

Pictures of the People of God

Seeing ourselves through God's Eyes.

Pt 3: The Potter and the Clay

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Jan 30th

REFLECTION: God uses many different Parables and Pictures in order to help us better understand how he sees us. Over the past few weeks we've learned that God sees us as:

A Buried Treasure (Mt 13:44) and A Precious Pearl. Mt 13:45,46 ("goodly"= kalos {valuable})

Both parables reflect the value placed on us by describing the Price of our Redemption;

But the Pearl parable focuses on the Process of our Perfection.

DIRECTION: This morning we're going to look at another facet of our relationship with God. In Jer. 18, God told Jeremiah to take a walk to the Potter's shop in order to better understand our relationship with God.

Jer 18:6 *"cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand"*

The Bible repeatedly compares us to Clay.

Gen 2:7 *"the LORD God formed man of the dust (āpār: grey dust/clay) of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."*

Job 10:8-9 *"Thine hands have made me and fashioned me ... thou hast made me as the clay"*

Job 13:12 *"Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay."*

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

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE POTTER. Perfection: (telios: Complete)

A. The Potter sees The "Finished Product" Before He Begins. Jer. 29:11; Jer. 1:5

1) He begins with an end in view. Eph. 2:10

Michelangelo when asked how he could turn a slab of marble into a beautiful horse responded:

"I Simply cut away everything that doesn't look like a horse."

2) We were "Selected" with an "end" in view! (Ro. 8:28,29; Jer. 29:11) "an expected end"

B. The Plotter (Devil) Fuels Our Resistance/Rebellion To The Potter.

1) Sin (hamartanō: Missing the mark) is anything that keeps us from God's design.

(Ro. 14:23) "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

(a) Sin gets us "off center" of God's will.

(b) This usually results in the vessel being *"marred in the hands of the potter."* (Jer. 18:4)

(shāhat: decayed, ruined)

2) As long as we're willing to stay on the wheel and submit to the Potter, there's hope because

he can repair or remake us. Jer. 18:4 *"so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."*

Jer. 18:6 *"cannot I do with you as this potter?"* Also Jer. 29:11

2. THE PROCESS OF THE POTTER. (Sanctification: hagiasmos: Purify)

A. SELECTING. *"I have chosen you..."* John 15:16

1) He searches for the right type of clay. (Often "miry") Lk 19:10

2) He pulls us from the pit! He removes the clay from the muddy pit! Ps 40:2

a) This represents "Salvation". (Deliverance) God loves you like you are,
but He loves you too much to leave you like you are! (Col. 1:13)

B. CLEANSING. (Miry means muddy; it must be washed!)

Is. 64:8 comes after Is. 64:6! *"We are all as an unclean thing..."*

1) He removes the mud from the clay.

a) This is done through His Word! Eph. 5:25,26; Titus 3:5,6

His Word (Truth/Light) exposes our “mud”. (Darkness/deception) 1 Jn 1:5-9

b) The Bible calls this “Sanctification. 1 Thes. 4:3 *“This is the will of God, even your sanctification.”*
(Hagiasmos’: purification from hagiozo: to consecrate/separate)

2) He removes the pebbles and impurities from the clay.

a) The water cleanses the mud, but the “Working” of the clay reveals the impurities.

b) This is a painful process. (He “works the clay” to bring impurities to the surface.)

c) Our “painful” problems don’t cleanse us, but often “reveal” what’s inside that needs to be removed. (Attitudes, bitterness, selfish motives, anger, pride, etc.)

d) Impurities” not found and removed here will come out later cause more problems.

ILLUSTRATE: Where is selfishness best dealt with: In children or adults?

C. SHAPING. He places the shapeless clay on the wheel and begins to shape it.

1) Other “Deeper” impurities that were not removed earlier often surface at this stage.

“The vessel that he made ... was marred in the hand of the potter.” Jer. 18:4

2) We often react or reject the potter’s design and become “Stiff-necked” in His hands.

Pro. 3:5,6 “Trust in the Lord...lean not unto thine own understanding...in all thy ways...”

Ps. 37:5,6 “Trust in the LORD...delight thyself also in the lord.”

Delight: *aw-nag’* to be soft or pliable.

Ps. 37: 23 “The steps of a good man are ordered by the lord and he delighteth in his way.”

Delighteth : khaw-fates’: to incline or bend. To be pleased with and desire.

3) God uses many things to “SHAPE US” Ro. 8:28,29; James 1:2-5

D. FIRING.

1) Any impurities that remain will usually cause “Cracks” at this point.

2) We will be “tempted” to cover our cracks with “Wax” to hide them. (Sincere!!!)

a) This isolates us from the very sources of help / grace God intends for us. James 4:6,7

3) God uses the “Fire” of pressures, problems, and “people” to accomplish this step.

➤ 1 Peter 1:7 *“That the trial of your faith, ..., though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ “*

➤ Isaiah 48:10,11 *“I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. “*

E. PAINTING. *“We have this treasure in earthen vessels..” 2 Cor 4*

1) God “decorates us” with Grace and Gifts to bless others and further His purposes.

2) This may make it (us) more “attractive” but the value of the vessel is tied to its

Purity and Purpose!

Conclusion: If God does the Selecting, Cleansing, Shaping, Firing, And Painting...

What’s our “Part” in this “Partnership”? Cooperation!

➤ To stay Pliable. (Ps. 37:5,6)

➤ And Centered in the Wheel. (His Will)

Ro. 12:1,2 *“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God... 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.”*

Application: Are you willing to resist the tendency to be “conformed” to this world?
And Submit to the Transforming Touch of the Master’s Hand?