

Jeremiah 18,19

1-29-98

1. Intro:

- 1.1. Each one of these pottery pieces tell a story.
 - 1.1.1. **Qumron** – A scribe for a day.
 - 1.1.2. **Shiloh** – Set apart for the Lord.
 - 1.1.3. **Tel Marisha** – Historical Accuracy of the Bible.
 - 1.1.4. **Lamp** – Not to place it under a bushel.
- 1.2. The Lord loves using this picture of himself as a Potter!
 - 1.2.1. As far back as **Gen.2:7** “And the LORD God **formed** man of the dust of the ground,” – (yatsar - to mould into a form; espec. as a potter;)¹
- 1.3. Here in **ch.18** we have a vessel in the making.
- 1.4. **2 Parables:** Pottery Watching! & Pottery Smashing!

2. **POTTERY WATCHING! CH.18**

3. Watching the Potter! (1-4)

- 3.1. 30 Hebrew words are used for pottery. It was a major industry in the Near East.
- 3.2. **Note:** He received this message not in prayer, not in church(Temple), not from his Pastor, but while watching a man throw a pot in **his daily work**.
 - 3.2.1. “God reveals Himself in strange places & at unexpected seasons. For instance He once revealed Himself in a stable!”²
 - 3.2.2. See if you can find God in the natural!
 - 3.2.3. That’s what devotion books are all about: “**Finding spiritual application, from day to day observation!**” (me)

¹ Strongs

² Charles E. Jefferson

- 3.3. The potter worked a **wheel** that was made of 2 parallel stone wheels attached by a shaft. He turned the bottom wheel w/his feet.
- 3.3.1. It is a comfort to know **God** is the Potter who spins the wheel of “life”. He alone controls its speed. {book-stop the world I want to get off!}³
- 3.4. **Vs.4** – Here the emphasis is on the “**remaking**”!
- 3.4.1. We see great examples of the Lord remaking many individuals: Peter, Saul of Tarsus; Matthew, me!
- 3.4.2. **Q:** Is there anyone we’ve given up on? - God is soooo Patient!
- 3.4.3. The Scottish preacher **Alexander Whyte** used to say, “that the victorious Christian life was a “series of new beginning’s.”
- 3.4.4. God gave new beginning’s to **Abraham** after lying; **Moses** after misrepresenting him; **David** after his adultery; **Jonah** after his running; **Peter** after his denying; & he can do the same for **us** today!
- 3.5. Jeremiah watched & saw the clay **resisting** the potters hand so that the vessel was ruined.
- 3.5.1. But the Potter patiently kneaded the clay into another vessel.
- 3.5.2. This was written in the early years, when they could still repent.
- 3.5.3. I remember 3 ways to **start over** on a vessel. Collapse it; Cut it down; or squeeze it.
- 3.5.3.1. **Collapse** – Someone’s world wcanill collapse in on them, maybe a tragedy happens in there life that reshapes them.
- 3.5.3.2. **Cut it down** – Sometimes our pride needs to be cut down.
- 3.5.3.3. **Squeeze it** – Other times the Lord puts a squeeze on our finances or something to get our attention.
- 3.5.4. I heard sometimes a potter has to beat on the clay w/a wooden mallet to get all the bubbles out of the clay...**Apply that!**

4. God Fashions Clay! (5-10)

- 4.1. **Vs.6** - We are not in the hands of an invisible force but in the hands of a person, Almighty God! {Clay cannot mold itself}

³ Erma Bombeck?

4.1.1. **Rom.9:19-21** "You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?"

4.1.2. What other **hands** has God used to mold your life?

4.1.2.1. Parents; siblings; teachers; coaches; ministries; pastors;...

4.1.2.2. By resisting these, we are resisting the hand of God!

4.1.2.3. **Rom.13:1,2** "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever **resists** the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves."

4.2. **Vs.7-10** - As the Potter had power over the clay, so God has Sov.

Authority over the nations.

4.2.1. "God is not irresponsible nor arbitrary in what He does. He is free to act as he pleases. His actions are always consistent w/his nature, which is Holy, just, wise, & loving."⁴

4.2.2. Remember He doesn't need our advice, nor do we have the right to criticize what he does.

4.2.2.1. **Rom.11:34** "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?"

4.2.2.2. **Rom.9:20** "O man, who are you to reply against God?"

4.3. **Vs.10** – God doesn't change in character nor needs to Repent of his actions, but He has the Sov. Freedom to alter His actions depending upon the responses of the people.

5. God Fashions a Plan! (11-17)

5.1. **Vs.11** - "fashioning" – another Hebrew word related to the word potter.

5.2. **Vs.13** – "a very horrible thing" – a strong term for idolatry.

5.3. **Vs.14** – Imagine leaving a delicious pure spring, to drink from the gutter(idolatry).

⁴ www

- 5.4. **Vs.15** – They weren't on God's safe highway, but on a detour down a dangerous & painful pathway!
 - 5.4.1. A pathway was narrow, insufficient, & dangerous.
- 5.5. **Vs.17** – God was turning His back on them.
- 5.6. “**East wind**” – **Ps.48:7** “As when You break the ships of Tarshish With an east wind.”
 - 5.6.1. Now the Lord will be like a **wind**, not to **save** but to **scatter** them.

6. The Conspiracy! (18)

- 6.1. Proud sinners do not like hearing about Gods sovereignty, nor about God's judgment.
 - 6.1.1. They think that if they silence the messenger they will silence the Lord. **Ps.2:4** “He who sits in the heavens shall **laugh**; The LORD shall hold them in derision(mockery/ridicule).”
- 6.2. **Their argument:** We have plenty of priests, prophets, & elders. We can do w/o Jeremiah.
- 6.3. “**w/the tongue**” – His enemies plotted a “smear campaign” consisting of lies about him.”
 - 6.3.1. The plot probably included quotes from his messages that suggested he was a traitor to Judah. **How?** (a traitor because he was speaking against Judah)
 - 6.3.2. **Q:** “If a doctor detects cancer is he nicer to not burden you with such bad news?”
- 6.4. Faithful servants don't **enjoy** opposition but they do learn to **expect** it!
 - 6.4.1. **Jn.16:33** “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

7. Jeremiah's Agony! (19-23)

- 7.1. This is Jeremiah's **5th lament** concerning his situation.
- 7.2. His words seem **pretty harsh** – but remember he is a divinely sent prophet speaking for God.
 - 7.2.1. At least he is honest before God!
- 7.3. **God will remake you & remake you,...till you get too hard, then one day...His only option is to shatter you!**

8. **POTTERY SMASHING! CH.19**

8.1. Intro:

8.1.1. In **ch.18** we had a vessel in the making; **now** we have a vessel hardened beyond changing! Fit only to be smashed!

8.1.2. In **ch.18** – He went down to the **Potters house** & watched a vessel in the making; **ch.19** he takes a completed vessel & breaks it down at the **garbage sight**.

8.1.3. Worse than being “unworkable” is when it has “set up”.

8.2. **Vs.2** – What a fitting place – at the gate of broken pottery, the rubbish gate; the dung gate, located at the so. end of the city.

8.2.1. Where they practiced their Idolatry, where is symbolic of Ghenna.

8.3. **Vs.9** – **A terrible prediction** – During the Babylonian siege, food became so scarce that people became cannibals, even eating their own children.

8.4. **Vs.15** - “**stiff necks**” – They didn’t have doubts about God, but pure 100% “unbelief”.

8.4.1. “Doubt is can't believe; unbelief is **won't** believe. Doubt is honesty; unbelief is **obstinacy**. Doubt is looking for light; unbelief is **content with darkness**.”⁵

9. **End:**

9.1. He is the Potter, he controls the wheel, he molds the clay. Trials are the furnaces (as we know the vessel is no good w/o going thru the furnace.)

9.2. **When the time was right, God left His potters wheel & climbed into the clay!**

9.3. **Is.64:8** “But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the **clay**, and You our **potter**; And all we are the work of **Your hand**.”

⁵ John Drummond (1851-1897)