



THE TATTOO OF GOD

Nowadays, tattoos are becoming quite fashionable, especially among young celebrities. Basketball players have tattoos on their arms, necks, and other parts of their bodies. In the old days, tattoos used to be reserved for convicts and scary criminal types. But young people have always had a fascination with tattoos.

When I was in sixth grade, a few of us boys decided to have our arms tattooed. In order to keep the cost down, we tried doing it ourselves. This meant using black shoe polish and unsanitized pins, a very painful and unsafe process. Since none of us was skilled in artful design, we limited our tattoos to just a few letters (names or initials). Some thought about putting the names or initials of some girls they liked. I was not too keen about having some girl's name on my arm for the rest of my life. So, I decided to put the letters "JR" (for Jr.) on my wrist (so I could cover it with my watch). Fortunately for me, my tattoo did not really take, though I still see a faint "R" on my left wrist.

Did you know that God has a tattoo on His hand? The prophet Isaiah was given this message from God for Israel: *"Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for a child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you. See, I have written your name on my hand."* (Isa. 49:15,16 NLT)

The practice of tattooing must really be ancient. God Himself assured His people of His faithfulness by saying, "Your name is tattooed on my hand! How I can ever forget you?" God's love and faithfulness are unfailing and eternal. Israel's unfaithfulness and rebellion could not quench God's love because His love is not conditional or dependent on human response. God loves us continually because He is love. Nothing we do can change the way God loves us.

The Good News of the Kingdom is this: **The King of the Heavenly Kingdom is our loving Heavenly Father.** And because God is the only true sovereign ruler (He is above all and not accountable to anyone), there's nothing human beings can do to change Him or His love for them.

After a long history of idol worship and disobedience, Israel was told by God, *"I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to*

myself." (Jer. 31:3 NLT) The Jews may have changed their allegiance many times over, but God's love for them never changed.

After being forgiven of his terrible crime and sin, David can write, *"The Lord is like a father to His children, tender and compassionate to those who fear Him. For he understands how weak we are, He knows we are only dust."* (Psalm 104:13-14 NLT) David was one of the few men in the Bible who really got to know God. In his penitent songs, he describes God as father who is tender and compassionate and who knows how weak we are.

The Good News of the Son is really the Good News about the Father! We discover the doorway to the Kingdom of God when we begin to know God as our loving Heavenly Father. As long as we continue to hold a distorted and warped view of God, we cannot walk into our divine destiny. We would not want to spend eternity with a god who does not love us and whose regard for us is dependent on our performance. In fact, our rejection of this kind of a god is not irrational.

God made human beings for intimacy and for a regal destiny. Though our lives now may be riddled with negative experiences, and though we continue to seek more fulfilling relationships, God's glorious purpose for us remains unchanged. We were made for something much more than the life we live now.

You can trust what the Bible says: *"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God."* (John 1:12 NLT) If you believe in Jesus Christ and have accepted Him as your Savior and Lord, you now belong to God's royal family.

You can know God as your Heavenly Father. When he understood the Good News about the Father, John the beloved apostle could exclaim, *"See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him."* (1 John 3:1 NLT)

You are a child of the King. God is your Heavenly Father and He loves you completely and unconditionally. Your Heavenly Father will never forget you. He has tattooed your name on His hand.