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**SERMON TITLE: The Craft of the Master Potter, Part 2**  
*The Life & Times of Jeremiah*  
**SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:7-15**  
**DATE: November 17, 2019**  
*Check out the service at [www.fpcd.org](http://www.fpcd.org).*

*Read also Isaiah 64:4-9, 65:1-2*

**We've** stepped away from Jeremiah's book for a week to follow the thread of God as the Master Potter in other books of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. In the Old, the prophet Isaiah spoke similar words. He lived 50 years before Jeremiah. He, too said, "We are the clay and God is the Potter." Isaiah says how fabulous that God works with those who wait on God; how God welcomes those who seek to follow God. But the truth of the matter is—we are not that godly.

In fact, "we are constant sinners" so what hope is there? There's a great deal of hope *if we ask*. God is ready to respond; ready to be found; God is here with open arms. God works with the clay to create a masterpiece.

READ 2 Corinthians 4:7-15. Notice verse 7:  
Paul said to us Christians, "*Now we have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure.*"

Consider Paul's background. He was religious but he did not know God. He was studious but all he knew was the law and the law does nothing to change hearts.  
*He was a broken pot.*

One of his helpers was John Mark. John called Mark jumped into ministry before he was ready, and then deserted Paul. Later Paul did not want to take him.  
*He was a broken pot.*

Mary Magdalene had seven demons when she met Jesus. *She was a broken pot.* She was the person Jesus sent to tell the others he was risen.

Peter denied Jesus during his greatest hour of need.  
*He was a broken pot.*

There was the demoniac living in the tombs, the blind men by the roadside, the woman with the issue of blood, the adulterous woman, the men who wanted to stone the adulterous woman. And so many more. That's in the New Testament.

Then there's the Old Testament:

Abram was a childless old man who was called to start a nation. *He was a broken pot.*

Jacob was a jealous second child who cheated his brother. *He was a broken pot.*

Joseph was the arrogant youngest son who lived to prove himself. *He was a broken pot.*

God recruited Moses to speak but he was known to be tongue-tied. *He was a broken pot.*

David loved God, but still fell into adultery and murder. *He was a broken pot.*

There's you and me. We are pressed on every side:

- by troubles,
- not enough faith at the times we need it most,
- burdens which we carry from our family narrative,
- physical problems,
- limitations and
- temptations.

We get knocked down by circumstances that are far beyond our ability to handle.

Yet there's not one broken pot that in the Master Potter's hands cannot become a masterpiece. *God is ready to respond; ready to be found; is here with open arms.*

There's a type of pottery called Kintsugi, which is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the breaks with gold. The philosophy treats damage and repair as part of the history of an object, rather than something to hide.<sup>1</sup>

Why would God do this for us? God believes the same way. God is a rebuilder, and in grace desires to reach more and more people with this good news.

From last week's message we remember that the Lord said in the Old Testament, "As the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand." It is here in the New Testament too. To be clay in the Master Potter's hands is to be a steward.

Have you put yourself just as you are in the Master's hands?

Remember, Paul was pretty rough when he put himself in the Master Potter's hands. But when he did, it was then that he realized the great value of being Jesus' steward—he gained this immeasurable treasure. He realized that God was opening a new beginning for him, developing him to do exactly what he was created to do.

<sup>1</sup> "Kintsugi" at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kintsugi>, accessed November 13, 2019.

Paul gained this because he gave himself, body, mind, and soul, as a steward to Jesus Christ. And so can you!

For we have our own personal struggles; our own doubts; our own family history; our own brokenness. Even so, even in 2019 God will give you a new beginning if you entrust yourself to him. You will thrive because the treasure of having God's power in your life is so great.

When we give ourselves to God all sorts of opportunities open up. **Let's be stewards of our lives**, like we talked about last week. Let's consider ourselves clay pots that we are setting in the hand of the Master by recognizing his authority, his ownership, and his vision of what we can be.

The Potter has an outcome in mind.

Stewardship is the open door to life with God. When you are unwilling to be God's steward, you bear the burden of your life alone. With the role of stewardship comes the opportunity for God's power in you.

To show how God works, I am going to tell you the story of the great grandson of Queen Victoria of Great Britain and India. She was a devout Christian who believed in the power of Scripture. During her reign, there was a strong turn to faith, high morals, and social reform. You see her presenting a Bible to an ambassador from East Africa.

It is recorded that she told her chaplain that she hoped Christ would return while she was alive. She said, "Nothing would give me more joy than to pass the crown of Great Britain and India to Him with my own hands." This was consistent in her life. As an elderly woman, she reiterated that she "wanted to give Him every crown that God had given her."<sup>2</sup>

The Queen's grandson had two sons, Edward and Albert, who were born during Queen Victoria's reign. Edward was lively and flamboyant; Albert shy and fearful. He suffered from ill health. He had to wear painful braces on his legs to straighten them. He was left handed, but was forced to write with his right hand. The children were raised by governesses as was the custom in royal families. He developed a stutter at a young age and his governess used to withhold food when he could not talk.

All attempts to correct his stammer were unsuccessful. He avoided the public eye. As a student at the Naval Academy he ranked at the bottom of his class. Life was not easy for this young man.

Later, though, he married a wonderful Christian woman. Elizabeth loved her family, serving in public life, and she loved Scripture. She stood by Albert, and sought out help for his stammer with a man named Lionel Logue, who was associated

with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Perth, Australia, where he was from.

Many times Albert got discouraged and quit—or tried to. Elizabeth helped him stick with it. Lionel was known for patience, humor and "superhuman sympathy." This was a different, unorthodox, approach.

In the meantime, Edward the oldest son, assumed the kingship when his father died. He was great with social events, but small on royal responsibilities. His affair with an American socialite who was divorcing her second husband was unacceptable. Before a year was out, Edward abdicated the throne to marry her.

Suddenly Albert found himself thrust into the role of king. Could this broken man do it? Could he lead Great Britain during WWII, one of the most tumultuous times in the world's history? If you know history, you know the answer was yes.

God knew, you see, all about Albert's childhood and his shortcomings, and yet God had great plans for him. He had a family narrative of love for God. Through a loving wife and an effective caring Christian tutor God did something magnificent.

Whatever brokenness you have, in God's loving Master hands you will be shaped into a magnificent vessel. Nothing limits God except your unwillingness.

We all bring baggage when we come as a steward. We have family narratives. They may be debilitating. They may be alcoholism or perfectionism or unfaithfulness or financial disaster or anger or sexual abuse—you name it. Families have problems. We cannot ultimately fix ourselves. The power only comes when God is involved because God as the Master Potter has the ability to take what you have been through and shape you into something new. So we have to go to the right "doctor" for spiritual healing to get well. It costs us, just like any investment costs us.

God said, "I was ready to respond, but no one asked for help."

God's cost is both easy—the 10% tithe; and hard—investing your entire life. Yes, the church needs the 10% tithe but **you need the act of faith more**. You need to be God's steward. The reward is a magnificent treasure. Don't miss it. This is the craft of the Master Potter.

AMEN

<sup>2</sup> Ernest A. Francis, Translated from the German: "Königin Viktoria" at <https://www.cai.org/bible-studies/queen-victoria>, accessed November 13, 2019.