

Jeremiah 18:1–11

“The Potter Offers Repentance”

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What is the “Potter and Clay” illustration about? Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. Jeremiah 18:1–11 prepares us for the opening portion of Morning Public Worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these eleven verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that because God, the Potter, offers us repentance, we have no right either to complain against Him or to consider repenting hopeless.

Tuesday, January 18, 2022 ▫ Jeremiah 18:1–11

Questions from the Scripture text: What came to Jeremiah (v1)? From Whom? Where must he go (v2)? What will happen there? Where did he go (v3)? What did he see there? What happened to what he was making (v4)? What did he do to it? According to what? Then what came to Jeremiah (v5)? Whom does this word address (v6)? Asking what? What does He say Israel is like? What might He speak concerning a nation (v7)? But what might that nation do (v8a)? And what will the Lord do, how quickly (v8b, cf. v7a)? What else might He speak concerning a nation (v9)? But what might that nation do (v10a)? And what will the Lord do and how quickly (v10b, 9a)? What does the Lord tell Jeremiah to do (v11)? What is he to tell Judah and Jerusalem the Lord is doing? What is he to call Israel to do?

Next week’s Call to Worship, Prayer for Help, and first song all come from Jeremiah 18:1–11 so that we will see that we are singing God’s thoughts after Him with *Have Thine Own Way, Lord!*

Often, a preaching illustration is more vivid when the preacher has experienced it firsthand, and the Lord sends Jeremiah so that he will be seeing the illustration (v2a, 3–4) as the Lord’s words come to him (v2b, 4–11). Notice, by the way, that it is both the Lord’s word (singular, v5) and the Lord’s words (plural, v2). The Bible is not merely a channel of God’s speaking to us, but the words themselves are God’s own speech.

As Jeremiah stands there, watching the potter, the Lord teaches him several important lessons: God’s sovereignty, God’s activity, God’s planning, God’s interactivity, and our submission.

God’s sovereignty. He’s in control. He’s at the wheel (literally “double-stone,” end of v3). He can do as He wishes (v6, cf. Rom 9:19–21). He is not required to comply with us, but we must comply with Him.

God’s activity. God is not some absentee creator who got things started and is generally hands-off. He speaks concerning nations and kingdoms; it is He who determines when they will be yanked out of place, torn down, or destroyed (v7).

God’s planning. There is one nation in particular that God established—Israel, who are under His judgment in the book of Jeremiah—but all nations owe their origin and their existence to Him (v9). And they would do well to remember that in gratitude. The same is true of churches, families, and individuals.

God’s interactivity. Although there is a final judgment coming for people, God continuously interacts providentially with nations. He responds to repentance (v8)—what great news for nations under judgment, and would that our own would heed Him! He also responds to backsliding and wickedness (v10).

Our submission. In light of all of these things, Judah’s options were clear: submit to God or submit to God. Either submit to the destruction that the unstoppable and sovereign God had determined (v11b), or rather submit to God’s good law (v11c) and enjoy the mercy of how He is pleased to respond to such repentance.

Whenever we are finding it difficult to submit to the Lord, let us remember that those who do not submit to His precepts will find that they still have to submit to His providential judgment. Let us not imagine that we have the option of ultimately successful resistance; rather, may He graciously give us to say, “Have Thine own way, Lord!”

How will you respond to the reality that the Lord is sovereignly, actively interacting with you?

Sample prayer: Lord, You are the Potter, and we are the clay. You have the right to do with us as You please, so forgive us for how little we often think about or aim at pleasing You. Grant unto us to repent of our evil and rejoice over Your goodness, so that we may respond with thankful obedience and service, in Jesus’s Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP2 “Why Do Gentile Nations Rage” or TPH533 “Have Thine Own Way, Lord!”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Jeremiah 18 versus 1 through 11. These are God's words. So, let us offer the right hearing of them to him as worship.

The word, which came to Jeremiah from Yahweh saying, arise and go down to the potter's house. And there, I will cause you to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house and there he was making something at the wheel and the vessel that he made of Clay was marred in the hand of the hand of the potter.

So he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. Then the word of Yahweh came to me saying a house of Israel. Can I not do with you as this spotter? Says Yahweh Look as the clay is in the potter's hand. So are you in my hand?

Oh, house of Israel. The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to pluck up to pull down and to destroy it. If that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it and the instant that I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to build and to plant it If it does evil in my sight.

So that it does not obey my voice. Then I will relent concerning the good, which I said with, which I said, I would benefit it Now. Therefore, Speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem saying, Thus, as you. All right. Behold, I am fashioning a disaster, and devising a plan.

Against you return. Now, Everyone from his evil way and make your ways and you're doing's Good. Hmm. So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent word. Now, often a preaching, illustration is more vivid when the Lord has made the preacher to experience it firsthand. One of the things that the Lord teaches us by having Jeremiah go and watch a potter.

While he tells Jeremiah this, he could have just given him the words, right? He didn't have to send him to a potter's house in order to give him to give him the words, we, I don't know if you guys have ever seen someone turning pottery on, on a wheel, especially hand pump wheel where you have to or sorry, a foot pump wheel, where you have to keep pumping to keep the stone turning.

And in this case, the word is actually two stones. It's not a word for wheel. It's a dual word which means two of them that some of you have studied a little Hebrew, may remember and stones and you'd have a smaller stone sitting on a big stone with stick sticking out of it at the bottom and you'd keep kicking the sticks to turn the stones on their axis that you would dork.

Or was it a big stone on top as much. It doesn't matter. The point is that God wants his word to be very vivid to us. He wanted his word to be vivid to Jeremiah so that Jeremiah could communicate to the people to whom he preached. How much the Lord wanted his word to be vivid and clear, and forceful and impressed upon them.

This is something that preachers use illustrations to help, just like the Lord, Jesus often used illustrations. Although the illustrations hid his word from those who either their minds were darkened or their hearts were hardened against him. I guess it would be both. So one of the things that is you hear the word of God daughter.

Is you read the word of God? You need to be seeking from the Holy Spirit, looking to the Lord, to make his word impress upon you, that you would be affected by it. That you would take it seriously, that it would grip you and it would come to you.

Clearly those things that preachers rightly use illustrations to try to help with our ultimately things that the Holy Spirit must give in our minds and our hearts. So that's actually the very first thing that we learn here. How the Lord wants his word to be impressive to us and he communicates to the people of Israel, several things about himself.

The first is that he is sovereign he's in control. He's at the wheel When we interact with God, it's not too equals coming to the table. It is even more unequal than a human being and a lump of wet dirt with a high enough clay content to make into pottery.

Here's the potter. We're in. We are the clay. He is not required to comply with us. We are required to comply with him And yet he is active, he's active. He does respond to us according to his perfect character. And so If we repent, he responds to that. If we turn from good to evil, he responds to that.

He's active and interactive and he is planning. He teaches us in His Word, what we can expect if we are doing good and what we can expect if if we are doing evil and he has of course beyond that a plan that goes to his eternal saving plan because if it's what we can expect, if we're doing good and evil and

you realize you're always doing evil, then you have despair.

But what does Jesus tell his disciples? After He rises again from the dead must be preached in his name. To all the nations Repentance and remission of sins. Repentance is possible and forgiveness isn't just possible. But it says, in this passage that it's guaranteed with repentance, because repentance comes by the power of the Lord.

So when we hear him threat and it's not an empty threat that if a nation does wickedly or a church, does wickedly or a family does wickedly or a person does very complete that he will bring disaster upon them. We must also hear the the call to repentance because in the passage he says if I've spoken against a kingdom but they turn from their evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it and the wonderful news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Is that God is granting repentance. We don't get to say, well, I'd love to repent Lord, but Bible says, I can't. So I refuse to No, if repentance comes from him because you can't, then you say, oh Lord. I see my evil. Make me to see it more. Oh Lord, I hate my evil.

Help me to hate it more. Oh Lord. I turned from my evil grant that I might turn from it because he gives repentance and he gives remission of sins when he when he spoke to the Israelites. Sorry the house of Judah is better or the house of Israel. Sorry when he spoke to the Israelites here and he said, therefore speak to Judah.

And then habitants of Jerusalem saying, thus, as y'all a behold him fashion and disaster and devising, a plan against you, he's saying yes, currently you are not the nation that is being built and planted. That was a long time ago and you did evil and I determined instead to destroy you.

But now you're the first of the nations in this comparison. Now, I'm bringing disaster upon you. And if you turn from your evil, then I will relent from the disaster. Something for you to pray for our nation because it's like quite clear that our nation is way past the tipping point of being a nation doing evil and then the Lord bringing disaster upon it.

And yet, this is spoken, generally of all nations. And the Lord says, if this nation even would turn from its evil. He would relent from the disaster. Now, if you have your Bible open, you can look at verse 12. And you can see that they responded in exactly the wrong way.

Then they said this is hopeless. So we will walk according to our unplans and we will everyone obey that dictates of his evil heart. I understood and agreed with Reformed theology but they used it as an excuse to be hard-hearted against God. They didn't respond to the fact that since he was offering them reprieve upon repentance.

That he would give them repentance if they looked to him for it to say, this is hopeless, is to say that God is a liar. He doesn't really give repentance to people. It says I am the one upon whom everything counts and since I can't repent, it can't happen.

If you say I can't repent. You're right by yourself. You're hopeless. This is why you must not be by yourself. That's why you ought to rejoice that God offers repentance because he is giving it for the sake of his love, for the sake of his son whom he has given in that love, man.

Let's pray. Mmm, grant to us. Oh, Lord to see. Hope in the fact that you are the potter and not as the clay to grumble against you, but to realize that we have not been doing according to your command, and that we do deserve to be shaped unto disaster, but that you have offered that we might be reshaped unto salvation.

And so make us to find our hope in. You hope for repentance hope for turning away from our sin. I'll give us. We pray to turn away from our sin. I pray for each of us here at this table that you would help us to see particular sins from which we ought to be turning away.

And that you would grant to us about each of those particular sins, not to say this is hopeless, but to know that you who offer the reprieve or the one who gives the repentance. So, grant by your Spirit that we would seek and receive both from you. For, we ask it in Jesus name.

Amen