

OLD UNION MINISTERS SCHOOL
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VESSELS OF HONOR

LESSON: II Timothy 2:19-26

TEXT: II Timothy 2:21

A *vessel* may be defined as any object that is used as a container. Vessel is most-often used to translate the Hebrew word of the Old Testament, pronounced *kel-ee*, which had a variety of applied meanings, from implements to containers, and the Greek word of the New Testament pronounced *sky-oos*, which also had a number of applied meanings, most of which were very similar to that for the Hebrew word, implements or containers.

The most common form of vessels were cups, bowls or jugs used for storage of liquid or dry consumer goods. Vessels were made from stone, pottery, wood (barrels), straw or reeds (baskets), leather or metals ranging from copper and bronze to silver and gold. There were routine household vessels and there were holy vessels used in the Tabernacle and the Temple.

These verses from II Timothy tell us about two kinds of vessels, vessels that bring honor to God and vessels that bring dishonor to God. God is looking for honorable vessels who will purge themselves from every contaminating influence that is holding them back from service. He searches for those who will turn away from the evil ways of the world and prepare themselves for the Master's use. There is much work to be done. God longs for willing servants who are ready to report for duty whenever He summons them. However, one thing needs to be made clear. Our goodness does not make us vessels of honor. It is our obedience to God's goodness that drives us to purify ourselves, as he is pure.

I John 3:2-3

2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Knowing that it is our obedience to His goodness that qualifies us, we can decide what kind of vessel we will become.

If there is one quality that sets apart a vessel of honor from that of a vessel of dishonor, it would be the quality of endurance!

II Timothy 4:7

7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*

A vessel of honor is so dedicated to the service of God; they will endure and outlast all the wiles of the devil sent to stop that work. A vessel of honor will stay with God, cooperating with the Holy Spirit to work out every last impurity that could be standing in the way of service.

Romans 12:1-2

1. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

2. *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

It may seem presumptuous for us to consider that we can become vessels that God honors. Aren't we supposed to give God all the honor and glory? Yes, and that is precisely the point. **We do not honor God, when we do not serve Him with our life.** Jesus describes how valuable our life truly is.

John 12:26

26. *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.*

In most homes there are containers which are used to either display or conceal its' contents, to expose its beauty or hide its ugliness. If one has an old crate filled with beautiful and unique objects, they raise the lid of the crate so that the beauty which is within may be exposed, and the Glory that's within brings honor to the vessel which holds it. It's no longer just an "old crate" but becomes a **"Vessel of Honor"** because of what it contains. Before, when it was empty it was useless and now having been **FILLED** it has become most useful. The old crate in itself is worthless without the goods, but as long as it is **filled with "valuable contents"** it becomes valuable, useful, as it is now an honorable vessel used to store **priceless and valuable goods**. Everyone will acknowledge it as the vessel which holds the beauty within and although outwardly it may appear to be torn and tattered, to the eye of the beholder and because of its contents, it will shine like gold.

On the other hand, if the "old crate" is used to store worthless and useless things, then the lid of that crate may remain closed in order to conceal the uncleanness within. There may even be an attempt to try and beautify the visible parts of the crate that the attention may be drawn to **IT** and not its contents. If it can become something pleasing to the eye to those who view it, then no one will question it's contents until one day when the lid must be raised and then ALL will see what's been hidden inside, for a vessel filled with useless things will be shown to have no value.

The vessels we use daily can become worn and dirty. Dishes and eating utensils are washed so they can be used again. You would not drink from a dirty glass. These vessels must be cleaned daily in order to be used another day.

II Corinthians 7:1

1. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We do not give thanks for the plate, spoon, or fork. We as vessels should never seek honor or credit for ourselves.

Matthew 23:12

12. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased;

Lot is not a good example of a vessel of honor, read **Genesis 19**

II Peter 2:8

8. for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;

David dishonored God by falling to temptation with Bathsheba.

II Samuel 11:3-4

3. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

4. And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

II Samuel 12:9

9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight?

Joseph could have succumbed to temptation but he honored God by being faithful to him.

Gen. 39:7-9

7. And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

8. But he refused and said unto his master's wife, Behold my master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

9. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

In the **MASTER'S GREAT HOUSE** there are many vessels. Some are filled with the things which honors and some the things that dishonors. The crate itself having no value will become valuable after being filled with honorable and good things and the master then uses such to Glorify Himself. The Lord desires every vessel which has been purchased with His blood, to be used as **"Vessels of Honor"**.

Let us each examine our vessels today. When we remove the lids, what is found inside? Have we used our vessels to HONOR Him, or dishonor him? Are they filled with wickedness and impurity, or goodness and holiness? Is the greatest gift **"LOVE"** found inside our vessels or does hate fill its crevices? Are our vessels filled with anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, lies, strife, divisions, judgements, jealousies and the like, or are they filled with joy, peace, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness? Have we used our vessels to hurt or to heal, to tear apart or build up, to ridicule or reach out in LOVE to another brother or sister? Do we walk accordingly as our MASTER instructed, or have we walked as we desired? Have we been led by the Spirit of God the Father, or driven by the lust of our own flesh? Have others notice Him in us or do they only see US! Is there light found in our vessels, or has it been smothered and covered in darkness? One last question..... If our beloved Savior were to lift the lids to our hearts today, would he be pleased at what he may find? Would he keep the lid raised high to expose the good treasures within for all to see, or will he have to lower it shut until all useless and worthless items are removed? Would He be able today to use YOU, to use ME as.....**"Vessels of Honor"**