

**September 7th, 2025, Sermon**

**We Are in Potter's Hand**

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I am not very skilled with my hands. If you give me a lump of clay and ask me to make a vase, I will probably end up with a lopsided bowl that leaks water. My wife, or even my children, could probably do better. Once, I tried to repair a broken coffee mug with superglue, and instead of a mug, I ended up with my fingers stuck together. I thought for a moment I might have to live the rest of my life like this, permanently glued in a prayer position!

In Jeremiah 18, we encounter an illustration of God as the Potter and Judah as the clay. If making a pot is a daunting job for me, how great God must have been in creating the vast universe. More than marveling at the beauty of God's creation, I am awed by the greatness of God in sustaining and restoring it when things go wrong with His creation, especially those involving societal and individual transgressions. It must be more challenging for Him to restore His concern, love, and care to the nation that went against Him, and when its people became ruthless, untrustworthy, disloyal, and foolish in their relationship with God. This is especially true when we reflect on how God handled Judah when they turned back to Him with disloyalty,

disobedience, and rejection of Him. God did not throw away Judah. He was ready to relent and rebuild it if it turned away from evil doing.

What are the implications for the nature of God and flawed humanity when such a restoration process occurs? Let us consider the potter who reshapes damaged and discarded clay during the process of making a pot. Why isn't some clay turned into a pot on the first try? He creates the pot beautifully, but most often, making a pot doesn't happen in one attempt. The potter must redo it with the clay from the earlier attempt. He wouldn't discard it. He carefully focuses on transforming it into a beautiful pot once again. God's relationship with Judah is similar to reworking damaged clay and refashioning it into a beautiful vessel. His covenantal relationship has been renewed and remains unchanged despite numerous instances of human transgression. Let us examine the parallelism found in verses 7 and 9.

*7The moment I speak regarding a nation and kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, 9And the moment I speak regarding a nation and kingdom, to build and to plant it,*

Notice that to “pluck up” is the opposite of to “plant,” and to “pull down” and to “destroy” is the opposite of to “build.” It shows that God is both a judging God and the God of salvation. God's covenantal relationship is restored when people turn to

Him with repentance. Not only did God restore His covenant with Judah, but He has also done the same with us today.

Failure is not final with God. This embodies the gospel message: through grace, our lives, though cracked or marred, can be refashioned into something new and valuable. Theologically, it reflects **redemption and new creation**: God does not discard us but lovingly reshapes us. Clay is not glamorous. It's messy. It gets under our fingernails. Sometimes it dries out and cracks. Sometimes it resists the potter's hand. Does that not sound like us?

Many of us carry cracks—mistakes from the past, guilt that keeps us awake at night, shame that whispers “you’re not good enough.” Sometimes we even believe those whispers more than the voice of God. We feel like broken vessels, unworthy to be placed on anyone’s table, much less God’s. But Jeremiah reminds us that our story is not over. God is still working with the clay. God does not throw us away. God reshapes, remolds, and reimagines us.

God’s Work is Not Destruction but Restoration. God’s response to our brokenness is not rejection but restoration.

God does not say: *“That one’s ruined; let’s toss it out.”*

God says: *“Let me work with it again, reshape it, breathe new life into it.”*

This is not about punishment. It is about possibility. As there is a possibility of mar or damage in the clay, there is also a possibility of transgression in our lives. Yet God relents as the potter begins to remake the pot. Life has always been a continuous process of formation and transformation. Let us not forget that clay is pliable only while it is soft. If it hardens, it cannot be reshaped. Spiritually, this reflects the need for openness to God's transforming work in us. Through the Spirit, God continually reforms us when we are responsive and humble.

Finally, let us not forget that God has the sovereign power over nations, societies, and individuals, not only through His creative power but also through His will to redeem us. Just as a potter has authority over the clay, God has sovereignty over creation. The clay has no inherent shape or beauty until the potter molds it; likewise, our lives find their form and purpose in God's hands. As the Psalmist reminds us, we do not make ourselves, but we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" by God. Let us also remember that there is an interplay of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. In Jeremiah 18, we see that the outcome depends on Israel's response. If the nation repents, God reshapes it for good; if not, the vessel may be discarded. God desires to shape us, but we can resist and become rigid like hardened clay.

Thus, the metaphor calls us to repentance, humility, and cooperation with God's will.

So, here is an Invitation to Reclaim Life. If you feel broken, have trust in Potter's hands. If you feel guilt, shame, or pain of walking away from God, let the Potter reshape your heart. If you feel stuck in your past, remember that clay can be softened with water and reformed. You are never too hard, never too dry, never too far gone. God's wheel is still turning. Your story is still unfolding.