

The LORD said: “Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.”
(Jeremiah 18:6)

Everlasting God, you are the Potter and we are the clay. We give you thanks for molding us and shaping us to fulfill your mission in this sinful world. Use us as your vessels of mercy towards others. Thank you for the love and compassion you pour out upon us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Introduction

God told the Prophet Jeremiah to go to the local potter’s house, where he would give Jeremiah a visual lesson. Like a potter who molds and remolds the clay according to his purpose, God himself is the one who makes us into the people that he would have us be.

Read: Jeremiah 18:1-11, 18-20

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

When we hear the word “prophecy,” what often comes to mind are predictions of the future. But the prophets were not simply fortune tellers, nor were they people who simply made guesses about things to come.

Prophets were messengers who spoke the direct message of God. Sometimes this message had to do with future events — like the bad results of the people’s bad actions. But prophecy is also a call to action. Too often people take their faith in God for granted. The prophets help us realize that the Lord is real and that God is acting in our lives every day!

In the Book of Jeremiah, we hear not only the message that God gave to the prophet to speak, we also hear about events from the prophet’s life and his own experience of suffering and loss. The book leads up to the conquering of Judah by the King of Babylon.

Discussion Questions

1. In our story today, where did God send Jeremiah? Why did God send the prophet there *before* he gave Jeremiah his message?
2. According to verse 4, what did Jeremiah see happen to the potter’s work? What did the potter do about it? Did the ruined clay vessel prevent the potter from getting his work done?
3. God said: “Like the clay is in the potter’s hand, so you are in my hand” (v. 6). How might that be both a frightening and a comforting thought? Who is the one in charge — the potter or the clay?
4. If God is Creator of this universe, why is there so much evil in the world? What has gone wrong? What does God say he is able to do when things go badly?
5. In verse 11, what did God say he was going to do to his people in Judah because of their sin? Did God’s punishment mean he did not love his people? What did God want them to do?
6. When in your life have you seen God take something bad and turn it into something good? Have you ever looked back on hard times and seen how they helped you to grow or become a better person?
7. Read Romans 9:14-24. From what you read here, does it seem like God sits back and lets human beings do what we want? Or is God actually involved in the world and in our lives? How so?
8. On the most basic level, faith equals trust. Knowing God is our Maker, what reason(s) do we have for trusting him?