aside. It's ok to question does God love me?

Let me just read to you what Isaiah said in response to a people who felt that God had abandoned them, that somehow they were no longer the apple of God's eye.

Let me remind you that prophets like Isaiah tend to write or speak as if they were God. Isaiah writes, "Can a mother forget the infant at her breast, walk away from the baby she bore? But even if mothers forget, I'd never forget you ---never. Look I've written your names on the backs of my hands."

God has written our names on the back of his hands. God has tattooed on the each one of us to himself. It can't be erased, it can't be removed. That is why last Sunday I got so choked up that I couldn't even remember the words of the peace... For it is such a powerful thing to contemplate that in baptism we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ own forever. Nothing can change that. God cherishes you and God loves you always and forever...

And ladies and gentleman this is in permanent marker it's not going to wash off. Thank goodness, it's non toxic. I'm going to have a lot of explaining to do over the next week or so. But, what a wonderful

opportunity to share with people as they wonder why I have my name written on the back of my hands.

AMEN