

Sermon – September 1, 2019 – Jeremiah 18:1-6 – In Good Hands

If you have accepted the Lord as your personal Savior, you are in good hands. Even if you are in pain, wherever you are in life, you are in good hands. This text is very troubling that the Lord sent a message to Jeremiah, the messenger, about the state of Israel. This message is not about the Potter putting us back together again, the theme of *The Potter's House*, the gospel song originally recorded by Tremaine Hawkins. Our subject today is the sovereign hand of God and the responsibility of the clay that is in his hands.

What are we supposed to do when we are good hands? God's people did not know how to act in good hands. "The clay" has responsibility in the hands of the potter. This text is about what can happen to us individually when we are not submitted to the Potter's hands and God's freedom to change His plan according to what the clay does. To put chapter 18 in context, in chapter 19 God tells Jeremiah to buy a clay pot and break it. God was demonstrating symbolically that Judah had an opportunity to be like clay, but decided to reject the hands they were in.

Israel had been in captivity because they worshiped other gods. The shaping process is not necessarily pretty—it could be messy. Like the Potter's wheel, God is controlling the speed of our lives—sometimes its fast and its slow. Some of us don't like God being in control. Are you comfortable with God being in control? The clay does not get to determine the destination or the purpose of the clay. Have we really submitted ourselves to the potter?

Our problem is not in knowing about the hands. The struggle is with God in availing and surrendering ourselves to shaping and molding without making demands about the outcome. We call God up to fix something rather than to ask God, "What is your will?" Pastor Washington leads the congregation in singing: "Have Thine Own Way Lord, have Thine on way. Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still." As the clay, we have not learned how to be yielded or still.

Sermon in a sentence:

While God remains sovereign, He takes into full account the way people respond to what He says.

God, in His sovereignty, pays attention to our response to what He says. God will discipline Israel because of their disobedient response.

1. God is at work in the midst of my brokenness.

- a. The Potter does not see imperfection and throw the clay away. He looks at the faults and he restores. He formed the marred clay into another vessel as it seemed best to him (Verse 4). Despite our flaws, the sovereign God gives us purpose—he repurposes us. When the pot goes into the furnace after molding and shaping, there is restoration. How does it feel when God says it is time to shift when he has something better?
- b. We are in good hands and God knows how to hold us. He knows just the amount of pressure that is needed in the design of the vessel based on the vessel's intended purpose. The Potter knows how to restore us despite the brokenness that might be present. He molds us to make us into what He wants us to be. God can use your brokenness to repurpose you.

- c. Sometimes we blame God for things happening around us. When we withdraw from His hands, the process is interrupted. Imagine the hands removed from the clay — the clay cannot shape itself.
2. **The conditions of my development are ultimately in God's hands.**
 - a. God uses people around us. However, we can get so attached to the people around us, that we lose sight that it is God.
 - b. God is not the author of evil. He uses the good and bad for our development. God used each stage of Joseph's journey to prepare him. He was preparing Joseph in the dark moments. God can take any situation and turn it for your good.
 3. **I am ultimately accountable for my motives, actions and responses to God's will and God's work in my life.**
 - a. We are accountable for our motives. Our heart determines our motives.
 - b. If your motives are wrong, they need to be put in check. I.e. Why did Adam and Eve sin? They were told not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Put your feelings in check, with your faith. Each of us is accountable for what we do and our response to God. My response to the will of God matters. Instead of being where God has told us to be, we can become paralyzed trying to understand the mystery and sovereignty of God. Questions can become the barrier to our obedience. Trust the Lord for what he allows. Refuse the temptation of allowing your questions of "how" and "why" to keep you from loving and worshiping God.
 - c. God is saying, you are in good hands. You can see victory. God turned things around for my good. My response, even though I am hurting is, "I trust you." Learn from Job, "Though he slay me, yet well I trust Him."
 4. **When God gave His son, He proved his good hands are loving hands.**
 - a. He gave His very best. Jesus knew for the first time in eternity, He would be separated from the Father. Have the faith to be able to walk and live with a clay-like posture.

The outcome is always better when you are in "Good Hands"

Discussion Questions for Small Group or Individual Study

1. What is your responsibility in the "good hands" of God? Explain.
2. What are the barriers to remaining yielded and still in the Potter's hands?
3. Share your reaction to the statement in the sermon, "God controls the speed of our lives—it may be fast or it may be slow." Give examples from your experience. What speed was your life going and what was your response to God?
4. How has God used the dark moments in your life to mold and shape you?
5. God's hands were on us as this sermon was being preached. Share what you will do in response to the sermon to "walk and live with a clay-like posture."