

The Potter

Jeremiah 18:1-6

Preface

Pam and I have purchased a few pieces of pottery at festivals and other places. We don't buy expensive pottery but rather inexpensive pieces made by unknown potters. I am always fascinated by the tender detail in which potters form and shape their work.

Illus: Show piece of pottery.

In the old and new Testaments, God is referenced as a potter when the Bible speaks of him molding and shaping our lives.

Scripture Text

¹*This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²“Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you my message.” ³So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. ⁴But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.*

⁵*Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶“O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. Jeremiah 18:1-8 NIV*

Introduction

I have heard many sermons on this text. Most go into great details about the intricacies of pottery making and the techniques used to create the pottery.

But the real lesson is not about the pottery making process but rather the intent of the one forming the pottery. There are valuable things we can learn about God as a potter.

Content

1. The Potter's eye is watching you.

Too often we feel as though God is completely overlooking us. People have made the comment to me, “God just doesn't care about me.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. God is always watching you in more ways than you can imagine.

The potter's eye is constantly on the pot watching every turn of the wheel, steady looking for blemishes and imperfections that might need his careful attention.

²⁹*Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Matthew 10:29-31 NIV*

We sing the great gospel hymn that says, “His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me...”

God is constantly watching your life. He is observing your struggles, your challenges, your hardships and your successes.

We must also understand he is watching our faithfulness and our heart's desires. God sees everything about your life.

The potter's eye is watching you.

Do you understand the significance of that today?

2. The Potter's hand is molding you.

Illus: This week my little grandson will be one year old. It is hard to believe this little fellow is already a year old. He is climbing up on everything and he is on the verge of walking. He laughs and plays and is always the center of attention.

I have also watched as he has learned to say a few words and perform many functions. He is learning to get his teeth brushed and he is learning the meaning of the word "No".

It has been a fascinating year. But he didn't just get through this first year on his own. The tender care of his parents have helped him grow from a tiny helpless baby to a growing little boy. Each day and every minute they have been carefully molding his life.

Likewise, God is constantly training us to be who He wants us to become. Romans 9:21 says, *"²¹ Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?"*

Like a potter, God is steady smoothing out the lumps and working in our lives to mold us and make us into who we should become.

We must each ask ourselves a question. Am I making that easy for God or am I making it difficult?

In other words, are we allowing God to shape our lives or do we hinder the work by being stubborn and unwilling to follow?

Hebrews 4:7 says, *"Today, if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts."*

We must allow the power of God to intervene in our lives and shape our lives for his purpose. We must listen and follow.

The potter's hand is molding you.

3. The Potter's heart loves you.

Notice verse 4 reads, *"shaping it as seemed best to him."* God is lovingly shaping us into what he sees is best for us.

The most important words you will ever hear in your life are **"God loves you!"**

Throughout the Bible we are reminded of God's love for us.

When we read today's text, one might get the idea God just toys with our life; shaping us based on feelings at the moment. That is not the case. God is shaping your life based on his enormous love for you.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgression." Ephesians 2:4-5

"Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies." Psalm 36:5

God's love is truly amazing. Have you comprehended it?

Illus: When the now-famous poet Elizabeth Barrett became the wife of Robert Browning, her parents disowned her. Their daughter Elizabeth, however, wrote almost every week, telling them that she loved them and longed for reconciliation. After 10 years, she received a huge box in the mail that contained all the notes she had sent. Not one had been opened! Although these "love letters" have now become a precious part of classical English literature, sadly, the intended recipients never read them. Had they looked at just one, the broken relationship with their daughter might have been healed.

How sad many people never comprehend God's amazing love for them. **The potter's heart loves you.**

Conclusion

Notice in our text the potter starts over with the clay. He takes the same ball of clay but begins to make a new pot.

There are times in our life when we need a fresh start with God. We need to confess our sin and allow God to start over molding our life.

Illus: Last week one of the men in our church came forward and rededicated his life to the Lord. Later in the week he was talking with me and he said, "I'm committed, there is no turning back."

There are times in our life when we need to completely rededicate ourselves to God.

Illus: In the movie Forrest Gump, Jenny and Forrest are childhood friends. Jenny lives with her father who has abused her for years. She has an awful childhood. After her father passes away, she returns home. Standing outside with Forrest she begins to frantically cry and throw rocks at the old house where she grew up.

Forrest sits down and patiently allows her to vent on the old house. Finally he says, "**Sometimes there just aren't enough rocks.**"

We all have times when we feel as though life is out of our control.

We feel like things are just set into motion and we are left to fend for ourselves.

We all have our moments when we feel as though God just isn't paying attention.

We feel as if our prayers, our needs and even our good **deeds are going completely un-noticed by God.**

But that is never the case.

The potter tenderly cares about you.