

# THE POTTER'S HOUSE – THE WORKMANSHIP OF GOD

By Richard Samuel

There are many references in the Bible to the *Potter's House*. *The prophet Jeremiah, the prophet Isaiah, the Apostle Paul among others.*

Paul (and all of these men) are rough, tough men of God, they weren't wimps or girly men. At different times, in different places, they all reference the clay, and the potter. It's an interesting message. Now their message – God's message is not one that is going to be popular. In fact I think that's maybe why I felt compelled to look at this through the eyes of the book of Ephesians 2:10, because I know when people read, "*For we are His workmanship,*" it makes it sound like we might have made a contribution or we had something to do with it. Not true if we understand the principle of the potter's house.

Now of course there are elements at the potter's house--but I'm going to add two more elements. They're not new by any means, but we're going to add two elements. Normally you have clay, a potter and the wheel. The clay, which is represented by us; the potter is God and the wheel is our life circumstance on to which the potter is going to do His work. But I'm going to add two things: Water and Fire. How do I know these things? To make pottery you need water. The water in our application will only go so far as to represent the Spirit of God and His word because that is needed to be the flow on which God will press His hands on us in our life situation. And FIRE. You need a kiln. You need to bake this final product.

There are four principles to understand.

**1. GOD IS THE BOSS.** The supremacy and the sovereignty of God our creator, His divine governing can be seen in the book of Ephesians and Romans chapter 9.

In the economy of God, the principle is that God has the absolute right to do with this piece of clay what He wants. And if He wants to mash it and throw it in the trash, that's His business, not yours. Likewise, it's the same for every person. If we come to the conclusion that God's the boss, we then have the tendency to say, "Hey look God, you've got a hard enough time with all these other pieces of clay around me. I think you should let me govern my wheel, let me adjust the speed. I can do that, you know. I can be trusted to do that..."

God's the boss. The perfect illustration--Isaiah says it--Paul says it, "*Does the clay say to the potter, 'what are you making?'*" Does the clay have the right to talk back to the potter?"

Well you don't answer that. Too many times we can read through a passage in the Bible and say, "Well that's somebody else." But, start reading Romans 9 and you'll recognize what Paul's saying, he says that God's saying, "*I'll have mercy on whom I want to have mercy* (one vessel made to honor, another to dishonor).

He had every single right to do what He wanted to do. In fact, if you keep reading in that chapter he talks about the wild olive branch, the tree being grafted back on. He has the right to save. He has the right to save whom He wants. Let's take a look at the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 4.

*When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside*

*everything is said in parables so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!" (Mark 4:10-12)*

God doesn't want everyone. The False Messiah (Anti-Christ) won't be forgiven or saved. God has the right to save. He has the right to save whom He wants. And we get stuck in this format somehow, "Well I want to submit to God, but can you not make it so difficult? I know God's the boss, I know, but..." Now listen carefully. Number two is:

**2. THE PURPOSE.** I'm going to outline the purpose in one word: HIS. It's *His* purpose. He chose you out from among others that He didn't choose. He chose you for Himself, His purpose. The Bible's full of the purpose--God's purpose. Well I can live with the purpose. I'd like to be more of Him and less of me. I already know that.

Now I look at myself as a vessel, that every day, little by little, every day that old nature of me is dying away; sometimes very little, but little by little I am being transformed, and this occurrence makes me a vessel of grace. While God was doing His work, it transformed itself from a dull, lifeless nothing piece of clay, being transformed into a vessel. And at that point it was marred. It's very subtle. This marring represents our freewill where we say, "I do what works for me. I'm going to go my way, not God's way." "Well, when you surrender your will, your way – you will be transformed. Now, if you've got that, you're going to need to look at the process.

**3. THE PROCESS.** This is my favorite part of the message. How does God carry out His process? The WHEEL.

I'm the CLAY. God's the POTTER doing the work on the wheel, which is how the process is going to be carried out. And I'm on this wheel. How many of you have once thought, "This is my circumstance, what I'm going through, my troubles, my tribulations, MY everything." How many of you thought, "This is part of my wheel. Thank God." How many of you thought that? Probably not very many of you. I know, because I'm guilty of the same thing too.

I complained and worried about something instead of saying, "This is part of my wheel." This is how God's shaping me. Everything that's going on in my life--God enters into all things to work His good. *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* Romans 8:28

How many of you view your life (your circumstance, your failures, your short fallings, all the debacles in your life) and yourself as caricature on the wheel where your life looks like it's spinning out of control?

How many of you feel like you're on a wheel, lifting your hands up and saying, "Lord I know you've got me. I'm praising you. I know you've got me. It's okay." Versus you who are revolving on the wheel and you look like someone that's fighting, "Get me off of here! Mine is supposed to be the gentle wheel!" You know, the smooth kind, right?

This is how wonderful God has been to me. I'm so grateful that I can say today. I feel honored to present this message to you. Not because it's something new. But because I look at this and I see myself on the wheel just like the next person. It's hard for me to accept that God is working a work on me that I finally have said, there's nothing that I can do. I've just got to **trust** You. You're the one being potter. I commit myself to You. And my failures and my troubles, all of the things that I go through, all of the things I've gone through. He uses those to accomplish the process.

And I know without a doubt, there are times when I thought, "You know if I could be on this wheel, but if I could control the speed or if I could control how many people are looking in while I'm being spun out of control."

How many times have I dropped my guard and thought, "My life is spinning out of control"? But don't forget ... He's got it under control. He's got this whole picture, just like He's got the whole world in His hands." "*Well, yeah,*" you might be thinking, "*that's great, but it doesn't apply to me. God could not possibly know how badly my life is bent out of shape.*" Oh, yeah? In fact that's the favorite type of clay that He likes.

The type of clay that sits on the shelf that has this, "I'm pretty good already. Thanks," attitude. I think He likes to leave those clay pieces there. He picks up the ones that have some mixed in ingredients, different colors, different shapes, and different sizes. Some that thought they'd never get the opportunity to be shaped. He looks at those, puts them on that wheel and begins to do His work.

Now we can say, "We are His workmanship." And that's true. There's that element that I added--the water. In the process of spinning, remember we looked at those power words and I said the Bible says the power is already in us thorough His Spirit. Those words tell me that while He's working the work, He's empowered me. The Bible says He won't tempt me beyond what I'm able. Sometimes I think He thinks I'm really able ... but He says He won't tempt me beyond what I'm able. In fact it says He'll provide a way of escape. "*And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*" 1 Cor. 10:13

The thing that I marvel at every time I come back to this, is the method; God's method with man and this is why God is the greatest artist. He's not only the greatest wordsmith; He's the greatest artist in the world. He can make something that is a throw-away reject into something as beautiful as anything you've ever seen.

There have been days when it's rainy outside and gloomy. In times past I'd say, "Aw, I hate the rain. Why can't it be sunny today?" Even when it's rainy now I go outside and say, "Wow! Look how green everything is. Look how beautiful." Even when it's gray and cloudy it's like God opens your eyes to say, "Quit complaining and start appreciating the masterpiece that I made." Why spend your whole life griping about something when you could be saying, "Thank you for this rainy day because it's really beautiful. You made it."

Now the process on the wheel, like I said, is my favorite part. Some of us don't really believe that this is a life application. How are you or I going to become transformed into what God wants if we keep staying in our little box? God calls us, chooses us out from among others He didn't choose. And then there's God's artistry.

Take a look at King David, and I love this about David because he embodies everything you need to know about the life of a believer emphasized ten times, twenty times, a hundred times over. David was far from perfect, he was an adulterer; murderer; king; he was victorious, next, he's running for cover to hide in the cave in Adullam. Everybody wants to be king, but nobody wants to have the cave Adullam experiences. But that's part of the wheel.

All those cave Adullam experiences with all those crazy things, that was part of David becoming the man he was. David was transformed from tentative, "I might make it" to "I will trust in the

Lord." We can sift all this away and just ask the question, "Do you trust?" I'm sorry to say it like this, but do you trust the one being the potter? The one who *died* for you.

Do you trust Him enough to say, "I commit my life to you." Do you trust enough to quit trusting yourself? And as far as I'm concerned, every single person has something wrong with them. It may not be an outward thing that you can see, but I have plenty wrong with me, and you've got plenty wrong with you. That's the concept of the potter's house and if God will empower you, you can be victorious over anything that is ruling the flesh because God empowers us. It doesn't mean that you're going to have the victory over everything but you can be like Paul and say, "This, I can get victory over." And that brings me to the person.

**4. THE POTTER.** The God that we serve, He doesn't look like the creation of my mind.

If we let modern day religion paint the picture of the potter, we'd be the one sitting in the potter's chair and the clay would be working on the potter. That's the modern attitude ... in place of what should be perfect submission. Instead, "Have your way, Lord. I'm just a lousy, rotten piece of clay anyway. You do with me what you will and I know when I come through this I'm going to be something good because you made me good, not because I brought anything to the table."

I envision the potter this way. Maybe you can say its child-like., but that's okay. I envision the potter, God sitting at His wheel, looking at this piece of clay with such care and such detail. When His hands are on me, while I'm busy fighting and swinging at the air and finally I submit. I think that He would even stoop to put His hands on this dirty piece of clay, that by His touch, by the shed blood of His Son I'm made clean. This person, just like David out of Psalm 139, "Who sees my uprising, my down falling. He knows my thoughts afar off. He knows my ways." They're not good. And yet He still works on me. And I am that vessel. You today are that vessel that He's working on. We marred ourselves. Ephesians 2 tells us the condition we're in, but we serve a potter.

We serve God, Almighty God, our All-Powerful God that takes the care to sit and watch. And when it says, He knows the hairs of my head and He sees the sparrow fall. He knows while I'm on that wheel just being whirled around. The one thing He's looking for while His hands are on me is for me to trust Him implicitly. If there was a message behind the message, it would be God speaking to you and to me, "I've got you in my hands. If the pressure gets a little tough, if it feels a little squeezed, I've got you. My hands are on you. **Just trust me.**"

Have faith and trust me. Just trust me. My hands are on you. And as I shape you, and as you feel this poking and prodding going on, on your piece of clay, quit, as He says to Paul, "*Quit kicking against the pricks.*"

We can be like Paul when he comes to his senses and says, "Lord, absolute Master, what would you have me do?" Trust Him. Just trust Him.

This is such a simple message but when I look at my life. While I was a dull block of clay, while I was shapeless and didn't have any luster, God saw me. He saw something good in me. Popular messages are peddled today on "the great potential in you." Well, that's true for Jesus' sake, for God's sake. There's great potential in you. He sees that. He views us as though we're something we're not, which brings me to the last element.

We have the CLAY, me and you; we have the POTTER, God; the WHEEL, our life; the WATER, His Spirit; and the FIRE. Unlike gold, which gets put in to be tried so that the pureness

comes out, the last passage for a piece of clay is to be put into the kiln. You're baked so you don't change shapes anymore.

He's got you to where He wants you when you are put into that kiln to bake. Ephesians 2:7, "*That in the ages to come He might show,*" He might display (and I would add, He might put on display) "*the exceeding riches of His grace.*" Who do you think or what do you think that is? Do you think God's going to put on display some power of His own? "*The exceeding riches of His grace*" those that were put on the wheel that went through the principle, the purpose and the process by way of the person put on display to show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

**WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP!**