

Title: Resting in the Potter's Hand
Text: Jeremiah 18: 1-11
Date: August 14, 1011
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

I visited a potter's studio recently so this message has been working since then. Read Jeremiah 18: 1-11.

I. YOU AND I ARE IN THE HANDS OF GOD AS THE CLAY IN THE POTTER'S HAND.

Jeremiah 18: 6:...Behold, as the clay *is* in the potter's hand, so *are* ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

All men literally are clay created of God from dust.

Genesis 2: 7: And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

God is not in our hands. We are in his hands. God is not ruled by our will. We are ruled by his will. As God dug Israel out of the red-dirt bondage of Egypt, so God has taken out of this lump of fallen humanity a people for himself—*called in Romans 9: 23: "vessels of honor which he had afore prepared unto glory."*

Isaiah 64:8: But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father; we *are* the clay, and thou our potter; and we all *are* the work of thy hand."

God has the power and right to do with his own what he will---"*O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter."* What did the potter do?

Jeremiah 18: 3: Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. (Notice it does not say wheel)

The "wheels" of the potter are a good representation of God working all things together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called, according to his purpose (Romans 8: 28-31.)

God eternally purposed to have a people for himself—saved by his grace, by his Son, quickened by his Spirit, molded by his hand. All whom God chose in Christ, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. So that everything that comes to pass in time is God fulfilling this eternal purpose which he purposed from eternity.

Ephesians 1:5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,...11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

As a potter uses the wheels to shape the clay—God works all things in providence to mold his people into the image of Christ Jesus

Illustration: Two things a potter does on the wheels.

One, as a potter turns the wheels, he takes his hand and centers the lump of clay—the potter makes the vessel take the shape he wants from that center point—Christ is that Center.

Romans 8: 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Also a lump of clay is full of silica—many little individual pebbles, grit, particles—that make up the lump. Those particles are all facing different directions. If you shaped a raw piece of clay took it straight to the furnace—under the fire—those stiff particles will cause the vessel to break apart. So the potter works the clay up and down to turn those particles all in the same direction—UP! Then when the vessel goes into the heat, the fire tempers and the vessel is strong—a vessel of honor.

Everything God is doing in providence is God’s hand shaping his vessels of mercy—you and I who are called by his sovereign grace. He is making us pliable in his hand, turning all his children in one direction—to Christ who is alone all our Righteousness, yea, all our salvation.

- God the Father chose his people unto salvation in Christ
- Christ has redeemed his people from all iniquity
- Christ is He to whom the Spirit of God draws us

So the first lesson is this: God is the Potter—absolutely, irresistibly sovereign in the salvation of his people—able to do with his own whatever pleases him--even as the potter has power over the clay. “*Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand!*”

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.*

II. GOD EXERCISES HIS SOVEREIGN POWER IN EQUITY AND JUSTICE.

When God gives his light to a people, and they begin to turn from his Salvation, turn from walking in the light God has given, God gives plenty of warning and space to repent. If they repent, God delights to show mercy.

Jeremiah 18: 7: *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; 8: If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*

There is no one to rejoice in for this but God. But if that people harden their hearts—like a pebble-filled lump of clay—the Potter will take away his presence and bring to pass his promised wrath. There is no one to blame but the sinner

Jeremiah 18: 9 *And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; 10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.*

God’s grace is sovereign, free, not based on men’s works whether good or evil, and his salvation is accomplished entirely of God’s will—of the Potter’s Hand—accomplished by Christ Jesus alone—there are no accidents with our Potter, no marred vessels which take him by surprise.

Romans 9: 11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated....15: For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will

have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16: So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Colossians 1: 12: Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

But if a sinner attempts to come to God any other way but Christ alone, the condemnation is entirely because of man's own sin and rebellion. The wages of sin are death. God does not predestinate men to hell, men go to hell because they earn it. God is the God of justice—all his works are right and just.

John 3: 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

III. SALVATION IS ENTIRELY OF GOD TROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS ALONE.

God is speaking to the nation of Israel. Everything the LORD gave to Israel declared salvation is in Christ alone: the mercy seat—Christ is the Propitiation—the mercy seat, the High Priest—Christ is the High Priest, the Lamb—Christ is the Lamb. This was the great offense--the majority in that nation were attempting to come to God some other way? They were still keeping up a form of godliness—but their hearts were far from God. Drop down to chapter 19.

Jeremiah 19: 4: Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; 5: They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.

So God sent his prophet to preach this word.

Jeremiah 18: 11: Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.

How does a sinner make our ways and our doings good?

John 6: 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

2 Corinthians 5:21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

But what did they do?

Jeremiah 18: 12: And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart. 13 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing. 14 Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon *which cometh* from the rock of the field? [Christ is the Snow of

Lebannon—the holiness and righteousness of his people, Christ is the Rock] **or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?** [Christ is the Water of Life come down from heaven in a dry and thirsty land] **15: Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;**...[Christ is the Way, the Way Cast Up—up on the cross, up to the right hand of God, up in the gospel]...**18: Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah;** [Jeremiah is God’s prophet—but being sent of God—he stands here as a picture of Christ. Christ is THE PROPHET and Christ and his ambassador’s are one!] **for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.** [Jeremiah prays to the Father] **19: Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me.** [“Ask of me God said to Christ his King—thou shalt break them as a potter’s vessel (Read Psalm 2—now see Jeremiah as a type of Christ)]...**19: 1: Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter’s earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests;**...**10: Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, 11 And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter’s vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.**

Illustration: He squashed it flat

Isaiah 45: 9: Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! *Let* the potsherd *strive* with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Application: Not as though the word of God hath taken no effect—they are not all Israel which are of Israel—but in Christ the Promised Son the true Israel are called—Jeremiah was one of those and there are some here this morning! Have you heard his Voice this day?

1. We are but “*clay—but oh, we are clay in the Potter’s hand.*”
2. Our LORD God exercises his sovereign will in righteousness and equity!—he is faithful and just!
3. Oh, turn unto Christ, cast all care into his hands, and forsake him not—so shall thy ways and doings be good in God’s sight.

And let me send you home singing this song! Our omnipotent, gracious, sovereign Potter, will never suffer his chosen vessels of mercy to be marred in his hand!

Isaiah 44: 21: I have formed thee; thou *art* my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

Isaiah 43: 21: This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

Isaiah 60: 21: Thy people also *shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Amen!