

July 26, 2015
Glorybound!!!

Read Isaiah 49: 16a – *Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands*



I would like to share with you a little about the Senior Youth Conference that was held last week. In all honesty, it should have been a conference for the adults as well. It was very good and the message was very powerful, but then again it was all about Jesus, so how could it not have been powerful.

The theme for the conference was “Marked.” Now, this could have gone a lot of different ways, but it was based on the passage from Isaiah that I had you read above. What they wanted us to take away from it was that Christ, or God in Christ, has our names *carved* into his hands. That illustrates how important we are to him. We are literally always on his mind, because he carries our names around with him wherever he goes.

Take a moment to consider that in your hearts. Perhaps some of you have tattoos, and perhaps some of those tattoos are the names of some people. Who do those names belong to? People you just happened to meet and thought their name sounded cool? I hope not! More than likely if you have a name tattooed on your body, it is the name of someone you love. That is precisely why God has your name *carved* into his palm, because you are his beloved. You are special to him. It doesn’t matter what you’ve been through or what you’ve done in your past, God loves you.

Jesus went to the cross and had nails pierce his palms because he loved you and wants you to be close with him. His love for you is up close and

personal, not love from a distance. As the speaker said, “Jesus doesn’t love at you or me from a distance.”

The same God who spoke the world into existence wants to whisper his love for you in your ear.

I say this because at times it is easy for us to think that our problems are either too big or too small for God to bother with. Nothing could be further from the truth! Jesus came to earth and *became man*, because he wanted to have a close, personal relationship with *you*. In fact, all of those sins, all of those problems that you deal with, all of the depression and questions in the wake of the problems, Jesus wants to take all of it from you. He doesn’t want to stand at a distance because you’re somehow repulsive or because you don’t need his help. Our Lord Jesus wants to be there and take those burdens out of your hands and walk with you through your pain so that in Him you see your salvation. His love is not some sentimental ideal that makes us feel better about death and the afterlife. Christ’s love is real and tangible for you now, in worship, in the Word and Sacraments and in the body of Christ, the church.

When your name was carved in God’s palm, when he was marked with you, you were marked by him. Because of that we can be Jesus’ hands and heart and feet. Because we were loved with such a personal love, we can share it with others who might share in our struggles, pains or sins. Because we are forgiven, we can take that forgiveness to others, so that they know Jesus’ love is for them, and that he will *carve* their names in his palm as well.

Pastor Carl Jh

