

## ***Extreme Makeovers---How God Wants To Change You From The Inside Out***

How much are you giving God? When I said “how much”, many of you immediately thought of money. I’m not talking about money today. Some of you thought of the time you give God. “God, I’ll give you an hour for prayer.” I am not talking about time today. I’m talking about you- your whole being, 100% of your life. How much are you giving God? Most people who are Christians reach a point in their lives where they recognize their need for God and His forgiveness and they accept Jesus as their Savior. The experience is often dramatic---but then what happens next is all too common-- Often they often join a church make some friends, read their Bible occasionally, pray when they get in a jam, and may even give something in the offering from time to time. After about 6 months, Christians are often living their life in much the same way they did before salvation. In their minds, because they are still doing spiritual things like going to church and occasionally reading their Bible, they feel they are showing devotion to God. If asked they may say I’m showing God 20% devotion, but that’s 20 % more than I did before I was saved. Hey ---I’m looking around and that’s a lot more than most of the people around me. ---- The truth is God wants all of you-not some, not 90 percent, all. When it comes down to it,

**--what you yield to God of your life determines what He makes of you—**

God is looking for fully devoted followers of Him who have completely yielded their life to Him.

Jeremiah learned this lesson in chapter 18 and 19 of his book. Let’s turn there and learn from him. Jeremiah was a prophet to Judah who began his work some time before the fall of Jerusalem and ended his work in the exile period. The Northern Kingdom had already fallen the century before and the Southern Kingdom was facing a Babylonian Empire that was about to overcome them. Judah had forsaken God over and over again and judgment day was approaching. Jeremiah delivers his words in chapter 18 and 19 as the people are slipping into deeper wickedness and rebellion.

Jeremiah learns a symbolic message from God as he is sent to a potter’s house. To give us an idea of what Jeremiah saw, I asked Brandon to join me today and give us a visual picture of what it was like for Jeremiah as he was given a message from God.

In Jeremiah’s day, the pottery wheel was built a little differently. It’s possible that Jeremiah saw a potter sitting at a wheel that was composed of a larger, lower wheel and a smaller, upper wheel attached together by a shaft. The potter would spin the bottom wheel with his foot causing the top wheel to spin. In some instances, the potter would

hire an assistant whose entire job was to lie on his side and kick the bottom wheel at whatever rate the potter requested. What a job, huh?

Let's look at what Jeremiah saw at the potter's house

### **Jeremiah 18:1 through Jeremiah 18:13 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup>This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>“Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message.” <sup>3</sup>So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. <sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>6</sup>“O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, <sup>8</sup>and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. <sup>9</sup>And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, <sup>10</sup>and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

<sup>11</sup>“Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, ‘This is what the LORD says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.’ <sup>12</sup>But they will reply, ‘It's no use. We will continue with our own plans; each of us will follow the stubbornness of his evil heart.’”

### **Surrendered to Him**

The people of Judah failed to surrender to God after Jeremiah's words. Look in verse 12. “We will continue with our own plans.” Surrendered to Him. We want to hold on to what is ours. Audrey and Natalie, my 5 year old and 2 year old, are sisters who love each other very much. However, when it comes to territorial issues regarding toys and their possession, the girls want what is theirs. There is a particular stroller that has been the focus of numerous arguments for months now. ----Words like “mine” and “my turn” can be heard along with crying and pouting.

Society conditions us to expect to be in control of our lives and our personal business. The song “I Did It My Way” climbed back onto the top ten music charts after the death of Frank Sinatra. People are celebrated in society for taking control of their lives and doing things their own way. God, however, is saying “do it My way.”

The story of the rich young ruler recorded in Matthew 19:16-22 is a prime example of someone who was not ready to fully surrender to God.

## **Matthew 19:16 through Matthew 19:22 (NIV)**

<sup>16</sup>Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”

<sup>17</sup>“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.”

<sup>18</sup>“Which ones?” the man inquired.

Jesus replied, “Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, <sup>19</sup>honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.”

<sup>20</sup>“All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”

<sup>21</sup>Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

<sup>22</sup>When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

**--A problem with money is only a symptom of a deeper underlying problem in a person's life—**

When Jesus asked him to sell all he had and give it to the poor and to come and follow him, the young man was not willing to surrender. The rich young man's issue was an unwillingness to surrender everything to God. Are you surrendered today?

When we are surrendered, our whole being on the wheel of life is shaped by the master potter.

Life Hurts. Whether we surrender or not we still take a trip on the wheel of life. Without proper centering and shaping, a clay mass will slip and slide all over the wheel. In the potter's hands ,however, a vessel is created.

### **Shaped By Him**

As we spin through life, we are shaped by Him. Point two is “shaped by Him” Pressure and force are required to create a vessel. Shaping hurts. The problem is that many of us don't see the hands of God shaping and developing us in the mist of the pressure and trouble. Jeremiah saw very clearly that God had ultimate control over the events of Judah and each person represented. No matter how you look at it, God uses force and pressure to shape and mold us into who he wants us to become. When he sees a flaw in the clay of our lives, He breaks us down and starts reshaping.

Pressure involves pain. Life requires us at times to do uncomfortable things in order to avoid even more uncomfortable or damaging things. After my appendix operation, a nurse came in and asked me if I had gone to the bathroom since the operation. I said no and she proceeded to tell me that she would have to use a catheter if I didn't go soon. The operation had required a catheter during the procedure. It was excruciatingly painful to go to the bathroom after the operation but the thought of a catheter being used while I was awake prodded me to find a way.

When I was growing up, I would wake up on occasion and tell my parents my legs ached. They would say it was just growing pains. God allows growing pains. Jonah—our Bible character from last week--felt the pressure of God's shaping in his trip to Nineveh. When the thumb of the potter presses down on the center of the clay to make an opening, major pressure is applied. God continues to work with us, shaping us as He sees fit. Pressures at work, in your family, in other situations of your life, allow God opportunity to mold and shape you into the vessel he desires. God has a plan of wholeness and completeness for your life—

Jeremiah saw the potter recognize some marring in the pot he was making. He was able to break it down and start the process over.

**--When clay is reformed and shaped over and over again, better clay is produced each time—**

It is easier to mold, easy to shape, and easier to create a prized piece. What an analogy for our lives. God is working out all imperfections, creating a prized piece for His glory. If we don't surrender completely, and allow God to remake us and fixed the marred clay, then we are in for trouble. The people of Judah refused to yield. This prompted God to send a clear message to the people in chapter 19.

Some time passed between chapter 18 and 19. Jeremiah was told to buy a clay jar and to take some of the elders and priests and go to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, at the Potsherd Gate. A place basically that served as a garbage dump for broken pottery and other trash. The type of jar that Jeremiah was to buy was a *baqbuq*, Hebrew for a water decanter four to ten inches high with a long and narrow neck. The Hebrews called the jar this name because of the way liquid sounded as it was poured out of the jar. Look at what Jeremiah is instructed to do in verse 10 of chapter 19 (**read verse 10 through 11**).

**Jeremiah 19:10 through Jeremiah 19:11 (NIV)**

<sup>10</sup>“Then break the jar while those who go with you are watching, <sup>11</sup>and say to them, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter’s jar is smashed and cannot be repaired.

Breaking pottery as a symbol of destruction was not new to the people of the world at this time. Egyptians over a century before would write the names of their enemies on clay pots and smash the jars as a sign of overcoming their enemies. The people understood what Jeremiah was saying and they didn't like it. Solomon was a man that God gave a unique offer to. He was asked by God what he would like to be given.---He asked for wisdom and God gladly gave him wisdom, and riches and power because he was pleased with his answer. Solomon started out fully surrendered to God, but something happened along the way that turned him from being fully surrendered. Let's read in 1 Kings 11.

### **1 Kings 11:1 through 1 Kings 11:6 (NIV)**

**<sup>1</sup>King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. <sup>2</sup>They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. <sup>3</sup>He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. <sup>4</sup>As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. <sup>5</sup>He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. <sup>6</sup>So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.**

Solomon knew what God had said about marrying women who worshipped other gods.—but the Bible says

**—nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love—**

As Solomon grew old,

**--his heart was not fully devoted to God—He was not surrendered completely—**

The shaping God wanted to do in his life was stopped short by his decisions. Here the wisest man in the world thought he knew better than God how to live his life. What about you? What areas of your life are you holding onto? We must surrender, we must submit to being shaped, and we must remain soft for God's work to be complete in our lives.

### **Soft for Him**

Pottery can be shaped and formed as much as the potter would like until the time comes to place it in the kiln to fire the vessel and harden it. The heat of the kiln actually

alters the chemical make-up of the clay to the point that it no longer is clay. It becomes a stone.

We must remain open to God's shaping and correcting before the fire comes. Point three of the message is "soft for God" (**Hold a finished clay pot in hand as the sermon continues**). If we become like the people of Judah, God will reach a point of breaking us. When your life is finished and you pass on, then the fire will be put to your work and the beauty of his workmanship will shine through. Or, a marred vessel will be uncovered. One hardened by rebellion, by stubbornness, by self-serving desires. God will have no choice but to break the jar (**Break the clay pot, that has been in hand, with a hammer**).

The people of Judah ignored the warning of Jeremiah as he delivered the message of God on more than one occasion. In 586 B.C. the kingdom came to an end.

How much are you giving God today? Are you surrendered to Him? Or will you say at the end of your life, "if I had known I would have given God more of my life"? Are you being shaped by Him? Are you soft for Him? Is your cry for God to continue his work in you?

**More Surrendered= More Effective**

**More Shaped= More Aligned**

**More Soft= More Obedient**

Three types of people will be the focus of my invitation. Those who recognize that they have not fully yielded to God and are wanting to change are welcome to come forward in a moment. Those who feel the shaping of God in their life at present and who will admit that they have rebelled against His hand are welcome at the altar in a moment. Finally, those who want softness toward God developed in their life are invited to come forward for prayer. How much are you giving God? We must be surrendered to Him, shaped by Him, and soft for Him.