

THE HAND OF THE POTTER

By
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The Lord has been dealing with me regarding His Working: the tremendous Power of God that is always at work to bring forth God's Eternal Plan and Will. This is always to satisfy the Heart of God, and all for His Glory. But this working is not something that can be seen by the natural eye and understood by man's intellect. I am talking about **God's Power that works IN Believers**. Paul said that this was how he labored. **Colossians 1: 29**, "*Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*" So I'll be talking about **HIS** Working that works in me and in you – Mightily! Kenneth Wuest translates this verse as: "To which end also I am constantly laboring to the point of exhaustion, Engaging in a contest in which I am controlled by His energy which operates in me in power." I was a little surprised at "I am controlled by His energy", but we must realize that God does not want or expect us to labor in our own efforts and natural strength. He wants to control US – every thought and action; and He does this because He is in us! And He is in us in the fulness of His Life, His Power, His Might, His Greatness. And all that He is – is now operating in US. **1 John 4:4**, "*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*"

And here is something that we need to recognize. God is not so much interested in "OUR work for Him", but He is

concerned and zealous for HIS work, His Working IN US. This Work goes far beyond just the “Saving Power of His Grace” which is wonderful and necessary. This Work is to satisfy the very Heart of God according to His Eternal Purpose in not simply saving us from eternal damnation, but in bringing us into a Relationship of Oneness with Himself while we are here in the earth. And by His Working in us He is making Himself known in this world. And contrary to some teachings in Christian circles today, this is all for His Glory – not ours. His Working in us, in Believers is so that He would be recognized, honored and praised here in the earth – not us! The Scriptures clearly declare that His Working in us is for His Purpose, His Good Pleasure, and for His Glory.

- **Philippians 2: 13**, “*For it is **God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.**”*
- **Ephesians 3: 20**, “*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to **the power that worketh in us.** 21 **Unto him be glory** in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”*

So we must understand that we are talking about God’s Working, not ours: His Mighty Power that continually works in us. But this is because of **what we are to God**. And we must appreciate that He has a right to Work in us the way that He does because **WE ARE HIS**. **Ephesians 2:10**, “***For we are his workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” We are HIS Workmanship, we are HIS Handiwork: what HE has created for HIMSELF. And this is speaking to Believers: not to the Adamic man who was

created of God out of the dust of the ground. That man received only natural life and only became a living soul, but did NOT receive The Life of God in him. The Work I'm talking about is in The New Creation, in those who are Born from Above, Born Anew, Created of God by and with His Life through His Son Jesus Christ. This "New Man" is God's Handiwork, **created in Christ Jesus** to make God known in the earth.

And the first thing we have to recognize and appreciate is that **we are HIS and not our own**: and without Him we are nothing! **1 Corinthians 6:19**, *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and **ye are not your own**?"* **20** *For ye are bought with a price: therefore **glorify God** in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."* This Creation is for HIS Glory, and the Holy Ghost that is now in US is His Power working in us. And we are here in the earth to make Him known and glorified. **1 Peter 2:9**, *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that **ye should shew forth the praises of him** who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."* The word "that" denotes Purpose. Why did God make us to be something? That we, (The Church, The Body of Christ, Born Again Believers) may proclaim HIM (not just by preaching on Sundays, but by living The Life He has given us); that we would be the declaration of HIS Excellencies, HIS Virtues, HIS Name here in the earth.

This is His Purpose in bringing forth a New Creation in Christ. And His Working in us – as His Creation is to accomplish that goal: all for His Glory. And this is clearly set forth in the Scriptures in type with the nation of Israel. In

God's Mind they were His Creation: taken out from the nations, redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb to be a People unto Him: to be His Possession – all for His Glory! Consider **Isaiah 43:1**, *“But now thus saith the Lord that **created thee**, O Jacob, and he that **formed thee**, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine... 7 Even every one that is called by my name: **for I have created him for my glory**, I have formed him; yea, I have made him... 21 This people have I formed for myself; **they shall shew forth my praise.**”* I hope we can see how very personal these people were to God. They were HIS and this is all because of what HE has done. He created them for Himself and His Glory: so that they would make His Name known in the earth. God saw them in a glorious Union, a Relationship of Oneness with Him: not just as a bunch of Israelites, but as HIS SON! **Exodus 4:22**, *“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.”*

But in **Isaiah 43 Verses 1 and 7** I want you to notice that there are two words used: CREATED and FORMED. “Created” suggests choosing to make, but “Formed” has an additional thought: a determination to fashion, frame. And this word is equated with the Potter who forms something by squeezing. And it is the “Forming Work” that The Lord has been dealing with me about because **the Forming brings to Purpose**. The Work of Creation is necessary but not sufficient. Now that which has been created must undergo a further Work: a “Forming” to bring it to accomplish God's Purpose. And this is the Work that only HE that created can do because only HE knows His Plan, His Purpose and what fully satisfies Him. We can only speculate on what God is doing in us and why: but HE knows! And even if we knew

what He wanted, we would NOT be able to make ourselves into that (even though the flesh thinks we can). And because this People were created by Him to be His Treasure, His Possession, His Glory, He continually Works; and will not be satisfied with anything less than what He determined His People to be.

And it is necessary for me to bring in here the word ‘Vessel’ because this will help us to understand God’s Work: how He dealt with natural Israel, and how He deals in us, The Body of Christ today. Natural Israel was the ‘Vessel’ – the means, the apparatus by which God would make Himself known as Jehovah in “Time past”: under The Old Covenant, before The Cross. But The Church today (God’s view of “Church” being those Born-Again Believers living in Union with God in Christ) is the ‘Vessel’ in the earth today to make Him known. But the Purpose of a Vessel is to **contain something**. And in the case with The Church and God, we are the Vessel that contains **CHRIST**. HE is the treasure: we are the Vessel to receive Him and contain Him, and then pour Him out into the world. **2 Corinthians 4:7**, “*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*” Notice here that this is God’s Wisdom: Him making a Vessel that could contain Christ. It is all by His Power and His Working – all for a Purpose: THAT the Power would be recognized to be of God and not of us! This is not done by OUR fleshly efforts and hard work as Christians, but by God’s Work IN US so that He alone would be glorified.

And the ‘earthiness’ of the Vessel is important to understand because the Vessel cannot make itself anything or correct itself. This is the Work of the Creator, and the Scriptures see this as ‘The Potter’: and The Vessel is ‘The

Clay'. This is something Israel needed to understand and we do also. This understanding is crucial to acknowledging and allowing God's Work to be done in us. **Isaiah 64:8**, "*But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.*" We have to recognize Him as Father first – giving us Life, creating us. But we also have to see that we are clay in His Hand. And because we were created by Him, He has the right to be "Our Potter": The One who forms, molds, even squeezes to make what He wants out of the clay that He has created. And the Vessel that He makes out of the clay is for HIS satisfaction and purpose. I am sure most of us are at least familiar with the wheel that a Potter uses. He scoops an undefined, glob of clay onto his wheel, and then as it turns continually and often at high speeds, he uses his hands to shape and configure a vessel; continually applying pressure, adding water and molding that lump into what pleases the Potter. And I want to emphasize that the clay cannot mold itself and make itself into anything! Even though it may be "good clay" UNLESS the Potter works on it, it is just a lump of clay! And in that form it has no beauty and is incapable of being a vessel containing anything. So the clay is dependent upon the Potter to make it functional.

And let me just say here that there is always a primary meaning to Scripture: what is particularly relevant and understood by those to whom the words were first spoken. In this case the Prophet spoke to Israel regarding The Potter and the Clay. Now in the natural Israelites were not great makers of pottery: other nations were. The vessels the Israelites made in the natural were not outwardly beautiful, but they were functional. And this was The Potter's Purpose with Israel: not just to make them a "beautiful Vessel", but

they were to be functional – containing The Life of God and pouring it out to others. And this brings a strong admonition to my heart: God's Work in His People is not just to make US beautiful and successful so that WE are admired and adored. His Working in us is so that we would be Vessels of Honor containing HIM. This is why we must understand our Relationship to God as 'Potter and Clay'. And we must allow Him to work in us according to what pleases Him and so that He can accomplish His Purpose in making the Vessel in the first place. We must not strive against this Work in us. **Romans 9:20**, *"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"*

And understanding the concept of 'The Clay' and 'The Vessel' as a container is also important. What good is a vessel if it is broken or cracked, or has a hole in it so that it cannot contain anything? In that condition it could not function according to its Purpose. And in the case of Israel we see God speaking through the Prophet Jeremiah because at that time they were not fulfilling God's Purpose for them: they were 'marred'. **Jeremiah 18:1**, *"The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 6 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.” Israel at this time had turned from God to other gods and were worshipping them.

Prophets like Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel were raised up to call God’s People back to Him, but they also spoke of God’s Judgment upon them because of their treachery and unfaithfulness to Him. But it is important for us to see that God saw Israel as The Clay – HIS Clay in HIS Hand because He was The Potter: The One that created them. And because HE did, HE had a right to deal with them this way. And we see here God’s severe Judgment upon them: they were so marred that He didn’t ‘Fix them.’ He said He would make again ANOTHER Vessel that would fulfill His Purpose! This is the seriousness of God’s Heart regarding His People: that His Workmanship come to His Purpose.

We see this reference to a ‘marred Vessel’ relating to Israel sadly spoken by the Prophet in **Jeremiah 2:13**, *“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, **broken cisterns, that can hold no water.**”* **My People** – see how personal this is to God? They have forsaken Me, God says, their fountain of Life and they made for themselves broken cisterns that can contain no water. Notice THEY made something for themselves rather than letting The Lord make the cisterns. I can understand this because here in the islands we have cisterns not just as our water supply catching rainwater, but the cistern is also incorporated into the foundation of our homes. And a lot of planning, time, money and effort goes into making sure the cisterns are secure and can hold water. If not, they are USELESS and put the whole structure in jeopardy! And the

repairing of a broken cistern can only be done by a 'Master builder' who knows what he is doing. Spiritually we know this is speaking of The Foundation that Christ is that must be established in our hearts to contain His Glorious Life! But a 'broken cistern' can not contain Him! Sad to say, we must admit though we have The Treasure of Christ in us, that Life is not filling us and keeping us as it should. If the container has a defect and is not repaired there is not only no 'Water of Life' to sustain us, but there is nothing to be shared with others.

But let's consider again what God said concerning the 'Marred Vessel'. The 'Old Marred Vessel' that Natural Israel was would NEVER be able to contain the fulness and greatness of God's Treasure – which is **CHRIST** in all His Glory. The old wine skin could NOT contain the New Wine: it would burst it! **Luke 5:37**, *"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. 38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved."* It would need a New Vessel: not a 'fixed up' Jewish nation. This is The New Creation that God would create in Christ Jesus: that Creation that we now are as Believers, His Church. But this is not only speaking of the need for "another Israel", but this also pertains to us personally: we must be 'made NEW' – Born Again if we are to receive Christ, The New Life, The New Wine.

But we must understand that He is still The Potter, and we as Believers are still The Clay that makes up The Vessel. And He is still Working in us so that there will be no cracks or defects in The Vessel, but that The Vessel can contain the FULNESS of The Treasure to the Father's full satisfaction.

So now to secure His Purpose God continues to Work: and there still is a 'Forming' taking place - a squeezing, a molding, a working in us so that the FULNESS of the Treasure would be contained and ready to be poured out for others. **Galatians 4:19**, *"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."* Paul is speaking of **Christ** being **fully formed in you**, and **you** as The Vessel being **formed to contain the fulness of Christ**. We must gratefully recognize this is God's Work of Transformation and Renewal that we must undergo as His People. **Romans 12:1**, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* And when we recognize that we are HIS, this is not seen as a burden or a hardship, but "reasonable" because He has created us for Himself, and we are content with whatever He needs to do to us. We must yield to His Will and submit ourselves to this Work so that we come to His Full Purpose and so that God alone will be glorified.

Colossians also speaks of this. God now has a New Vessel – The Church, and as we understand The Work of The Cross we "have put off the old man". And now The New Man is dealt with. **Colossians 3:9**, *"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after **the image of him that created him**."* It is The New Man who is renewed after the Image of Him that created him. And remember because we are God's Creation, He has the RIGHT to do this! This is coming to God's full

Purpose for us. Notice there is a “conforming to the image” – not a representation this time (not us trying to figure out ‘what Jesus would do’), but the exactness of His Son. His Vessel – The Church is being ‘squeezed’ and molded into that exact likeness. God is not making us “Better Christians”, but He is molding us to take on the image – the Nature, the Character, the Mind of Christ so that we manifest the exactness of The Life of His Son here in the earth. We “contain” His Son so that we can “pour Him forth” unto the nations. This was God’s Plan and how He continues to Work. **Romans 8:28**, *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to **his purpose**. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”*

And in closing I would like to point to two Scriptures that tell us more of **God’s Work in us** that we need to be mindful of: God’s Work that Works mightily in us. And I pray that as we recognize the need for this Work in us, that we see His Love at Work and embrace what He is doing. At times this Work will be painful and discomfoting for us (and the flesh definitely does NOT like this!), but He does it for His Purpose: that He would be glorified. But His Purpose is also that we can enjoy our Union with Him more, and be FILLED with the Fulness of His Life. That is the desire of His Heart. May it be ours also. Please consider:

- **John 15**: Here we see that the Father is the Husbandman: He brought forth the Union of the Vine and the Branch and He desires and has a right to expect the FRUIT. 1, “ *I am the true vine, and my Father is the*

husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, **he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit...** **8** *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*” We bear His Life: The Father is glorified.

- **Hebrews 12: 5**, “*And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, **God dealeth with you as with sons**; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, **that we might be partakers of his holiness. 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.*”

This is the mind of The Lord for us as His People. May we recognize His Work and His right over us, and submit ourselves to the Work of **The Hand of The Potter!**

Amen