

# **The Potter and the Clay**

**Our Daily Bread – 3/23/2011**

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## **A Chosen Vessel**

The Master was searching for a vessel to use,  
On the shelf there were many, which one would He choose?

“Take me, cried the **gold one**. I’m shiny and bright,  
I’m of great value and I do things just right.  
My beauty and luster will outshine the rest,  
And for someone like you, Master, gold would be the best!”

The Master passed on with no word at all.  
He looked at a **silver urn**, narrow and tall,  
“I’ll serve you, dear Master, I’ll pour out your wine,  
And I’ll be at your table whenever you dine,  
My lines are so graceful, my carvings so true,  
And my silver will always compliment you.”

Unheeding, the Master passed on to **the brass**,  
It was wide mouthed and shallow, and polished like glass.  
“Here! Here! Cried the vessel, I know I will do,  
Place me on your table for all men to view.”

“Look at me”, called the goblet **of crystal** so clear,  
“My transparency shows my contents so clear,  
Though fragile I am, I will serve you with pride,  
And I’m sure I’ll be happy in your home to abide.”

The Master came next to a vessel **of wood**,  
Polished and carved, it solidly stood,  
“You may use me, dear Master”, the wooden bowl said,  
“But I’d rather you used me for fruit, not for bread!”

Then the Master looked down and saw a **vessel of clay**,  
Empty and broken it helplessly lay.  
No hope had the vessel that the Master might choose,  
To cleanse and make whole, to fill and to use.

Ah! This is the vessel I’ve been hoping to find,  
I will mend and use it and make it all mine,  
I need not the vessel with pride of itself,  
Nor the one who is narrow to sit on the shelf.

Nor the one who is big mouthed and shallow and loud,  
Nor one who displays his contents so proud.  
Nor the one who thinks he can do all things just right.  
**But this plain earthy vessel filled with my power and might.**

Then gently He lifted the **vessel of clay** ....  
Mended and cleansed it and filled it that day.  
Spoke to it kindly "There's work you must do ....  
**Just pour out to others as I pour into you.**

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## Background

**In 1902, Adelaide A. Pollard**, a Bible teacher and hymn writer, was hoping to go to Africa as a missionary but found herself unable to raise the needed funds to make the journey. Greatly discouraged, she attended a prayer service one evening and as she sat there, she overheard an elderly woman say "**It really doesn't matter what you do with us, Lord, just have your own way with our lives.**" The elderly woman inspired Pollard and she contemplated the story of the potter from **Jeremiah 18:3** and, upon her return home that evening, wrote all four stanzas before retiring for the night.

Five years later **George Stebbins** wrote a tune titled "**Adelaide**" to accompany the text.

## [\[edit\]](#) Lyrics

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
**Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.**  
**Mold me and make me after Thy will,**  
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
**Search me and try me, Master, today!**  
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,  
As in Thy presence humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Wounded and weary, **help me, I pray!**  
Power, all power, surely is Thine!  
**Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.**

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
**Hold o'er my being absolute sway!**  
Fill with Thy Spirit 'till all shall see  
**Christ only, always, living in me.**

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## IN THE POTTER'S HANDS

Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.” *Jeremiah 18:6*

As we all should understand, **our Creator is the Potter** and we are the clay. In *Isaiah 45:9* we read **“Does the clay say to the potter, what are you making?”**. The purpose and the plan of the clay is in the Potter’s mind. And when we submit ourselves completely to His will, He will mold us to be the best vessel, as He pleases. But too often we, the clay, may be reluctant to submit ourselves to the Master’s hand. We may say that we surrender all to Him, but there could be areas where we think we know best (see Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25): God cannot work in our lives when He sees a resistance in our lives. Today let us consider those **clays that cannot be used by the potter.**

### **A potter cannot use a clay that is very dry.**

This type of clay was once very moist and pliable. When a clay is exposed to air, it loses its “moisture” and becomes hard. It tends to crumble in the potter’s hand. A potter can use it only after starting the kneading process again. Are we that kind of a clay? Years back we may have accepted Jesus as our personal Saviour and were leading what we considered a converted life, guided by the Holy Spirit but, as time went on, we may have lost the “moisture” as we were exposed to the world more and eventually became very dry. God cannot use such a clay for His purpose. He needs to break it down, moisten it, knead it and mold it again to make it pliable in His hand. And that can be a painful process. If we look at a potter’s place, we can see his clay well kept in plastic covers to protect it from air and placed in moist places. A child of God is always encouraged to protect himself from the outside influence of the world and sin which can take away the “moisture” from him.

### **The second type of clay that cannot be used by the potter is the clay that is not moist enough.**

A potter expects a certain amount of “moisture” in a clay. A clay that lacks moisture cannot be molded to different shapes as the potter desires. This type of people, profess Jesus as their Saviour, they go to church, they worship God, they do everything for God. But when it comes to surrendering themselves to the will of God, they may refuse or neglect. They may not soften themselves to be molded. They may not allow the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. Such people seem to just be satisfied with the state they are in right now. Even though they know for sure that they lack “moisture”, they may not be ready to long for more of the Holy Spirit and be willing to yield and be shaped into His purpose.

### **The third type of clay that is not usable is the one that has air bubbles and hard spots**

Such clay **may be adequately moist** but may **have air bubbles** and **hard spots** which are not visible from the outside. It works just fine for the potter and beautifully molds into the desired vessel but, when it is **placed in the kiln** to fire up the clay, these **hidden air bubbles expand and break the vessel**. Like that clay, if you and I have hidden sins and hard spots, we cannot be molded into the purpose He has planned. When we are tested in the fire, everything **hidden will be revealed and exposed** (1 Peter 1:5).

**As Passover approaches**, we are admonished to **“examine ourselves” I Corinthians 11:27-30** -- it would be good to check our lives and see how we are in our Potter’s hands. Are we **too dry** and in a state of **“falling short in our walk with God?”** Or are we **lacking moisture**, not enough Holy Spirit and the word of God in our lives? Are there any hidden sins and tough spots which we are not willing to give up for God? God cannot use us if we are in any of these states.

We must not struggle in our Potter's hands thinking, "**What is he going to do with the purpose He has for my life?**" We have to trust Him in faith and put the molding in His hands. It is better to be on the potter's wheel so that His hands are constantly working on us, **molding us into the vessel He wants us to be.**

***Jeremiah 18:3-4 reads "So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him."***

Consider the words "**marred in his hands.**" We do not know the reason for it. Maybe it is because the clay was too dry or it lacked the exact amount of moisture. Whatever the cause, **it was marred in his hands.** When the potter saw that the clay was marred, he did not throw it out thinking that it is useless. He took the same old clay, moistened it, molded it and made a vessel to His liking. So it is always better to be in His hands and at the Potter's wheel. Our Creator **knows best.**

**Perhaps we could make a request to God similar to this:**

"Lord, today help me **understand** my present condition. Help me see my **negatives.** **Am I too dry,** exposed to this world and unable to hold up the shape that you have planned for me? Do I lack even **a drop of moisture?** I want to have more of the Holy Spirit in my life. Is there any kind of **hidden sins** or tough areas which I am not ready to surrender to your will? Help me recognize and fully acknowledge those hard spots. I want to be the perfect clay that is pliable and moldable in your hands. Make me a vessel that is **pleasing in your eyes** and **usable in your Kingdom.**"

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**James 1:2:** "My brethren, **count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;**"

**James 1:3:** "Knowing this, that the **trying of your faith worketh patience.**"

**James 1:4:** "But let **patience have her perfect (complete) work,** that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting (lacking) nothing."

**Acts 14:22:** "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through **much tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God."

**2 Timothy 3:12:** "Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer **persecution.**"

**Psalms 34:19:** "Many are the **afflictions of the righteous:** but the ***LORD delivereth*** him out of them all."

**Romans 8:18:** "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

**Romans 8:19:** "For the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the **sons of God. (V:14 those led by the spirit of God)**"

**Hebrews 12:11:** "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless **afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness** unto them which are exercised thereby."

**Remember the story of Job:**

**God turned Satan loose on him -- only spare his (Job's) life seems to have been the limits God placed on Satan. Consider the end of the test and trial -- Job had been "refined in the fire" so to speak -- he was then blessed 7 times more than what he had lost in way of possessions.**

**Yes, God is the "Master potter" and we are "the clay". He is molding and making us into what He wants us to become. Paul wrote that no corrections were pleasant -- but the fruit that comes from it (correction) is what counts.**

As Peter wrote: "For you are receiving the end (goal or product) of your faith, the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:9 and Matthew 24:13).

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