

In the Potter's Hands

Jeremiah 18:1-11

3/16/03

Intro

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Jeremiah is asked of the Lord to go to the house of a potter because he wants to use it as an opportunity for another illustration for His message to the people of Israel.

There at the potter's house Jeremiah sees the potter making a clay vessel, yet it has an issue of some sort and will not form as the potter intended, so he remade it into a another vessel.

That's when the Lord explains that there are several lessons to be learned from the illustration and that's where we also learn lessons for our lives as well.

These verses are insights into how the Lord molds our lives. There are three aspects that we need look carefully at in order to understand the lesson; the clay, the wheel, and the potter.

I. We are the clay

A. Clay is just common, worthless material

- But in the hand of the Master it becomes something valuable and beautiful

Psalm 139: 14 I will give thanks to you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; "Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well."

II Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not of ourselves.

- Which is what the Lord used in creating Adam
- He "**formed**" man out of the dust of the earth

Illus – When Jesus healed the man who was born blind, He first formed clay and applied it to his eyes.

John 9:6-7 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came *back* seeing.

B. We are clay with an attitude

- We have a will of our own that can talk back to God

Isaiah 45:9 "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—
An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth!
Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?'
Or the thing you are making *say*, 'He has no hands'?"
"Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?'
Or to a woman, 'To what are you giving birth?'"

C. The clay is spoiled in the hand of the potter

- There is something wrong with the clay that the potter wants to form

Illus – Clay that is hard and dry is not moldable. The same is true with clay that has rocks in it is not moldable.

- Many people are hard and dry, even to the point of having rocks in our hearts.

Verse 12 – But they will say, "It's hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his own heart."

- We need to come to the point where we say, “Lord have Your way in me. I submit to the shaping of Your hand.”

II. The clay is fashioned on the wheel

- A. The wheel is a picture of life
 - The potter would spin the wheel around and around by pumping with his foot
 - All of life is happening on the Lord’s pottery wheel
 - These are the circumstances of daily living
- B. We are the work of His hands

Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- C. The process is not always easy

Illus – Nicole and the mystery disease...

- The clay must be molded through being pressured and squeezed in the potter’s hands
- And this is clay that is moldable

Illus – The process is not finished until the clay has been heated. This is a picture of the process of our maturity. Without the heat, we cannot be made ready for use.

But we need to be strengthened in the right form; that which He chooses.

III. The Lord is the potter

- A. Is the Potter equal to the clay?

Isaiah 29: 13-16

- **And He is sovereign over all the nations.**

Verses 7-9

- B. He shapes according to His good pleasure

Ephesians 1:5b “...according to the kind intention of His will.”

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.’”

Illus – Misha only needs to know that I love him.

- C. He remakes the vessel that is broken

- His mercies are new every morning.

Illus – When Peter blew it, Jesus restored him

Conclusion

In the Potter’s hands is the best place to be. May we come to Him moldable and teachable for what He wants to do in our lives.