

## Jeremiah 18-20 – 20 Apr 2014

In 1883, American potter John William Bell, from Waynesboro, PA who was never known to be bashful about his talent, was once advised that a shipment of pottery supplies he had ordered had been lost in the mail. When asked if the clay was of any great value, Bell remarked, "not yet, not yet."

We are helpless to do anything great in life, BUT, we can see amazing things accomplished thru us by God if we just stay flexible to His will. **How do we stay moldable for the Lord?**

**Read 18:1-6 (opposite of vs 7-10)**

**The 1<sup>st</sup> way to stay moldable is by accepting God's sovereignty over my life. He is allowed to do whatever He wants to with my life.**

- These verses show God's absolute sovereignty to do whatever He wants to do in molding us.
- Cannot God do whatever He wants to with His creation without us questioning Him?
- Rom 9:21, II Tim 2:20

## **Read 18:7-10 (opposite of vs 1-6)**

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> way to stay moldable is by turning a 180° when God says to turn a 180°.**

- Jeremiah doesn't just have a ministry; he has the ministry that is at the heart of what God is doing. (See Jeremiah's calling in Jeremiah 1:10)
- These verses show how God is willing to change His plans based on the choices of the people involved.

## **Read 18:11-17**

- God gives them a choice to repent and return (vs 11).
- They think that God wouldn't take them back (vs 12) b/c they've been whoring around (Jer 2:25).
  - Maybe someone in this room feels the same way right now.
  - Unlike men, when we wrong God, He's still willing to take us back.
- It's against natural instinct for Israel to turn away from God.

- Example: (vs 13) When you know a good source of drinking water, you wouldn't go look for another.
- Example: If you had a great Mom growing up, you wouldn't go around calling someone else Mom would you? (You're really Mom was the source of all blessing for you, not this other person.)

## **Read 18:18-23**

- As long as they still had a form of godliness given to them from the priest, wise men and false prophets (vs 18) then they feel they were ok.
  - They didn't care what the Law really said as long as they maintained that model or template around them.
  - Maybe someone in this room would admit that they've acted the same way. "Oh, I'm not really interested in what the church really has to say to me, as long as I have the form of church and Christianity around me...that makes me comfortable."

- Jeremiah knows that his preaching although hard to hear is good for them (vs 20)

## **Read 19:1-9**

- 4 words translated as “Hell”
  - Hebrew – Sheol, Greek – Hades, Gehenna, and the once used Tartarus.
  - Hades – *“to not see” – Most common word*
  - *Tartarus – unknown usage only used once but says the fallen angels are bound at Tartarus in “chains of darkness” (Hades = to not see)*
  - Gehenna (G1067) – used 12 in NT all by Jesus and in James 3:6
    - This means the lake of fire.
    - False worship and burning trash at the valley of the Son of Hinnom.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> way to stay moldable is by actively doing God’s work and will whether hard or easy.**

- Jeremiah is told to accuse them of their sins, right in front of the elders and leaders, right in the place of committing those sins, even of human sacrifice.

- Don't be concerned if the task is hard or easy, but be concerned with whether or not it is GOD that is the one trying to mold and move you.
- *A story is told of a man who loved old books. He met an acquaintance who had just thrown away a Bible that had been stored in the attic of his ancestral home for generations. "I couldn't read it," the friend explained. "Somebody named Guten-something had printed it." "Not Gutenberg!" the book lover exclaimed in horror. "That Bible was one of the first books ever printed. Why, a copy just sold for over two million dollars!" His friend was unimpressed. "Mine wouldn't have brought a dollar. Some fellow named Martin Luther had scribbled all over it in German."*
  - Don't stop pursuing God's work if others don't value who God is shaping you into. Stay faithful to God's molding.

## **Read 19:10-15**

**The 4<sup>th</sup> way to stay moldable is by remembering the experiences of those who've not stayed moldable.**

- Many of us think that chapter 18 (changing the marred vessel into a good vessel) was mean of God.
  - No! That was God's mercy not to allow us to continue marred.
- Chapter 19 is the place that we never want to find ourselves.
  - Vs 15 – They had hardened their necks.
  - This is why the vessel needed to be broken, it was no longer pliable.
  - That's what it means to be a stiff-necked people.
- We all know people who've thrown away their usefulness by constantly being rebellion and stiff-necked
  - The argumentative who go from church to church.
  - The worldly one who's usefulness is choked out by the cares of this life.
  - The PK (preacher's kid) raised with every spiritual advantage yet never submits to God's will.

## Read 20:1-6

- Jeremiah now suffers physical and emotional harm for preaching.
- Jeremiah's response: Prophecy the truth, specifically, to the one who persecuted him.
  - Notice that Jeremiah didn't seek any personal revenge, just that God would avenge.
  - Pashur, judgment is now such a part of you, that it's now part of your name.
  - You will die in Babylon b/c of your stiff-necked rebellion.

## Read 20:7-11

**The 5<sup>th</sup> way to stay moldable is by being honest about our frailty and shortcomings. Don't put up a fake front.**

- Jeremiah was tired of the struggle socially, the struggle intellectually, the struggle emotionally. Some here have been this way.
- Picture wanting to quit preaching then you get around 2 people talking about the Lord in a wrong or cult-like way and you just want to jump in. You can't help it.

- But, verse 11, the Lord is with us. Where can we go from His presence, where can we flee.

## **Read 20:12-18**

- Jeremiah pleads with the Lord in a very up and down, up and down fashion.
- Jeremiah is at a very persecuted, lonely, being in the minority opinion, sad state right now. Maybe someone here is like this today.
  - Most people fall into selfishness at this stage either by isolation or by indulgence.
  - All people will resort to who their core character in times like these. You know, the base instincts of how they were born.
    - Have you been born again?
    - If not, your core character will lead you into a bad time when you come to these situations.
    - If you have, you will cling to God in these times.
      - It will still be hard, as with Jeremiah, but you'll make it thru honoring God.