

In the Potters Hands - Part 2

by Jenny Daniel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of total submission to God as the potter, allowing Him to shape our lives into vessels of honor despite our imperfections and trials.

Duration: 44:45

Scripture: Exodus 8:25, Psalm 106:15, Titus 2:10

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Salvation Invitation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about two boys and a tap to illustrate how we often try to take control of our own lives instead of letting God be the potter. The speaker then recalls a moment when their child, Roy, obediently followed the water restrictions and turned off the tap tightly. This act of obedience brought joy and a sense of heaven's presence. The sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God's work in our lives and accepting His invitation for salvation. It warns that there will come a day when it will be too late to respond to God's call.

Transcript

I think let's have a word of prayer before I start. Oh Father, we thank Thee that we can pray to Thee, and that Thou art always waiting to hear our prayers. And Father, I just pray that this morning Thou will come and tenderly speak to us, each one of us, Lord.

May we hear Thy voice, showing us the way to go. Use me, Father, in Thy mercy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

And yesterday was an invitation to you and I to come into His hands. And we went to look with Jeremiah a little bit at the potter's house. We visited with him and we saw the potter's house and we saw the clay.

And we saw that the clay was marred in the hands of the potter, and how the potter remade it. And we discussed the response of Judah to the invitation of the potter. One king said yes to the potter, and from a young age, Josiah, he was formed and used by God.

Others said no, and the potter smashed them in pieces. Manasseh repented in his old age, and God remade him, the potter remade him. We thought of the potter as the creator, omnipotent, able to form us and to change us.

Sacrificial, he gave his blood, so that your and my grime and sin can be washed away. And he was not only sacrificial, but he was compassionate, going through all our processes, so that he could understand

with us the forming process. But we have to be in the potter's hands.

He cannot form you and I unless we come and place ourselves in his hands. And to place ourselves in his hands, we have to acknowledge that we cannot fulfill his righteousness ourselves. We cannot do it.

We need his blood to wash away our sins, his power to make us able to become what he wants us to be. Now, we know that Judah said no time and again to the potter, and the awful thing is that you and I can say no to his invitation. Why does the gate of God's mercy beckon? Oh, enter within.

High is the price paid on Calvary to conquer and cover all sin. Yet at thy heart, man, he standeth, knocking. Oh, let him come in.

Years upon years he is waiting to rid you from guilt and from sin. Why will you spurn his salvation? Why will you yet turn away? One day your chances are ended. One day it will be judgment day.

Today the potter still stands, compassionate, sacrificial, omnipotent, inviting us. And there's not one that he will turn away because all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But one day it will be too late.

Have you responded to the potter's call? Are you in his hands? But you know, we sometimes find that even though we are in his hands, we are not a vessel that is fair. Our lives are not pleasing. And we wonder why is it? We've come to the potter.

We've placed ourselves in his hands. Why are we not what he wants us to be? And that is the process that we have to go through to become the vessel that is fair. Now the first requirement for us in his hands is that he wants the whole lump of clay.

He wants every single bit of us. Romans 12 verse 1 and 2 says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies, every part of you, spirit, soul and flesh, as a living sacrifice. And only then will he be able to fulfill his purpose for us.

I want you to imagine a lump of clay on the wheel. Now imagine if the clay says to the potter, well, you can form every bit of me, but just leave this little corner out. And we see the vase being formed, and he has this beautiful vase with a big lump on the side.

It would be ugly, wouldn't it? And yet that's how some of us are. We've held back. We haven't given everything to God.

It might even be a dream we have for a child. As a young person it might be that we say, oh God, I can have everything, but just let me plan my future. I want to do this and that, and don't tell me what to do.

There may be things in our lives. I remember at a convention quite a few years back, a lady came to me and she said to me, you know, I know your husband should take the spiritual lead in the house. But she said, you know, I'm so much more spiritual than my husband.

I know so much better. So I've taken the lead. It's wrong for others, but it's right for me.

Well, during that time that we were with him, the minister happened to say that this very husband has got so much potential spiritually, but his wife wears the trousers in the house, and so he isn't able to develop spiritually. You see, she had a big lump on the side of her, and she thought, you know, she didn't realise

anybody could see it, but all the people were seeing it, and perhaps we walking around with lumps, parts of our lives, that we have not submitted to God. He needs the whole lump, and only if he has the whole lump can he form us into a vessel that is to the honour of his name.

I remember when I was at Bible College, we had a principal, Colin Peckham, Mr Peckham, Melanie knows him, and he often quoted a poem by, I'll just get the name right, Martha Snell Nicholson. She wrote this poem, and he often quoted it. And you know, I have not forgotten that poem to this day because it made such an impression on my life.

He quoted, when I stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and he shows me his will for me, the will of my life as it might have been, and I see how I blocked him here, and checked him there, and would not yield my will. Will there be grief in my Saviour's eyes? Grief, though he loves me still? He would have me rich, but I stand there poor, robbed of all but his grace, while memory runs like a hunted thing down the years that it cannot retrace. And my desolate heart will work, and I've gone a bit wrong, let me just check here.

Lord of the years that are left to me, I yield them to thy hand. Break me, melt me, mould me to the pattern that thou hast planned. Let us not keep back from God, and so have to look back on our lives one day, and see that we stopped God from fulfilling his will in our lives, from becoming the vessel that he wanted us to be, because he did not have the whole lump of clay.

I'm walking around with big lumps on the side of us that others see, but we think nobody sees. The potter has got a purpose for your life, and he has got a purpose for my life. Even though we are young, we are children, we're in the home, we might be hidden from the public eye, he has got a wonderful purpose for our lives.

Now if you go into a house and you look at the vessels in the house, they're all so different. You get beautiful vessels, they're beautiful, they're behind glass doors, they're seldom used. Then we get the serving dishes, they're beautiful and they're used fairly often.

And then we get the cups and the other bowls that are used much more. And then we get the hard usage bowls, they're different vessels. And so we are all different, none of us are the same.

And when the potter forms us, he's forming us as different vessels, and he has got a different plan for each one of us. Now I don't know about you, but it's very tempting as a vessel to look at the other vessels and say, why didn't he rather make me like that? Why didn't he make me ornamental? You know, that lady is so chic, she's always so smart. In Afrikaans you say, you can draw her through a ring.

She's just perfect. When you look at her, everybody looks at her, why am I just a little bit scruffy and I can't help it? You may stutter and you say, Lord, why do I stutter? It just makes it so hard for me. Why couldn't I have been born not stuttering? I know I've often said, Lord, why couldn't you have made me more extrovert? To find it easier to speak to people.

My sisters can speak much easier to people. Why did you choose the Shahi one? What other things are there? As a young person you might say, why wasn't I given a musical voice? All the vessels in the church are musical voices, but when my voice goes, it sounds like a black crow. Why did you make me like this? But you know, we mustn't say why to God.

Because He loves each one of us and I think He glories in making us as individuals. And He wants to use us as individuals. Because I can't sing beautifully, I have great sympathy for others that can't sing

beautifully.

But rather if I could sing beautifully, I might not have had that sympathy with others. And so even the things that you would like different, He wants to use. He wants not to make you into another person, but He wants to make you in a more beautiful you.

And that's what we've got to remember. Don't look at the people next door. Don't look at how they're homeschooling their children.

Sometimes you look and you think, oh goodness, they're doing this maths course and that maths course. I wonder if mine is enough. Do you ever think that? And then you add things and your poor little vessels in the house are overloaded because you're trying to be like the vessels next door.

Concentrate on yourself as the vessel and be answerable to the potter so that he can inform you and he can guide you. We need to rest in the purpose of the potter for us. Now, in a mission in South Africa, there was a missionary's wife.

She'd been in a mission for many years and she was not a lady that liked to speak to people, but she spoke to me and she said, you know, I've been in a mission for about 50 years and they've asked all the other younger ladies to share about their experiences and about their life, but you know, they've never asked me to share. And she said, why? You know, is there something wrong with me spiritually? I would probably have said no if they asked me, but why didn't they ask me? What is wrong with me? I feel a failure. You know, nobody respects me.

And some years later, not so long ago, her husband gave a testimony when they retired from the mission and he said this. He said, my wife was never on a showcase for people to look at. She didn't ever share.

She wasn't in the public eye, but at the conventions, my wife was the one who, in the hot, steamy kitchen, prepared delicious meals for the camps again and again and again. And he said, we wouldn't have been able to survive without that. And he said, you know, there behind the pots in the kitchen, ladies were able to share with her and to open their hearts to her and many met with God in the kitchen.

And he said, only heaven will say what God accomplished through my wife, unbeknown to anybody else in the mission. So isn't it wonderful that we have to rest in God's purpose. We don't even know how he uses us, but what he asks us is to say, let me have my way.

Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way. That is what the song said that we sang today. And we need to say to the potter, have thine own way in my life for him to form us.

Now, some of us young people or some of the young people and the mothers in the home might feel that you are hard usage vessels in the home. You know, people don't say thank you. They just expect, they don't come to say thank you, they come with another request for you to do.

And you feel, oh, if only they just say thank you so much, wouldn't be so kind as to do that. But you just feel as if everybody is misusing you and trampling upon you. And there are others in other homes that just seem to have such an easy time, to have so much time to read and do other things.

You feel, you know, it's right that the potter made me into one of the hard usage bowls, but you know, he needs those too. And he can use that very hard usage that you have to go through. Even the times when

people don't say thank you, he can use that to make you more beautiful for him.

So let him use whatever you have to go through. Now, we don't only have to place ourselves totally in the potter's hands, but we've got to stay submissive to his hands. Imagine if we were on the wheel and the potter has been doing things in our lives, and we say, alright, I think I'm good enough now.

I'm going to hop off the wheel, he's done enough. Thank you, Lord, I'm grateful for what you've done for me, but that's enough, no more. We can't do that, and we have to stay submissive in his hands.

Every morning it is wonderful if we can say to the potter, I gave myself wholly to thee, but this morning anew I give myself to thee for this day. Use me, do whatsoever thou wouldest to me, I am submissive, I am willing in thy hands. You know, sometimes when we hop off the wheel, God loves it, but it brings sorrow and sadness into our lives that is unnecessary.

Psalms 106 verse 15 says, And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. What an awful verse.

Let us stay on the wheel so that the potter can finish the work that he's busy doing in our lives. Now when we read in Jeremiah yesterday, we saw that the clay was marred in the hands of the potter. So there the clay was in the hands of the potter and yet it was marred.

And I wondered to myself, why was that clay marred in the hands of the potter? Was it perhaps lumps in that clay that made it so marred? Now we only have to go a little bit back again in Judah's history. We see Uzziah the king. He was a good king.

He was an exemplary king and yet he had a lump inside of him and that lump was pride. And you know Uzziah went to the temple. He eventually thought he was so good he didn't have to be a priest.

He can go into the temple and take an offering just as the priests were told to do. And so he goes into the temple with pride. And that pride caused him to leave the temple as a leper.

Hezekiah, he also had a lump. His lump says, Lord, I want to have my way. King Hezekiah, God said to him, prepare your life, prepare yourself, you're going to die.

Hezekiah said to God, no, please, no, no, not this, please Lord, just change it a little bit. I don't feel ready to die. And instead of setting his house in order, God gave him his request.

And in those 15 years, Manasseh was born. The wicked Manasseh who caused Israel to go into so much evil. Let us not say no to the potter, but let us say yes to the potter.

Whatever he may bring across our paths, we have to be pliable in his hands, willing for him to form us. We have to continually stay submissive. There might be lumps in your life, you know, only God can see.

There might be bitterness. And this bitterness is a lump that makes a stone in your clay that makes it, it cannot be formed. There may be criticism in your lump of clay that makes it marred, murmuring, anger.

It's a not fair attitude. That is not a submissive attitude and it's hard to be submissive to the potter. But if we allow these things to be part of our clay, our clay is going to be marred even though it's in the hands of the potter.

Let us not make it hard for the potter to form us. There's a verse in Isaiah 45 verse 9 which says, Woe to him that striveth with his maker. Let the potter strive with the potters of the earth.

Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What makest thou? All thy work he hath no hands. Sometimes the potter uses a very sharp knife to form us. It's part of the forming process.

If you look at a jar being formed, sometimes they use a scalpel, a knife, to cut, to form that beautiful shape in the vase. And sometimes God uses, and often the potter uses, a knife, a scalpel, to form us. Hard things, terrible things that come across our path.

But he actually wants to use it to form us into a more delicate, a more beautiful vessel. I can think of my aunt that died in this year. And I visited her a lot.

And there she was suffering. She said, Lord, I can't understand why I have so much pain. The medication couldn't help her.

But she was submissive. Lord, I'll understand one day. And she just became more beautiful and more beautiful in those last weeks as she was being hurt by the pain, by the cancer.

And then eventually when she died, she said, His righteousness is all that matters. Her whole being was just so given over to God. And her funeral was really a testimony of a life that was in the potter's hands, holy.

We can think of John Bunyan. God used a very sharp knife on John Bunyan, didn't he? He had to spend such a lot of time in prison. And yet there in prison he was able to write those beautiful books, Pilgrim's Progress, The Holy War, all those other books were written.

So he allowed that scalpel that was causing so much pain, separation from his family, he allowed the scalpel to be a forming for him so that we are still blessed by his works today. We can think of Madame Guillon, that noble lady who ended up in prison, and yet her works still bless us today. I wonder if she would have written those works.

I wonder if John Bunyan would have written what he had written if he didn't feel the knife thrust on his lump of clay. Milton, that wrote on his blindness and Paradise Lost, he was blind, and he had to allow that very blindness not to be something that marred him, but actually that formed him. Now in South Africa, near to where we stay, there's a gentleman who only has one leg.

He lost the other leg through cancer, and he shared with me that he's probably going to lose the other leg too, but what a bright witness he is for the Lord. He does prison work, he does cottage visitation, he's just so full of joy, so given over, and because he is so full of joy with minus his leg, his testimony counts, because the people can just see that this man, his Christianity is real. So he allowed that scalpel to be a forming tool, not a crushing tool.

Now, people in the home can be scalpels, did you realise that? You know, sometimes when you have an impossible brother, or a demanding sister, or people that don't understand you in the homes, or a hyperactive child, then they can be the potter wants to use them, not to break us or to wear us, but to use them as scalpels. We see his hand in everything. You know, somebody said to me once, do you know why that gentleman, it's a very old gentleman, is such a saint? So I said, no, I don't know what she said.

So she said, he's a saint because his wife is a tartar. He allowed, he didn't let his wife rob him of his Christianity, instead he allowed that very sharp tongue, I think that is what it was in that case, he allowed it to be used by the master to make him more gentle, more patient. Are we going to allow things in the home, people, neighbours, friends that sometimes hurt us? Don't let them hurt you.

Rather let them make you more patient. Let them form you. Let God use it as a scalpel.

Financial strain, it's a terrible scalpel that the shepherd, that the potter sometimes uses. I've seen people go through such deep waters. I can think of one young man, you know, he was very reactive before the financial strain came, but under the financial strain he has become softer, he has become more gentle.

And the financial strain has not lifted yet, but I long to see the time when the potter can use a little bit of a gentler tool on him, but it has changed him. He has allowed it to become a tool, not a breaking hammer. Dear child of mine, I hear your cry.

I know that after you'd rather die than face the scalpel's steely touch that reaches to your inner dust. I've planned, dear child, what you shall be. Thus leave the choices up to me.

I will not probe one inch too far or carelessly your beauty mar. Ah, child of mine, please understand my boundless love your path has planned. Your potter's hand is never rough.

He knows the time to cry enough. Let us trust the potter and be submissive in his hands, whatever he brings across our path. Now for us to be formed to a vessel that is fair, God has placed before us a wonderful mirror and he wants us to be turned in front of this mirror.

And in the mirror is the perfect image of the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect image of what he wants us to be formed to. 2 Corinthians 3 verse 18 says, But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. As long as we stay in front of that mirror, God can change us.

But if we think that we can do without the mirror, things are going to go wrong in our shape. We're going to become a bit lopsided. We stand in front of the mirror and our family or friends or whatever are very hard on us perhaps, and then the mirror says to us, Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another.

And because the mirror says that to me, I am more patient. I am more long-suffering. The mirror says to me, as a young person, flee youthful lusts.

Abstain from all appearance of evil. And because I'm in front of the mirror and I've seen what the mirror says, when I go to the supermarket and there are all those terrible magazines, I don't know about your supermarkets, lying around, I turn from it. I don't just give that second look.

If I'm on the email and all these emails come in and it says open, I don't open them because the mirror told me to flee youthful lusts. Do you see how important the mirror is? When a brother or a sister perhaps gives me an explanation for something that I didn't understand that they had done, then I believe them because love hopes all things, believes all things. And when I find out that actually it was as bad as I thought, then what does the mirror tell me to do? Love endureth all things.

Do you see how important the mirror is? We cannot do without the mirror. And we have to ask ourselves, have we shifted away from the mirror, perhaps following the ideas of others, or are we still dead centre in front of that mirror, allowing the mirror to show us how we should walk, what God wants to turn us into. Do I appreciate thy word that showed me Calvary, and gave me faith and simple trust to find new life in thee? Do I hold fast thy precious word when storms and wild winds blow, that all the promises in thee are mine to claim and know? Do I so heed thy precious word that when temptations come, I know the warnings, strict and stern, and thus thy will is done? Do I delight in thy own word when blessings from on high do shower in abundance and banish every sign? O God, thy word, a mirror, to guide me day by day, I'll cling, I'll hold, I'll treasure it, to be my strength and stay.

Let us not move away from the mirror. Now, you know, we're so conscious of the potter working with us, as individuals, that sometimes we forget that the potter is working with the other vessels in the home. My relationship to the vessels in the home, we must realise that the potter is not only working with us, but he's also working with the other vessels in the home, and we must be careful that we do not hinder and hurt and make it difficult for the potter to work with them because of our reactions to them.

It's so easy to bump the clay in the home, isn't it? And to give it a knock, and sometimes those knocks take years for the potter to erase. Sometimes it almost lasts a lifetime. The kind of things like, why do you always do everything wrong? Have you heard that before? Oh mum, you're always moaning.

Why do you always moan? You're not supposed to moan all the time. I hate you. Have you heard that? Why can't you click the maths quickly? You know, your brother just explained once, and there it is.

And you have got to go again, and again, and again. What's wrong with your brain? That's a hard knock to give. Mum, why are you grey at such an early age? You know, the other mothers that are older than you haven't got one grey hair.

That's a hard knock. You're hopeless. It's so easy in exasperation to turn to a child and say, Oh, look what you've done.

You're hopeless. That's a big jab to give a child for the potter to have to, and because they're going to look at themselves and think, I am hopeless. There's no hope for me.

I despair of you making a success of life. That's a dreadful thing to say. I despair of you ever making a success of life, because that becomes a dent in that clay that's going to be very hard to erase and to get over.

I give up on you. Have you heard that before? I give up on you. Can you wonder that the potter has such a difficult time sometimes to remove the dents and the knocks that the clay has gone through that might be in our home? It'd be terrible if we're the ones that have given those dents.

Am I a hindrance to God's work as near me clay is marred and hurt? Yes, on the wheel a loved one lay whom I have jabbed this very day. Scars can so easily start and form. Hurts are in bosoms sadly worn.

What if my hands should be the one damaged to finish the work so well begun? Let us ask God as vessels being formed by the potter to help us that we will not hinder his work on the other vessels in the home. Now another thing we can do is we can take over the potter's job. That's rather a nice way of saying, you know, in a sense we're saying you know, I don't think the potter's doing such a good work and I'm just going to help him a little bit.

I've come across people who have said that, you know, I just want to get these people's convictions right so I'm going to tell them how they should live. And I've cried, no, that's God's work. Let him write the laws in their heart because if he writes the laws in their heart then he's not grievous and horrible to follow them.

You love to do his work. Now Roy was at school. Roy was never home schooled.

We didn't home school in those days. And I came early and I was sitting in the parking lot and I was just watching the playground. It was a time of drought in the eastern Cape and in Port Elizabeth there were water restrictions.

So you were told you must use water very sparingly and you must turn off the tap tightly if you use it. And all the children had been told to do this. So as I was sitting in the car just glancing I saw Roy run to the tap, turn it on, cup his hands, quickly drink some water, turn it off again and turn it off very tightly.

So I thought well I'm glad he's obeying the rules. But then I saw another little boy follow Roy and he turned the tap on. And he drank but he didn't turn it off properly.

So Roy turned around and he looked at him and I could just see his fingers say, you put that tap off. And the boy said no. You know I could see it all from the car.

I could imagine everything that happened. And Roy was getting angrier and angrier. And then he took the boy around the waist and he picked him up and he took him right to the tap.

And he put his hand, took the other hand and he put it on his hand and he turned the tap. And then he walked off as if he'd done a wonderful job. But I saw the other boy run back to the tap and he turned it on again.

And it flowed even more. So that's a picture of what we try and do. We try and take over the potter's job.

Our pet theories. Our little rules for ourselves. It's so easy to want to force it on others.

And force them to follow our ways when we should just let the potter form them. Let him do the forming. He knows best.

There was an old missionary. We loved him. I knew him from childhood.

We used to call him Mr. Sucker Man because he always used to have a sucker in his pocket. He didn't have much money but whenever we saw him there was a sucker in his pocket for us, which is a sweet on a stick. But he died when he was nearly 80.

No, his wife died when he was nearly 80. And in his loneliness he married somebody else. So here he was, nearly 80 years of age, set in his ways.

A delight to us. Full of joy and whatever. But he had a wife quite a bit younger than him.

And they visited us. And this wife came to my mother and she says you know, there are so many things I'm going to change about my husband. He's going to change this, this, this, this.

My mother looked at her and she said, but he's nearly 80. How can you do that? Why did you marry him if you want to change him? It's sad when we want to take over the potter's work because you know it doesn't work. I've seen even in missionary societies when we try and force certain things and the moment they

leave the mission, it's all changed because it was never written on their hearts.

Let us trust the potter to see to the details in the forming. Let us not try and take over the potter's job. There were vessels that were marred in the potter's hands but we find that there can be broken vessels.

Is there hope for a broken vessel? In the Old Testament we read about David who sinned. He sinned so badly. He went so deeply.

He sinned. He committed adultery. He not only committed adultery but he had a man murdered and he had been such a beautiful vessel.

We only have to think of the Psalms, how beautiful they were and here was this broken vessel. Somebody who had sinned so deeply but you know when he called on God, when he saw sin, not just as a sin against Bathsheba or a sin against her husband but when he saw sin as a sin against God and as a broken vessel called on God to have mercy upon him. When David said against thee, thee only have I sinned.

God was able to take the pieces up again, the broken pieces and he was able to reshape him into a vessel fit for his use. Peter failed badly. I think he was like a broken vessel.

He swore in front of the crowd. He denied the Lord Jesus Christ. I wrote a poem about Peter, not the old one and it said, Peter had boasted so loud to his Lord.

Confident phrases from his mouth had poured. Others may fail you but never will I. Danger may threaten but Peter is nigh. But when the soldiers had captured the Lord, the ear of the servant by Christ was restored, Peter had shrunk to the loud mocking throng into the hall where he did not belong.

Joy must have flown as he heard their loud cries. Fear must have gripped him amongst their rank lies. Thus the great Peter, who boasted so loud, denied his Lord and swore at the crowd.

But when the cock crew remorse smote his breast, Peter repented his sin and confessed ah the deep sorrow that Peter went through. He had denied Christ and publicly too. Perhaps you like Peter have failed in the crowd.

Perhaps under pressure to sin you have bowed. Peter forgiven was used by the Lord. Peter forgiven was fully restored.

You too may fall at our dear Saviour's feet. You too may taste His forgiveness so sweet. Like him forgiven and used by the Lord.

Like him forgiven and fully restored. Is there perhaps somebody here who has failed publicly? I don't know of your failure. And because of that you've just become a broken vessel.

You've said no I can never be used by God again. But think how Peter felt. Think how David felt.

And yet God was able to take up the pieces when they repented and to form them anew. Perhaps you may be broken through things that have come across your life that did not come from God's hand but from Satan seeking to destroy you. You have to remember that every temptation, every trial that has come across your path, He knows about.

And now you lie shattered by what others have done. You may be abandoned, deserted, betrayed and you feel, I'm just broken. I can never be used again.

But you know the potter knows every deep feeling of your heart. And he longs to take up those broken pieces and he longs to make you into a much finer vessel than others can be who were never broken like that. Because you, out there there's a world that has been betrayed.

There's a world that has been deserted. There's a world that has gone through so much. And because somehow these things have come across your path and made you smash, you will if you allow the potter to fulfill his purpose, you will be able to help where others will not be able to help because you've been there.

So if things have come across your path, allow the potter, instead of just smashing you, allow the potter to use you with them because you'll probably be a much finer vessel than others who have not gone through the deep waters that you have gone through. Now Peter speaks of us as a peculiar people. And I believe that as Christians in the potter's hands we have to realize that we are peculiar vases.

But I don't mean peculiar in an ugly sense. I think it means peculiarly beautiful. Peculiarly holy.

I was listening in a car to a radio conversation where somebody from another religion was speaking to a young person and this young person said Oh, I go through so much trouble at school because they do not understand me. I am so different to them. I speak a different language to them.

I don't do the things that they do. And then a leader of this religion said to him Oh my son, you are doing well. They are not meant to understand you.

You obviously are following our faith properly and correctly. Well done my son. Now I don't know about America but in South Africa the thought of the Christian is let us be as little peculiar as possible.

Let us be as like the world as possible. You know when the Israelites wanted to leave Egypt a pharisee said serve the lord in the land. Serve him in Egypt.

And that is the message that is going out to Christians today. You don't have to be different. Just serve him in the land.

Or else just go a few little steps out of the land but not far. You can be as close to what they are as possible. But that is not the message that God gives.

He calls us peculiar vessels. We are in the world but we are definitely not of the world. And we should be recognized as not of the world.

We are not ugly. We are just peculiarly beautiful because we have to adorn the gospel. It says in Titus 2 verse 10 Adorn the doctrine of Christ.

Are we so dedicated, so consecrated, so submissive that we are peculiarly beautiful. Peculiarly different. The world wants to please itself.

We should want to please God. The world happiness is an event. I saw that at boarding school.

It was one event after another. You are happy and boom down you fall again. You are happy.

But a Christian, the peculiar vessel is different because your joy is from within. It is different. It doesn't have to be an event that makes you joyful.

To the world they have peace when all is well. But to the peculiar vessel you have peace that passes understanding when all is not well. The world says I want it now.

The peculiar vessel says I want it in God's timing. The worldly vessel is decorated on the outside. The peculiar vessel is glorious from within.

She is decorated from the inside. And now we come to the final glaze. Pottery, they put a final glaze on often.

And time and again I have seen people before they go into glory receiving that final glaze. I can never forget going into a hospital and visiting this old lady. And when I went there it was as if heaven had come down.

Her face shone. She was just so ready to go. She might as well have been in heaven already.

For the glaze, the glory of the Lord that is upon us. Mr. Macfarlane just before he died, his face shone. Whether we be everyday pots, whether we be ornamental pots, whether we be hard usage pots, one day in glory we are going to shine because we will be like him in heaven.

The master potter's work cries out behold his hand was here. It is only him could form us thus. The evidence is clear.

I marvel that within his hand my mortal clay should lie. That he should take this worthless self to cleanse and purify. His precious blood removes the dross, the sin, the guilt, the shame, so that he can impress on me his signature and name.

A purpose for this lump of clay. Dear God how can it be that thy blessed hand should be the one to form and fashion me? I lie submissive in his hands and trust his love and care despite the hurting cuts and prods to make my vessel fair. How marvellous that I should lie within the potter's hands.

That he should form and fashion me according to his plan. Come, says the voice of the potter, warped and defiled though you be. I can restore and remake you rid you from dross and debris.

Come, says the voice of the potter, wise though you be, in your eyes you will not last in the furnace lest in my hands you do lie. Come, says the voice of the potter, I have a pattern to do. Fair is the shape of the vessel I have envisaged for you.

Amen.

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