

The potters house

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[0 : 00] Let us turn to the prophecy which we read, the prophecy of Jeremiah, in chapter 18, leading at the beginning of the chapter.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise and go down to the potter's house. Do I recast thee to hear my words?

Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he wrought a work on the hills. Especially those words in verse 3.

I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he wrought a work on the hills. There are times when it is more difficult to work with God and live for God than it is at other times.

When real vital religion is low, when spiritual life is something that is smeared up, then it is not easy to be a man or a woman of God.

[1 : 26] It was in such a time that Jeremiah the prophet was called of God to be his witness and his minister.

He lived in a time when his nation, the people of God, had other nations turned their back upon God.

He lived in a time when God's people were rebellious. He lived in an age of apostasy. The generation's selfishness was one of the leaders that categorized even God's covenant people. There was a strong sense of individuality abroad in the nation. And each man said, there is no hope that we will do the imagination of our own evil hearts.

Reading through the prophecy of Jeremiah is the reading of a sad story. The reading of a story that caused God himself to come to the place where he threatened to turn his back.

[2 : 56] All the strength had been cast off, men followed their own devices. It was such a time that it rang a sad cry from the heart of God's prophet.

This cry. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. And if we pause to think about it, it was a time that was not so very different from our own.

We also live in an age of apostasy and selfishness and individuality.

As a nation, we are largely tearing our backs upon the God that our fathers loved and served.

As a nation, we too say there is no hope that we will do each one new imagination of his own evil heart.

[4 : 09] Spiritually, Jeremiah's day was a dark day. Spiritually, we're in a barren loneliness. But a dark day can be a day of hope.

And awareness under the blessing of God can be made to blossom. And into the darkness in which Jeremiah prophesied and vision ministered, Into that darkness came the voice of God himself.

And there is no hope for a situation when God speaks into it. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.

And when the word of the Lord comes to a man or to a people, Then there is hope for that man, and there is hope for that people. For the word of the Lord is the word still that is quick and powerful and sharp.

The word of the Lord, Coming into our situation today, Is the one message of hope for us today. We want to look with you for a little while, But of what?

[5 : 31] God said to Jeremiah. God spoke to him and basically the message that he gave Jeremiah was very simple. The very wonderful thing is about God's messages to men, In their essence, they are all very simple.

God spoke to Jeremiah and he said, Jeremiah, quit dying to the potter's house. And Jeremiah, in his instructions, did this God have told him.

It may have been quite difficult for him to do it. But he died down to the potter's house. Been there very often. There is nothing there that the prophet and his ear, And the lumps and plate. Nevertheless, God's been down and Jeremiah went to the potter's house. And at least in the imagination you and I can follow Jeremiah. Many things have changed. Technology, Mechanics, Manufacturing has changed a great deal since the day of Jeremiah. Except, perhaps, in the potter's house it hasn't changed too much.

[6 : 47] Essentially, The mechanism of the poem uses is still an orange and same.

And when Jeremiah went down to the potter's house, he saw basically three things. He saw a passion at work.

The potter. He saw the same of the poem, the machine in which the potter wrote his work. And he saw the clay that the potter used as his material.

These three things in essence was what he saw. And from these three things, God taught Jeremiah a lesson. That Jeremiah very badly needed to know. And I believe that it is a lesson that outrage desperately needs to learn.

It's a lesson that those others who are Christian people in the world is evil need to learn. And it is a lesson that those others who do not know Christ also need to learn.

[7 : 53] And I think that if they stop to look at the three things in the world, they will be the same way. And I think that if they stop to look at the three things in the world, they will be the same way. So you may, by the glissing God we may, see something in the lesson, that God taught Jeremiah there in the potter's house.

Keep in mind the features that you can see, an intelligent, care-to-be worker.

The infinite and worthless, intelligent, care-to-be man did his work on the pliable, nor-a-bue material that the workman used.

When we look at these three things, I would suggest, first of all, that Jeremiah was given the recognition of a decisive principle.

The recognition of a determinative principle. And in its essence, that principle is very simple.

[9 : 11] He looked and he saw a passion at work. This passion at work, imposing his will, fulfilling his purposes.

Shedding, molding, burning, turning, master of his instrument. A master of the material that he had with his instrument. Jeremiah looked and he saw living sensitive hands.

Intelligent hands. Controlling, athletic hands. And as Jeremiah watched the imposition of living world, a pliable metal, the determinative principle that thrust me to him as this.

The absolute sovereignty and authority of God. Jeremiah as the queen and the poor crown. So are ye mine.

And living in the age, in which he did Jeremiah and me did it to a rock. That he turned into a stubbed in his heart. He needed to be reminded of the glory of his death.

[10 : 37] And the, the, the, the most human experience in the world in his Jeremiah, we need to be reminded that still, the father and God was in control.

My friend, you, the young man who have been born into the ministry of the gospel. Those of you who have to witness for cuts in difficult circumstances.

Those of you who so often feel that you, you, a desperate, a small minority. And all of us feel that sometimes. We have to hear this basic principle that runs all through the word of God.

We have to learn that our God is the sovereign God who is still in control. He is the one who works his will in the armies of heaven. And he tells me among the nations of men.

This is something that we must learn and heal again. The absolute, sovereign God.

[11 : 49] And there is something that Israel had forgotten. Strange, sad, or almost unintelligible. But Israel had forgotten it.

And there is something that we today have forgotten also. And there is something that no matter where you live in life, ultimately we cannot escape.

The fact of the all-pervading, sovereign God. Why are you the passion of God? Why do you live in the 20th century?

Why do you live in the hand of the history of God? Why are you given the privileges of the blessing of any other children who have enjoyed? Why? And of inquiry. Why one evil? Is the person of heart anywhere is for us. And I feel very worried. They are very worried about holding it.

And You are not at all. They feel very old. My image is also unable to fall over BYA. Why do you live for all such zugeandry? You have no harm in it. And you have no harm in it. It is the most at own worrying? It is the purpose of God. It is the purpose of God. Look at any aspect of your life.

[12:54] Look at any aspect of the circumstances of your life. And how often we have to learn and relearn that there is a debilitating shapes our hands.

Love you, the Holy Will. There is a God in heaven. My Christian friend, you and I must not forget that. My unbelieving friend, my unconverted friend, you must not forget that also.

You must remember that there is a sovereign God over you as well as over the Christian. Jeremiah, I think, he learned that this principle reached a little bit further, not just that God was from them, but that in God's hands there is an absolute power over men.

As the claim, the Polish hands, for year nine. Jeremiah, who? Who is the rebelling against Jeremiah?

Not just you, Jeremiah. They are rebelling against the rebelling against Jehovah. They are rebelling against the Thrice Holy One.

[14:17] They are rebelling against the God of heaven and earth. Jeremiah, don't be afraid. They are rebelling against God as a nation.

But we must always be mindful of this fact, that our nation is not that we're going to be the great limits. You and I so often complain about the society in which we live today.

We so often complain about the godlessness of our nation. We complain about the morality of our literature. We complain about the hopelessness that's perforated the rebelling society.

We complain about the nihilistic philosophy that's giving the minds of men and leaving our young people to live in a hopeless house. And we wonder how young people turn away from the cold materialism that has been fed all their days and the tons of drugs and the supernaturals in witchcraft and darkness.

We wonder at it. We stand appalled at it. And we need to remember that still that is our God in heaven.

[15:33] We need to remember something else. That each one of us individually is responsible for the shaping of the society in which we live. A nation is composed of goodness.

You are part of the nation in which you complain. My friend, you life matters. The way in which you think matters. The ultimate eternal reality is that you believe and live by matters.

Even though only one person is standing in that place. You matter. Every man and woman of God that lives under the sovereignty and the power of his love matters.

today. But every time you go to bend your knee to God in secret that time matters. The person you are in your office and in your place of work in your university and in your college.

The way you walk conduct yourself that matters. Because a nation is made up as an individual person. and the nation is there to be more and been changed.

[16:45] And the sad thing is that it has been more than it is being changed not by Christian thinking. Not by Christian men and women. But by men and women who have been set against God and against his Christ.

And the church you and me we've allowed it to happen. And in allowing it to happen we have forgotten that there is a God in heaven.

Be clear and the potter's hounds. Perhaps you're thinking of a little objection. Perhaps you're saying that there's something almost frightening here.

The absolute power of the potter over the clay. It's different between my soul and God because the clay is a lifeless thing. It has no way in its own.

The distance between the potter and the clay is greater than the distance between the eternal God and me. Because I am not clay.

[17:54] I am a living throbbing person. I have a way of my own. But I want to suggest to you that the difference is not greater. The difference between a human will and a human will is perhaps greater still than the difference between a human will and a human will at all.

What is will? I suppose we talk about it so much and we understand it so little. What is will? What is it for me to say that I am a creature with a will of my own?

Perhaps we could feel this that will is the power to act unto truth. But as soon as we make that definition we have to go a little bit further and we have to say it is the power to act and to choose with any limitations.

And as soon as we say that we have to go a little bit further and we have to say that no is really a servant because we all will act and choose in accordance with the government principle of our nature.

And it is possible I believe for men and women to be governed by one only one of two principles. One the principle of holiness ensured by the power of the Holy Ghost and the other the ruling the terror of principle of sin that is in every man and human by nature.

[19 : 45] And we will always choose and we will always act in conformity with the governing principles of our lives. The governing principle of our lives.

And if it is sin then our rule will just be the executive of our nature. We will act in accordance to the principle that rules us.

the good generation and the new man makes the will as you need as well. And the way undercomes I believe capable of choosing not only evil but of good.

I do not believe that the analogy between clay and the potter breaks down at all when we take it and place it in relation to God on our shelves.

God used this analogy. What's the best way for us to use our will? What the gospel teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ shows us the way.

[21 : 03] He tells us that the finest thing we can do of the will is submitted to the will of God. Father not neither but thy will be done.

And that's perhaps one of the basic things in being a Christian. But I mean more submitted to the will of the sovereign God.

Two choices best. Two choices is this the losing of our own choice in the mind and will of God for us.

This principle of God sovereignty tells us that we are in the hand of God. This principle makes a tremendous demand upon us.

It demands absolutely everything. It demands the unconditional uncompromising surrender of a real man to the will of God.

[22 : 18] Now as I said already that's a rather frightening thought. To serve and be absolutely subservient to another will.

To the will thumb over their shells. That can make a phrase. And so we have to bring on the recognition of our principle to the next thing that Jeremiah saw.

That he was taught. He was given, I think, not just the recognition of a decisive principle, but he was given something even better. He was given also the realization of a definite pretzel.

father. There was watching the father at his work in the game. And as he looks, this is what he sees and learns. The father has a thought in his mind for the clay.

And this comes home to Jeremiah as it must belong to you and to me also. The father having a definite thought in his mind for the clay, the father alone can transfer that thought to the clay, the potter alone.

[23 : 37] The clay, the clay is the middle of the thought in the mind of the potter. Do you know this? There is only one way, there is only one way in which the clay can find the thought in the mind of the potter, and that is that it lie, submersive to the hand of the potter.

Quiet submission to the hand of the potter and the clay will begin to find out the thought that's in the potter's mind. Let's leave that for a moment.

Clay is on the wheel. What is the wheel? The wheel is all the circumstances of your life and of mine. God's providence around us, God's ordering of your life and of mine in all its aspects.

Circumstances. When I look only at circumstances, again, I'm afraid. But when I look to the hand, it moves the circumstances.

I can begin to lose my fear. The power is in control not only of the clay, it is in control of the wheel. control. When I think of a sovereign God in charge of the circumstances, all the circumstances of my life, I can still be afraid.

[25 : 08] But when I begin to realize that there is a purpose, there is to walk through the circumstances, then I can begin, yes, I can just begin to find comfort.

I can just begin to find a place in which I can put my feet when I realize that there is a purpose being worked out for me. The power is not in this.

As we watch the power, we see this. He has a sword in his mind for the clay. We care, the power is a sword in his mind for me. I do not know what the sword in his mind is, but he does.

And there is one way and one way only which I can find the sort of a terrible potter for my life. Not as this to be submissive in the hand of the potter.

I want you to note this too. Clay as clay is something shapeless, purposeless, useless.

[26 : 15] Clay apart from the puddle and apart from the clean has no meaning, no ultimate validity for itself at all.

My friend, that is true for you, life and for mine, apart from the eternal God and his purpose for us, our lives are meaningless, empty, useless, no ultimate or final validity for him at all.

how many young people have I spoken to over the last seven or eight years and said to me, Mr. McMillan, there's no point in living, there's no practice in this life at all.

I talked not too long ago to a young man who was in a medical institution for the third time because he had become a drug addict, a young mechanic worked in a garage, 21 years of age.

And this is what he said to me, all I have to live for is the next needle. All I have to live for is the next needle.

[27 : 37] Life meant nothing at all to him. It was a useless, valueless, invalid thing. And he had become to him, he said, it was his own words.

Life had become to him an empty, living as hell. That's what life is, apart from God. the potter, the clay has no meaning.

This is why a humanistic society must inevitably become a nihilistic one. But I want you to notice this too. Apart from the clay, the potter cannot express his thought.

So the apostle Paul is writing to one of the young churches. When he's writing of the marvelous thing that God has done and is recreating in Christ, this is what the apostle Paul says.

Speaking of the redemption of Christ, he says, we are his workmanship. We are his workmanship. He is in Christ Jesus. And the good works.

[29 : 00] No, the word that he uses there is workmanship. it. From the reading of that word, we get out of one poem.

What are living we created in Christ? We are God's poems. Not quite that literally, but we are God's work of art.

What is God doing in his recreating power in Christ? Christ. He is molding the clay. He is giving it fashion, point, purpose. He is expressing the thought that has been in his mind for all eternity for his church.

He is taking the thought of beauty and he is molding it. And he is doing it in lives like yours and lives like mine in his genuine recreating work in Christ.

he is taking his thought and he is giving it expression. You know, the only way you can really see the thought of a great artist is when that artist gives his thought expression perhaps in a beautiful picture or in the shading of that beautiful vase.

[30 : 26] So it is with the eternal Potter. We are using this a very humble analogy in comparison to reality I believe.

The clay has no meaning apart from the Potter and the Potter can't express his thought without the clay.

Peter Peter invited to a young Christian church that's to undergo suffering Christ in order to what?

Why does Peter want him to stand for him for Jesus? For this reason that he may show the excellency of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Show forth the excellency of God in Christ. How can you do that? By being like Christ. we have been changed as the apostle Paul from glory to glory from one stage of transforming glory to another and what is the ultimate end?

[31 : 38] The apostle John tells us we know not yet what we shall be we have never yet glanced the thought of the glory eternal after self and mine for his redeemed we do not know yet what we shall be but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him man alone man out of Christ man without God his life will be shapeless pointless and purposeless but let man find the throne of eternal God and let him yield to Jesus to that throne and his life his life will into that throne and to all eternity will reflect the flaming beauty of the redemptive thought of God in Christ we can be afraid of our cold principle we can even be afraid of one other purpose for us because our purpose can be a tyrannical purpose sometimes tyrannical

Hitler is our man of purpose but what I mean and which his purpose he had it's not enough for us yet to say but because his purpose our fear can go no we have to go further and Jeremiah was

taken further by God he saw not just a principle was given not just a recognition of a very definite purpose ultimately Jeremiah is given a revelation of a divine passion a revelation of God this is what we have to do we have to get beyond the principle and find the purpose and then we have to go behind the purpose to the passion this is very ultimately every matter this is the vital question who is the potter who is the one in whose hand

I am that's the final question before I can ever possibly hear or submit to him before I can trust him I must know who the potter is who is the potter the potter is God what is God God is love love how can I know that God is love I can know that God is love only in one place only when I bow before I cross can I know that the eternal God is the God of love I can't find his love anyone else but I can't find it in the suffering of our cross the apostle

Paul right into the Romans he says God commended God prepared God has publicized God has put up on a great holy this love God has commanded this love to us how men today talk about a God of love and the man nothing of a God of justice and the man of a God of holiness and the eternal rectitude and righteousness us my friend there is only one place where you can know that God is the God of love and that is before the cross where a son out of love gave himself when I know that God is love then I can submit then I can begin to trust then I can begin to yield myself into the hands of the pot for I see in the hands that shake the clay and the hands that are crucified and cowardly

I can be unaffin I can stand strong and I can say have all my with me and I can do it in one way let me sum up what I have been trying to say I bring you to a principle that runs all through life and the runs all through this scripture that God has given us the principle of God's absolute sovereignty over us and he has it even when we deny and defiant I take you beyond the principle of the potter's house to the purpose you yield in the potter's house and I take you beyond the purpose to the passion I will take you to the heart of the passion to the

[37 : 37] God who so loved the world for he gave his only begotten son but whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life I can only testify to you as a passion not just as a master but as a passion there's one place and one place only where you find purpose that is in God there's one place and one place only where you find purpose allied to love and that is in God and Christ some of us know this scenario and experience some of us have seen it happen in the lives and experience of others my friend has it been through has it come through in real life of a new experience question there's there's a man a new poem un florida in muslim home who was thrown down in a burnt sickness that he never arose from.

And in his own, he got a letter from the man he had worshipped in the New Orleans Bory Ferry on Sunday night. He said, Dear Mr. James, I was listening to you preaching last Saturday evening. You were preaching on the text, The Lord shall arise upon me. And his glory shall be seen upon me. Listen, I came when I saw the glory of God in the face that he preached. And it wasn't anything that he said. It was one aware that some made him to seek a Savior. What are you?

The same machine writing one of these touching, heart-throbing pains of health, brought out what he meant for himself.

[40 : 41] Brought out what more than the man he was. Looking at what he was in life and what God has done very well. This is what he wrote.

When this passing life is done, When the St. John Fleming from, When I stand with Christ in glory, Looking back upon my story, Then shall I know, And only then, How much I owe.

The last, One of the last pictures, That the Bible gives us of the potter, Is a picture of the potter's field.

Just recently I came across, A thought and a commentary that was, Very novel to me. I had always thought of the potter's field, As a field out of which the potter's claims dug.

This man had a different idea. He thought of the field, As a field behind the potter's house. Every time the vessel was marred and drawn, In the hand of the potter, It was thrown into the field, At the back of the potter's, Building shed.

[42 : 06] What was the potter's field? It was the field of broken, Marred vessels. What is the potter's field?

It's the field of unbroken, Twisted, Sadly lost humanity. What price, The potter's field.

What price, The potter's field. Do you know the price, That man took in the potter's field? Do you? The price of blood.

It was burnt, It was the price of pieces of silver, Silver. For the price of Jesus. That will pay him.
For the price of Jesus. That's what, That's the value that man put in the potter's field. That was the
value that God put on him.

[43 : 15] For the value, That God put in the potter's field. This is the value. We have been
redeemed, Not with corruptible things, A silver and gold, But the precious blood of Christ, As of our
land, Without spot, And without blemish.

That's the price, That God put in Pottersfield, On the field of broken, Moulded, Useless vessels.
He bought it. And he takes a vessel, As mired, And in Christ, He makes it a new vessel.
Because God does that, You and I can trust ourselves, To his hand. And we can say with another,
Just as I am, Just as I am, Without one plea, For that thy blood was shed for me, And that thou
bidst me, Come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come.

And whosoever comes, He will in no wise, Cast out. Come. Come tonight. Come, While it is called
today, For there may never, Ever be another day, When you can't come.

[44 : 53] Come, And God's grace, And God's spirit, Is striving with you. Come, As a sinner to
Jesus. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.