

# Day Twenty-Three

*So they will put my name on the Israelites,  
and I will bless them.*

*Numbers 6:27*



In Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne wears a scarlet A as punishment for having committed adultery. She is marked for life, and it's a mark of shame.

After Cain kills his brother Abel (Genesis 4:1-16), God puts a mark on Cain to prevent him from being murdered in vengeance for his crime. He is marked for life, and it's a mark of mercy. The Lord gives Cain the mark and with it, time to realize the seriousness of his sin and to repent.

We are marked for life, too. The name of our God has been stamped on us and is refreshed each time we hear anew the words of blessing from Numbers 6. This mark, though not visible to human eyes, is very real even so. The eternal God, Yahweh himself, the Lord, has claimed us as his very own. We belong to him, and he has sworn never to leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).



The mark we bear is a mark of honor. Our Lord says:

*Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have summoned you by name; you are mine. . . .  
You are precious and honored in my sight,  
and . . . I love you.*

*Isaiah 43:1, 4*

Because all this is absolutely true of each of God's children, we can shine as beacons of hope in our dark world. Our lives can light the way for those who are lost, helping them to find their way home to the Father.



Wherever we go, we can "be Jesus" to those around us. No doubt we will fail from time to time in showing Christ's love. We will miss the mark, drop the ball. But even then our Lord will not disown us. He will never disinherit us. He will never stop honoring us, never stop loving us.

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That unconditional acceptance, won for us by our Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary, creates courage in our hearts. It stirs our zeal for the service in which Jesus places us. "We love"—actively, positively, without looking for a reward or payback—"because [Jesus] first loved us" (1 John 4:19). We are marked as Christ's own. Praise him!

**Jesus, I want the new identity you have given me to energize my love. May others see you in me. Amen.**