

## The Potter and the Clay; Romans 9:19-21

### I. Ceramic Art

#### A. Starts with a lump of clay

1. The clay has to be moist and soft; malleable
2. The clay cannot be hard or dried out when it goes on the wheel or it will just crumble into pieces;
3. You can add water to the hard, dried clay to make it soft and malleable
4. The clay has to be workable in order for the potter to mold it

#### B. The wheel spins

1. The potter begins to work the clay from the lump into something only the potter has the vision of
2. The potter is the one who decides what this clay will turn into
3. The clay has no ability to mold itself

#### C. The Potter works

1. It is no longer a lump of clay, but a work of art
2. The potter's handiwork is clearly seen all over the clay
3. We can see intricate details in the clay work
4. We can see fine craftsmanship in the form and painting of the clay

#### D. The Pot performs

1. The potter make pots for different uses
2. The pot does not decide what it's use is
  - a) A tea pot does not really work as a plant holder
  - b) A grain holder does not really work as a water pot
  - c) The idea is that the pot functions best when used for its purpose

### II. Lumps of Clay

#### A. We are the lumps of clay

1. Lamentations 4:2; The precious sons of Zion, worth their weight in fine gold, how they are regarded as earthen pots, the work of a potter's hands!

#### B. We must be soft, ready to be molded; workable, to be spun into a useful tool

1. Matthew 13:3–9; 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, 6 but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears, let him hear."

#### C. We have control over what type of clay we are; soft and malleable, or hard and dried out

1. Soft and workable clay is ready for the hand of the Potter
  - a) We read His word and are willing to be used by Him and for Him
  - b) We concentrate on things like the fruit of the Spirit
    - (1) Galatians 5:22–23; 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
  - c) We think on the things of God
    - (1) Philippians 4:8–9; 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise,

think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

2. Hard and dried out clay needs to be softened
  - a) We read the Word of God, but some are not ready to hear what it says
  - b) We argue about the “exact point of salvation” instead of reading and heeding the words that God wrote down for us
  - c) Francis Chan, “Simple Truth About Baptism”
    - (1) “Can I be a Christian without being baptized?”
    - (2) “Can I get the Holy Spirit without being baptized?”
    - (3) “Can I be a Christian without repenting?”
    - (4) Why do you ask?
    - (5) They (the first century Israelites) asked one question, “What shall we do” (Acts 2:37)
    - (6) Peter’s response in Acts 2:38
    - (7) They didn’t ask any questions after that
  - d) Hard, dried up clay would rather theologize and ask questions that fit their own ideas and beliefs and muddy the clear water of the Word
  - e) But all you have to do to hard dried out clay is add water and it becomes soft and malleable again

D. What type of clay are we?

### III. The Potter Works

A. God works His plan in the Old Testament

1. From the very beginning, He tells Eve of the Savior (Genesis 3:15)
2. He tells Abraham of the Savior (Genesis 12:3)
3. He tells Moses of the Savior (Deuteronomy 18:15)
4. Both Abraham and Moses change God’s mind (Genesis 18:22-33; Exodus 32:7-14)
5. He keeps the Israelites from total annihilation (Esther)
6. He tries to keep the Israelites from Idolatry (all the prophets)
7. He gives Daniel prophetic visions of the future (and sure enough it all happens as God planned it)

B. God’s plan comes to fruition through the Christ

1. Jesus performs many miraculous signs designed to bring people to belief
2. The Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
3. They Holy Spirit and the Gentiles (Acts 10)
4. The signs and wonders done by the Apostles and those they laid their hands on

C. There should be no question in our minds about God’s intervention in our lives

1. He has not simply started us (the clay) spinning and walked away
2. No matter how long you leave the clay spinning on the wheel, it will not miraculously become a pot
3. The clay must have His input, His hands in direct contact with the clay (us)

### IV. The Pot Performs

A. When the Potter is done with the put, it is put into service

B. Our life as a pot is a very short one

1. James 4:14; yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

C. What are we concerned with?

1. With the mist that appears then vanishes?
2. With the eternity we spend either with or without God?

D. What are we to do?

1. Preach the Gospel

- a) 2 Timothy 4:1–2; 1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

2. Be fruit

- a) Ephesians 5:8–9; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),  
b) Colossians 1:10; so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

3. Be salt and light

- a) Matthew 5:13–16; 13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.  
b) “As one of the most essential articles of diet, salt symbolized hospitality; as an antiseptic, durability, fidelity and purity.” Smith’s Bible Dictionary

E. God has also given us individual tasks; to teach, preach, give, exhort, encourage

1. Romans 12:3–8; 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

2. Yet, some of us refuse to be the pot the Potter has made

- a) Jeremiah 18:1–6; 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 “Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” 3 So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. 4 And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 6 “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

3. The good news is that we can be reworked!

F. Whatever your function is, do it with zeal!

V. The Potter and the Clay

- A. 2 Corinthians 4:5–7; 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of

God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

- B. He is the Potter and we are the Clay
- C. Let the Potter make what He will
- D. You, the clay, perform as you were made