

The Potter and the Clay: Finding Purpose in God's Hands

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[0 : 00] We're going to go to Jeremiah 18, speaking about the potter and the clay. Why am I here? All of us can wonder that question. What is my purpose in life? Some look for meaning in career, in relationships, in personal ambitions.

Yet our true purpose is God. It's found in Christ, our Saviour, our Maker and His plan. God tells Jeremiah the prophet to visit the potter's workshop. So we're going to take a trip to the potter's workshop today to learn a spiritual lesson.

We're going to pick it up there from Jeremiah 18, from verse 1.

As seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?

Saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. It's speaking to the house of Israel, but we could very well take this truth ourselves as God as the potter and we as the clay.

[1 : 44] Picture it, if you will, as you enter into the potter's workshop and you can smell the wet clay. You can hear the grinding hum of the turning stone, the potter's wheel.

And you see his steady, deliberate movements of his hands, the craftsman's hands, bringing forth a vessel of purpose.

Pressing and printing it, shaping the clay upon the wheel. Think of the potter and the clay. It's a picture of God and his people.

God is the potter and we, you and me, are the clay. And God is at work in the lives of his people. It pictures this clay, this picture of the potter as God at work, isn't it?

God's relationship, the hands of the potter shape the clay. And it's the same for you and me. God's purpose is his making of us, isn't it?

[2 : 45] A light to a potter. And throughout the process, the potter maintains complete control. So he goes out and searches out the clay.

And there's different kinds of clay. The potter chooses that raw material. Some for earthenware. Some for stoneware. Some for porcelain.

And he knows what he's looking for. And notice how it tells the story here of the clay in his hands. The potter's hands. And that the clay was spoiled or marred in the potter's hands.

So he remade it into another pot, another vessel. As seemed good to him. As seemed best to the potter.

So look at the lessons we can learn this morning. What can we learn from the potter's workshop? It pictures how God uses circumstances. How he uses people, events, to shape believers.

[3 : 45] Even through suffering at times. Consider some snapshots as we walk through the graphic picture of this potter at work. Notice firstly the potter.

A picture of God himself, our maker. And you can see him there, as it were, wearing the clothes of a workman. The master potter. And he bends over his work.

He has in view what he is making. And look at him working purposefully. He's got a clear design in mind. He's working patiently.

He's got this taking of time. Of the shaping process. And he's working in a persevering way too.

Even when the vessel is marred and he's got to start all over again.

And in it all we see the potter's heart. It's intentional. It's loving. The potter. Then we see the wheel. Where the clay is stationed on this wheel.

[4 : 43] This turning wheel. This potter's wheel. And God's shaping here. As the wheel spins ceaselessly. And it's going round and around.

Underneath the potter's hands. And it's a symbol, in a way, you could think of life. And the orchestration of life. Under God's hand. Sometimes that wheel, it turns swiftly. Sometimes slowly. As God directs the seasons of our own lives. And our life is like the wheel turning. The potter's wheel. God uses circumstances like life events. The happenings of life. Both pleasant and hard. The people in our lives. Even those who hurt us. God can even use the devil.

In the case of Paul's thorn in the flesh. That affliction. That which was not comforting and comfortable. God used that. In the making of Paul. And we're like that clay on the wheel, aren't we? [5 : 43] Through lifetimes. Sometimes dizzying cycles. Spinning round and round. Maybe times of pressure. Of lifting. Of carving. Through it all.

The potter. He's still in control. He is there. Always present. Every rotation. Every pass of his fingers. It's measured and purposeful.

And at times it can seem. When we're on that wheel. Especially getting whirled around. Seems a bit chaotic. Sometimes we're not sure. What's happening. But the hands of the master are there. At work. Bringing forth. A masterpiece. That's you. Think of the clay. A picture of humanity. This lump. Just starts off as a lump. This. This. This kind of squishy little piece of clay. A lump of clay. And we think of clay. Can be pliable.

[6 : 39] But it also can be resistant. Sometimes. Takes a bit of working. Bit of hammering. And pressing. And shaping. And the clay. It submits. It's. But. At times.

It pushes back. And the potter has to apply pressure. Pressure. Before the clay gives way. So here's intent. And the master's fingers. They press.

And mould. And shape. They smooth. Sometimes the clay collapses. Under his touch. It doesn't take the form. That he intends. But the potter does not give up.

He keeps on. He takes it back. And puts it back on the wheel again. He shapes that clay again. He wets it. And he begins to. Shape it again. But that clay.

At times. It can be. Stubborn. At other times. Yielded. It's the same with you and me. Isn't it? As. The clay. In the potter's hands. Sometimes man.

[7 : 36] In the hands of God. We can be resistant. Or we can. Surrender. We are really. As you think of it. Dust and water.

Aren't we? Like it began in the garden. Given life. At his breath. But often we resist the shaping. Of his will. And we can harden.

When we ought to be flexible. Sometimes we break. When we should endure. Think of the shaping. On the wheel. It's not without friction. Sometimes we don't like it.

What God is doing. The pressure of trials. Of circumstance. The cutting away. Of excess. To make that vessel. The right shape. The refining then. Through the fire.

In it all. The potter is present. And his hands are never absent. Consider the process of shaping. The clay's condition. The clay to be shaped. Needs to be pliable.

[8 : 32] It's the same with you and me. Are we sensitive and soft. To the master potter. It can happen that. The clay can get hard. And dry. It has to be softened.

With water. We can get spiritually dry. Can't we? And it happens when we're not being nourished. By God's word. We see the word. Of God.

Is pictured as water. Sometimes. We need God to. Pour his water. His word upon us. Make us moldable. And then as vessels of clay.

It's not up for us to tell the. Potter. What he cannot. Use. In his shaping process. It's up to him. Sometimes we don't like. The pressure.

Of the potter. Notice. The mud vessel. It's a picture. You see. As the. As the story tells there. Jeremiah 18.

[9 : 28] That the vessel was marred. In his hand. It's a picture of resistance. Isn't it? It represents those who resist. God's shaping process. We could think of Bible examples.

Of that. Like. Saul. King Saul. He resisted. God's purposes. There's many. Examples. We could cite. Of. Such cases.

And we think. How. Are we. Are we resisting God. Are we. Maybe. Not meeting. Our potential. Because. Of rebellion. Or sin.

And we become. Marred vessels. Could it be self. Of pride. Self will. Lack of submission. We can all make that mistake. How tragic it is. To. Resist God's.

Shaping. Rather. Receive it. We can miss out. On his blessings. And be like that. Marred vessel. But. Thank God. The story. Does not end there. With the marred vessel.

[10:24] We see God. Perseveres. With us. Doesn't he. I know some talk about. The perseverance. Of the saints. I think about the perseverance. Of God. Don't you. He perseveres.

Doesn't he. With his people. Thank God. The story. Doesn't end. With the marred vessel. We see the remade vessel. God's redemptive work. We see the marred vessel. Becomes a remade vessel. What a picture of God. Giving us. Grace. Of his redemptive work. He did not discard. The marred vessel. Instead. He made another vessel.

In the same way. God does not throw us out. Or throw us away. When we falter. Thank God for that. That when we mess up. When we're a marred vessel. God doesn't give up. He doesn't give up on us. He refashions us. For his glory. He doesn't discard. That marred clay. But he remakes it. He reshapes it. Into another vessel.

[11:20] We get another go at it. And again and again. If need be. The potter. He needs that clay. Doesn't he? With his hands. To remove the air bubbles. The pressure. He's got to squash.

And squish. And get the air bubbles out. Because with the air bubbles. That will make the vessel weak. So the pressure is good. The pressure is good.

Brother. Sister. It's like what happened with David. After adultery. And murder. He was a marred vessel. But he was remade. Wasn't he? We see Peter. After his denial.

A remade man. And it's the same with you and me. In the Christian life. There's a whole series of new beginnings. And God loves to remake. Marred vessels. Think of that.

You might say. Preacher. You don't know where I've been. What I've done. Who I am. My story. Hey. You can get a new story. He's going to make you. Another vessel. God recreates.

[12:14] Doesn't he? He remakes. And he keeps on doing it. He keeps on changing us. From glory. To glory. To glory. And also in the potter's vessel. We see the fire.

It pictures strength through trials. That vessel. After the wheel. It goes to the fire. Once the vessel is formed. That's not the end of the process. It cannot remain that way.

Soft and unfinished. It could become dry and fragile. It must pass through the fire. The vessel must go through the fire. And the kiln's heat is searing.

It's unrelenting. But it is the only means by which that fragile clay can be hardened. Unto a vessel of strength and endurance.

And think of it. As you think of the fire of the potter. The kiln. The fire is not for destruction. But for completion. Without the fire.

[13:10] The vessel would crumble. It's not finished yet. Under that slightest touch. It would crumble. It would not hold the purpose. For which it was created. It's the same for us.

The trials we must endure at times. The refining of suffering. Of loss. Of testing. It's not signs of God's abandonment. But of his finishing work.

He's finishing you. He does not shape us only to leave us weak. He fires us in the furnace of life. So we can be steadfast and useful and resilient.

It's the fire. It's the fire. It's the making of us. That kiln process is painful but necessary. For strength. And for endurance. For usefulness. And so the pottery goes through the fire.

And it goes through twice. It makes that vessel durable. So trust the potter's process. Think of it. Can you trust God? Whether you're on the wheel.

[14:10] Spinning around and around. Marred and then remade. Maybe marred and remade again. Can you trust him? Through the process. The potter. Can you trust his hand? It's tested faith that grows and refines and becomes strong.

As God develops and he refines us through life. And sometimes it's the hard times of life. As hard as it is. And it comes close to home of late.

Brother, sister, that Job cries out. He knoweth the way that I take. And when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. It's like a goldsmith refining gold, isn't it?

Sometimes we don't like the pressure. We don't like the fire. We don't like that tough time. That sometimes life throws at us.

And yet, God will fortify and strengthen your faith. He's the potter. He knows what he's about. And there's a purpose in trials. We know it tells us in 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9.

[15:14] How God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. When we're feeling overwhelmed. When we're feeling hurting. That God's strength is here for you.

In him. In Christ. It's interesting in how, in a learning context, everything taught must be tested. You know, homeschooling mums and dads.

You've got to test what you teach. Everything taught must be tested. It's the same with the Christian life, isn't it? That there's a test. And then you get through the test.

You get to the next level. The next level. Advancement requires testing, doesn't it? For us to grow, to go further, grow stronger, there's a test.

Then there's a test. There's a test. There's a test. And trials can be that kind of growth opportunity. So God's got a purpose for trials and testing. And it's easy for me to say that theoretically, but some of you are going through that right now.

[16:17] The hardships are preparing you. They're making you stronger. Think of it. Strong people don't come from easy pasts. The strong people have been through something.

God's refining you. Trust him. Trust him today. In his testing. And stand firm. We know that the word promises joy comes in the morning. Psalm 30 verse 5.

We've got to go through the night and then joy will come. It's promised. In the morning. And even when we feel like we've failed, God continues to work. You might think, preacher, I'm feeling pretty marred right now.

I'm like that marred vessel. Just back to some squishy piece of lump of clay again. Well, he's going to throw you back on the wheel again. God's not going to give up on you.

Thank God he reshapes the vessels that are marred. Marred by others. Maybe marred by ourselves and our own choices. Our own mistakes.

[17:13] Our own rebellion at times. Your purpose is in God's hands. It's in the potter's hands. Know that God is working. He's making a vessel.

And by God's grace, we can be a vessel unto honour. Sanctified. Meet or prepared. Made prepared for the master's use. Prepared unto every good work.

As Paul tells Timothy, the potter has in view what he's making. What you can become. Think of it. The potter isn't just playing around with clay on the wheel for just some occupation.

He's got an intention. He's got an intent. He's got an intent of what you can become. Because he's making vessels. He's making vessels. And it tells us here, In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour.

If any man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

[18:19] So it's saying we can be a vessel unto honour, like an honourable vessel. We can be a vessel that's sanctified, set apart, and it's meet, it's fit for the master to use, and it's prepared unto every good work.

There's a usefulness here. So Paul's describing this vessel of honour. He says if a man purge himself from these, he's talking about getting rid of, in the context, the false teachings, the ungodly influences.

In the context, Hymenaeus and Philetus, they're spreading false doctrine. Purge yourself from the false teachings, from false and ungodly influences, from sinful behaviours, from associations that bring dishonour and unfruitfulness.

Hey, don't toy with that. Stick with the word. Stick with the people of God. Don't toy around with false ideas and false teachings. And the whole point is to be useful.

It's about usefulness to God. You can be useful to God as you cleanse yourself, purge yourself from other things that will hinder and rather follow God's way.

[19:26] To be that vessel that's set apart for the master. To be a vessel that's honourable and useful for God's purposes. Prepared for good works.

Now think of it. There's many kinds of vessels. As you could go to your cupboard, your cabinet. And some vessels will be a plate.

Some a serving bowl. Maybe the vessel could be an oil lamp. We're different vessels. Every one of us have a different purpose. But all vessels have a purpose.

And think of it through life. God orchestrates. He shapes us through life. He's that master potter. We are the clay. He's working on us. And we can know his love, his purpose.

The potter is careful. And his intentional. His transformative. That which was just a lump of clay. Now, something useful. It's God's vessel.

[20 : 25] And just as clay is shaped and moulded in the skilled hands of the potter, so too our lives are formed by the divine hands of God. God fashions each one.

Every one of us. We all have different passions, gifts. We're all wired differently. And everyone's got their own distinct kind of blueprint. You are unique.

Even when we feel like we're marred. Like we messed up. Hey, join the club. God continues to work. He doesn't give up. Thank God. Your past, your weaknesses, your limitations, your failings. They don't disqualify you from God's purpose. Think of it. God uses the least likely people. Look at who he used. You see them warts and all through the Bible.

Abraham, Moses, David. At times they were unlikely choices. But God had great plans for them. We've all asked that question.

[21 : 24] What's my place in life? Why am I here? Where do I fit in a world of 8 billion people? You are an individual. Uniquely made.

A unique fit. In God's grand design. You have a place in God's plan. And God's designed you with intention. Like the potter.

He's making something that he wants you to be. And he's perfectly designed you to be you. Your own unique talents, your own gifts and experiences.

It's all part of his plan. You see, even before we're born, we see that our maker has possessed us. He's got a hold of us.

He's covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your purpose is unique. Unique to you. Among the billions, God sees you as an individual.

[22 : 22] He knows your name. He knows the numbers of hairs on your head. Your uniqueness. God is your creator. Genesis 2.7. He formed man out of the dust to the ground. We like this vessel of dust, of clay.

From the very beginning, he's been shaping us according to his perfect will. And like the potter, he's got control over the clay. We're literally in his hands. Think of that.

It's like David cried out. But I trusted in thee, O Lord. I said, thou art my God. My times are in thy hand. We're very much in the hand of the potter. He's got control over our lives, hasn't he?

And he knows what's best. If we can only come to the mind of that. What is God's best? That he shape us into that vessel of honour.

As Isaiah reads, But now, O Lord, thou art our father. We are the clay. And thou, our potter. We are all the work of thy hand.

[23 : 19] The potter's hands are on you. Brother, sister. His hands are on you. Shaping you. Making you. His fingerprints. The potter's fingerprints are on his creation.

An imprint of his divine care. God's shaping our lives. In the way that seems best to him. So, what will we do? Will we yield to the potter?

Jeremiah beheld the potter at work. The clay yielding to the touch of the master. Can we trust his hand?

Even when we're marred. Even though we think, Well, he'd just as well throw me in the bin. I'm just a marred piece of clay. This vessel's not going to amount to much.

He'd just as well throw me back in the dirt again. But no, God doesn't give up, does he? And we're not random lumps of earth spinning without purpose. We're vessels in his hands.

[24 : 19] If we can but trust him. And know we're shaped by him. And in his wisdom. And at times in the fire, He'll test us. Though we may resist, Though we may falter, His hands never let go.

And your purpose really, It begins with trusting and seeking him. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him.

And he shall direct thy paths. Think of it. Trust God to lead. You can discover God's plan. Hey, you're here for a reason. There's a purpose for you. Individually, each one.

Each one here has God's plan. It's intimacy with God. It's yielding. It's knowing his heart. It's seeking first God.

And discovering his purpose. Really, our soul's true happiness is Christ. It's to yield to the potter's hands. Sometimes we don't understand. Our own understanding.

[25 : 22] Our own understanding is finite, isn't it? But his understanding is infinite. It's eternal. Will we trust and obey even when it is hard? Think of Abraham.

He left his home. Trusted God's call. Became the father of nations. He just asked God, Hey, direct my paths. He didn't know where he was going. It's a telling thought, isn't it?

And Peter's nets overflowed after obeying the Lord Jesus. He thought he knew it all. He was the top-notch fisherman of his day.

He knew all the places to fish and all the techniques of fishing. And he'd been fishing all night. And then Jesus says, Go out again. Cast your net on the other side.

And okay, Lord. And when he obeyed, that's when God blessed, isn't it? And sometimes we've just got to listen to the voice of Jesus, don't we? Surrender to that.

[26 : 21] The potter stretches the clay beyond what it thinks is possible. Imagine if you were that lump of clay getting stretched. Sometimes it hurts to get stretched, doesn't it?

And we can think of that through maybe times where we might step out and do something for God. I know there's some very nervous men preparing to deliver a five-minute devotion on Wednesday night because of the homiletics class.

And they're starting to pack it here. You know, we've got five minutes. I've got to say something for five minutes and deliver a little sermon. You know, sometimes there's a stretching, isn't there? For us to do something we've never done before.

A stretching to do something that we might feel humanly so inadequate for. So unqualified. So untrained. So incapable.

It's the stretching, isn't it? It's those opportunities of stretching that will grow us. And we've got to be willing for a stretching to happen.

[27 : 24] You may not always feel prepared or ready. The clay that is our life can be marred. The clay becomes unworkable when we don't yield to the potter.

Hearts can get hardened like hardened clay that cannot be shaped. And you think, really, through life, the self is our greatest enemy, isn't it?

As we say, oh, I'm not able. I'm not going to even try. I don't like getting stretched. And we can hinder God's work in shaping us.

Rather, be willing. Be humble. Be receptive. Be sensitive. Get your heart soft before God. To be humble and willing. You can be that clay that's mouldable, that can be shaped.

To be shaped by God's will. To trust the process. God's process. Trust the potter. Sometimes the shaping is uncomfortable. And you can have that through life, whatever it be.

[28 : 24] The circumstances of life. The setbacks. The discouragements. There's pressure. But sometimes the pressure is a good thing. The pressure of the potter's hands is a good thing.

Because he's shaping you. He's making you. That trial is going to mould your character. And your purpose is to glorify God. That's the ultimate. That's the ultimate purpose.

It's not to go and get some particular career. Or have some particular worldly venture. Or worldly building up of wealth.

Or doing your own thing. It's actually what is the most God-glorifying thing I can do. That's what matters. And it's like you're being assigned a position.

A specific position in the game. And you know it could be the coach says. Okay. Right wing. Left wing. Centre forward. Defence. He gives us a role to play doesn't he?

[29 : 23] As it were. A position. A specific position. You're assigned that. And think of it. What's my assignment? Am I doing what the coach tells me? What Jesus wants me to do?

Specific to my gifts and passions and experiences. God's purpose is for you to be formed. To be shaped for his glory. And he's using a lot of that raw clay.

Ultimately he's taking it to be that finished product. And as we referred before to Timothy 2. It says how we can be a vessel unto honour.

Think of that. Just dwell on that thought. Sanctified. In other words set apart. And meet fit for the master's use. Every vessel has a unique purpose.

You have a purpose. You have something you can be and do. Not all pottery is the same. Some vessels hold water. Some store grain. Some are more decorative.

[30 : 19] It's like in the kingdom of God. We've got a unique capacity and calling. And volunteer. I love that. There's some people in our church that volunteer for everything.

Amen. It's like we know he'll be there. I don't want to single that man out. But he even goes to the ladies meetings. He's driving the bus.

He's like he's omnipresent. There's some people. Hey. Maybe I could do a bit more. I could be a bit more like him. Instead of him doing it all.

Hey. He's a bit greedy I think. Maybe I can lend a hand. Maybe I can put my shoulder to the wheel. My nose to the grindstone. Maybe I can. Maybe I can.

I can maybe displace him. You know. Think of it friends. Honestly. Be useful for the kingdom of God. We are his workmanship.

[31 : 17] It tells us that. We're created for this. For this purpose. Unto good works. We've all got a purpose. Let's not stay back in the back of the China cabinet.

Unused. Or just on the shelf. Getting dust. On display. No. The master wants to use you.

To be useful. For the kingdom of God. And we can know for sure. The potter's work will come to pass too. It tells us that. He that has begun a good work in you.

We'll perform it. Till the day of Jesus Christ. Hey. One day. It's going to be the day of Jesus Christ.

You want to be making sure. You're where you're meant to be. There's an eternal significance.

About what you can be. For the kingdom of God. And the ultimate really is to glorify God. Isn't it? No matter your career. Your role. Your status. Your primary purpose is to glorify God.

[32 : 17] That's it. Whether. Therefore you eat or drink or whatsoever you do. Do all to the glory of God. So think. How can I live righteously? How can I please God?

How can I share the gospel? How can I step out and follow God's direction? How can I stop being that dusty piece of pottery in the display cabinet?

And actually be in the hands of the potter. As the vessel that he's using. His vessel. You can be that one. God helping you.

To be that vessel. That is useful to the master. And his use for you might be different from the use of others. It's not. We're not all the same.

And trust in when the direction is not always clear. God can use trials. Don't think that God's left you. Because the suffering is part of his equipping.

[33 : 14] That you can minister. He's transforming people to be instruments of his grace. And God sees the full picture, doesn't he? Of our life. Of where we've been. Hey, even your sinful, unsafe past can actually be an asset for you.

That God can say, hey, you can tell others. That was the man I used to be. But praise God, I'm not him anymore. Amen. Amen. Think of Joseph's setbacks.

His betrayal. His slavery. His prison. They were set up for his rise to leadership. We see the trials. The tests. It's building faith.

We see Job's suffering. It's strengthened and deepened his trust. Ultimately, it led to greater blessings in Job. We see Paul's trials with the shaping of his ministry. So, brother, sister here today, trust God.

Even if you're feeling like the marred vessel. Even if you're feeling like a failure. Feeling like God should just give up trying. No. Let him put you back on the wheel. And get you back in the race.

[34 : 17] Get back on that shaping. That forming. That developing of you. That making of you. And even the fire. And the fire again. That you can then be a vessel.

A vessel. Chosen vessel. A useful vessel. Ready for the master to use. Hey, there's some wonderful things that are happening in this church. We've seen some of the ladies getting together. And going visiting some of the people that are a little bit distant from the church. And encouraging. Wow, that's just going out and being a friend.

It's going out and showing love. It's going out, taking time to care. See Sister Margaret on that one.

If you want to be part of the team. I'm sure there's opportunity to engage. There's opportunities.

There's opportunities in the youth group. In the children's work. In so many capacities. We see the Thursday night group. The opportunity to engage.

[35 : 15] To interconnect. To build the church. Be one of the building team. Of course, he is the one who builds his church. But we're part of the building crew, aren't we? And think, how can I be more of that vessel?

And sometimes we wonder, is God working? But we can be like that seed underground. And it's the watering that's happening. And the roots are growing down. You don't always see it.

Until, bang, it sprouts from underneath the surface. So trust God's timing for you. Be patient. Trust God. There's waiting times too.

David took some years of hardship before he took the throne. He was anointed, but he had this gap of waiting. And God's timing is perfect, isn't it?

God has a plan for your life. We posed the question at the start. Why am I here? It's the glory of God. He's got a purpose.

[36 : 15] You can be that chosen vessel. You can trust his plan. God's going to finish what he started too. It tells us, seek first the kingdom of God. His righteousness.

Have that priority shift. Hey, that's what matters. That's what my time ought to be about. To seek him daily. To live every day for his glory.

To think eternally rather than on temporary things. And to work out intentional time management. I know I could use a bit more of that. Intentional time management.

Really that finite resource that is your time. How can I use it for the best? For the glory of God. And we may not always think of it too.

But there's a generational impact of our decisions. What we do, our children will do. They're copying us. So when we're setting an example, a role model.

[37 : 14] By attending or not attending. By engaging, not engaging. The children are watching. Hey, I'm going to be like Dad. I'm going to be like Mom.

So as with Solomon, our decisions affect not just us, but future generations. So think of the example you're setting. And know that God's purpose is powerful. That he's going to accomplish what he wants to do.

And all things are going to work together for good. To them that love God. To the court according to his purpose. God's in ultimate control. The potter has got his hands on you.

And he's working everything according to his will. His purpose. And sometimes we shy away from that. And we don't always achieve the place that we ought to get to.

Can we submit to him? To his plan? It's greater than what we can see. Can we surrender our plans? Rather, what would you have me to do?

[38 : 17] Or to be our heart? No matter where you are in life, God can use you for his glory. So in closing, can I urge you, prepare for your assignment.

Delight in God. It tells us in Psalm 37, 4, that God plants his desires in the hearts of those who delight in him. Delight in God.

Let him be your delight. And in everything give thanks. This is the will of God for you. Be salt. Be light. Be that godly one.

Wherever you are. Bloom where you're planted. And know that God is that master potter. We are but the clay. His purpose is that we yield to his hand.

That we be that moldable clay. Not some resistant clay. And know God's faithful in it all. In all of life. Are you being tested?

[39 : 15] Trust him still. Trust him to carry you through. Even in that time of fire, because your faith will shine brighter like gold. And surrender to his shaping.

Know that his pressure is a good thing. His divine workmanship. His craftsmanship. He's making a masterpiece. He's making you even more amazing than you already are.

For the glory of God. Amen. And you can know that his shaping is for his glory and your eternal good. So what type of vessel are you today? Could it be you fill up that squishy lump of clay?

It's like God's not even started on me yet. Or maybe you're like that clay that, oh, it's just collapsed and it's just gone. Okay, it's got mud.

Okay, God's going to remake you. Don't give up. He's not going to give up. Are you that vessel that's resisting the potter's hands? Or are you humbly yielding to his hands?

[40 : 19] He's patient and loving. And he's wanting to start over. With you today. Isn't he? So know that he completes what he starts as well.

He's creating you to be uniquely someone created unto good works. That only you can do. So you've got a purpose. So again, to think of that kind of analogy of the vessel.

Don't be the vessel on the shelf. He wants to take you off the shelf and use you. He wants you to be that vessel that he can fill, that he can engage, that he can use, that he can work through.

So, have you hardened yourself against his will? Or will you be yielded like yielded clay in the hands of the potter?

Let us pray. Lord, we pray. Have thine own way, Lord. Have thine own way. We are but clay. And you are the potter.

[41 : 26] Help us to get a handle on this, Lord, to think of it. And, Lord, to understand, yes, life's pressures, the prodding of your fingers at times isn't always how we'd like it to be.

Lord, yet you don't quit on us when we're marred and faulty and collapse. Yet you remake us again. Lord, we pray each one might have that wonderful assurance that you are our saviour. That you are the one.

You gave your life's blood that we can know eternal life. And we can know your saving grace. And we can know your tender hands are making us more the person you want us to be.

That we can be a chosen vessel. Used for your honour. Used as you would see fit to use us. Help us to be so useful, Lord, that we can be in your hand as a useful chosen vessel.

[42 : 37] Lord, to know your saving grace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.