

Being a Vessel of Blessing

Jeremiah 18:1-6

Introduction – God at work

When the Lord chose to call you and me – He really made a long term investment in a mission project. That is, like a divine contractor, God covenanted within Himself and decided that He would bring you and me to that place where He wants us to be and make us into what He needs us to be. That is, God would provide the material, the patience, the skill, the work, and the energy that would bring His wonderful work to completion in us, His people. With a blue print in His mind and with skill and precision, God has taken on this precious building project, and you and I are a work under construction and being molded by Him.

Ephesians 2:10 states this truth, *“For we are God’s **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* That word “workmanship” means we are God’s “work of art.” You and I are God’s masterpiece. We are His work of art. When we look at ourselves this way, we begin to understand our incredible value in Christ. Indeed, as C. S. Lewis said, “We are a Divine work of art, something that God is making...something with which He will not be satisfied until it has a certain character.”

God has a plan for us

In Jeremiah 29:10 we read, *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

Philippians 1:6, *“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

God has begun a good work in you and me and He is going to bring it to completion when Christ comes for us at the rapture, when we are taken away to be with Him. God is shaping and molding us into a vessel that will honour and glorify Him. Let’s look at that process of shaping and molding in Jeremiah 18:1-6. In this passage we are taught that God is the potter and we are the clay that He is fashioning into a vessel for His use.

The Potter’s House

The prophet Jeremiah is told by God to go to the potter’s house where he will receive a message for the people. The message is a parable in which God is showing a parallel between the physical and the spiritual. Let’s see...

Process in molding a vessel

1. Clay

Clay: is made up of dust and water as in Genesis when God created humanity out of the dust of the earth and blew the breath of life into humanity. Our lives are like clay in God’s hands.

Job 33:6, *“I am the same as you in God’s sight; I too am a piece of clay.”*

Isaiah 64:8, *“Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.”*

2. Clean the impurities

The debris and impediments have to be removed.

The clay is in the potter's hand and under his control. The defects were in the clay, not the hand of the potter.

The potter's perseverance must not be overlooked. God doesn't give up on us even with our impediments and flaws He patiently works on our lives.

Ezekiel 11:19, *"I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh."*

3. Apply water

Water takes away the dryness, the spiritual dryness and to be more flexible and pliable in God's hands. The Holy Spirit is often represented with the imagery of water, symbolizing His power to wash us clean of sin and nourish us spiritually.

John 7:37-39, *"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."*

4. Molding stage

The potter forms and gives shape to the clay.

Psalms 139:13-14, *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."*

Romans 9:20-21, *"But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? 'Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?"*

The meaning of this parable of the potter in Jeremiah is in this stage, the stage of molding and forming. Just as the potter remade the clay to conform to his purpose, so the Lord's will and power continue to mold God's people until they are conformed to His plan and purpose.

The parallel between humanity and the clay must not be carried too far. Humans, as clay, are not passive. If a person repents God can rework him or her into a vessel of honour. The position is not one of blotting out the person's choice. Ultimately no one is free but God in His mysterious working in human life has ordered it so that humanity may choose. In this passage the point is neither denial nor affirmation of human freedom.

5. Firing stage

Fire strengthens. When we go through trials and difficulties they help to strengthen our faith.

1 Peter 1:6-7, *“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”*

6. Decorating stage

Lord paints our lives with love, patience, kindness, self control, humility etc. It’s the fruit of the Spirit, the good virtues and qualities.

Galatians 5:22-23, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...”*

7. To Utilize

We are vessels and instruments of God, to be used for his purpose and glory.

Romans 6:13, *“Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.”*

2 Corinthians 4:7-9, *“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”*

Ephesians 2:10, *“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

Biblical Examples

God builds and molds his church on a bunch of misfits and imperfect people:

- 1) Give me a murderer like Moses and I’ll turn him into a liberator.
- 2) Give me a dreamer like Joseph and I’ll turn him into a co-commander over Egypt.
- 3) Give me a prostitute like Rahab and I’ll turn her into a righteous woman
- 4) Give me a shepherd boy like David and I’ll turn him into a king.
- 5) Give me a fisherman like Peter and I’ll turn him into an apostle.
- 6) Give me a tax collector like Zacchaeus and I’ll turn him into a disciple.
- 7) Give me a persecutor like Paul and I’ll turn him into a preacher.
- 8) Give me an adulterer like the woman at the well and I’ll turn her into an evangelist.

Conclusion

In looking at these biblical characters aren’t you glad that there is hope for you and me? Aren’t you glad that God is working patiently in our lives and molding us into the vessel He wants us to be? All God wants is you to be pliable and flexible in His hands. Surrender your life to Him.

Philippians 1:6 (The Message), *“There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.”*

Lord, make me a vessel of blessing!