

# God Remembers Us!

Rev. Michael J. Mattil

**Memorial Day** weekend! That means a lot of different things. It should be a reminder to us all to be grateful for those who have given their all that we might enjoy our freedom and way of life here in these United States. It is also a time for graduations and marks the beginning of Summer in our minds. And it is often a time for the release of a big blockbuster movie – at least they hope it will be a blockbuster. This year is no different. The release of *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* has created a quite a buzz. And that reminded me of the first movie in the series released way back in 1981: *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*. That was a great action film and it even had a Biblical connection – they were searching for the Ark of the Covenant which was constructed during the Exodus and represented God’s presence among His chosen people of Israel.

I’m sure many of you know the plot of the movie. Indiana Jones is a globetrotting, swashbuckling archaeologist who gets in and out of dangerous situations as he follows clues to determine the location of the ark. One thing he needs to find is a medallion that has an inscription on it. It is in the possession of an old girlfriend of his, so he goes to get it from her in Nepal. Unfortunately, a Nazi is also looking for the medallion and shows up as well. A fight scene ensues, a fire breaks out and the Nazi spots the medallion that has been heated up by the fire. Here’s what happens next. **[VIDEO CLIP 1]**

You know that had to hurt- grabbing that hot metal and burning his palm, the most sensitive part of the hand. And even though he dropped the medallion and left it behind, the bad guy had a reminder of it, as well as part of the inscription that he needed. **[Video Clip 2 followed by still shot of image seared onto his palm].**

He had a permanent reminder of the medallion. The reason I thought of this and why I bring all of this up on this Memorial Day weekend to remind each of you that you are remembered by God. Listen again to part of today’s Old Testament reading:

***Isaiah 49:13-16 13 Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. 14 But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.” 15 “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.***

At times, we may complain with Zion, *The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.* We can all feel abandoned and forgotten. But our God responds to that complaint by asking a question: *Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?* Unfortunately, when we get past all the pious platitudes about the powerful love of motherhood, we must admit the answer is "yes." A mother can forget her child. We have seen the cruelty that people are able to display in their sinfulness: Women capable of not just forgetting or abandoning their children, but even killing them, before and after birth, without compassion. It may seem unthinkable to us, but it happens. The idea that a mother could forget her own nursing baby is seemingly beyond the realm of possibility, and yet it can and does happen. God's point here is that as powerful as the bond of motherhood is, mothers, by nature, are prone to sin, and therefore they may forget.

But here is God's promise to you: *Though she may forget, I will not forget you!* That is the Good News, God's promise to you. His love and kindness are eternal. That love has found its expression in Jesus Christ, who entered our world to take our sins and pay their cost. Jesus offered Himself to appease God's righteous anger, and He satisfied the judgment that stood against us. God did this because He remembered you and He remembers you still.

*See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.* God has your image with Him at all times, engraved the palms of His hands. Let's think about that terminology that is used here: engraved. Some translations say "inscribed" or "carved." And this engraving is on His palms, the most tender and softest part of his hand. His palms would always be in His sight and therefore in His mind. God remembers you.

And consider how that engraving took place, what was used to put that reminder on His palms: A hammer and nails engraved you on the palms of Jesus' hands. This engraving was **Painful**, yet Jesus was willing to be crucified for our sake. It is also **Permanent**, it will not go away. God Remembers you. You are engraved on the palms of His hands.

In one of the old liturgies of the church known as the Order of Matins, Psalm 95 is set to music in what is known as the Venite, which is Latin for "Come." I grew up singing that and still have those words in my heart:

*Oh come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His also.*

In His hand are the deep places of the earth. The one who holds all creation in His hands, from the highest height to the deepest depth, has me engraved in the palms of His hands. And the same can be said for each of you. And for everyone in this world. Jesus died to pay for the sins of all people. All were engraved in His palms when He let Himself be crucified. And all those who have been led to believe in Jesus by the power of God's Holy Spirit rejoice in His promise of forgiveness, the certainty of His presence with us now, as well as life everlasting. God remembers you. You are always in His sight. And He will be with you.

Listen to how that promise was stated by Jesus in John 10:

***John 10:27-29 <sup>27</sup> My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.***

Nothing can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. No one can take you out of God's loving hands. You are engraved there. Your faith in Jesus assures you of every good promise that God has made. God remembers you.