

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message Five : God as Our Sovereign Potter Making Us His Vessels, His Containers, to Contain Him

I. Overview:

God as our sovereign Potter has absolute right over us as His pottery. Sovereignty refers to God's unlimited authority, power, and position; Romans 9:19-23 refers to God's sovereignty. We need to realize that God is our Potter, and we are the clay in His hand; God, our Potter, has sovereignly created us according to His predestination to be His vessels to contain Himself, and to be filled with Christ as God's great corporate vessel for His expression. All of Paul's fourteen Epistles can be summed up in two words, open vessel; God wants us only to love Him and to keep ourselves open to Him. In His sovereignty God as our Potter has the authority to make the ones whom He has selected and called to be vessels of mercy unto honor and glory. If we know God's mercy, we will neither trust in our effort nor be disappointed by our failures; the hope for our wretched condition is in God's mercy.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound Jehovah is the Potter and we are the pottery in His hand in Romans 9.

In Romans 9:21 Paul asks, "Does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" God, the Potter, certainly has such authority. His selection is according to His absolute right. He may choose one vessel and reject another. God is absolutely free to do whatever He desires to His people.

B. Explain what revealed to us as Jeremiah saw that the potter was working the pottery at his wheel in Jeremiah 18.

Jehovah told Jeremiah to go to down to the potter's house. Jeremiah saw that the potter was working and reworking the pottery at his wheel into another vessel, as it seemed good for him to make. This indicates that the potter has the full right to do whatever he desires with the clay. Jehovah as the sovereign Potter is able to do with the house of Israel, as the clay in His hand, in changeable ways according to Israel's condition.

Day 2 —

A. Explain man as a peculiar container for being made purposely to contain God.

God created us to be His containers in order to contain Himself. We are only empty containers, and God intends to be our only content. We people are also "peculiar" containers, for we too were made for a specific purpose. Man was made purposely to contain God. If we do not contain God and know God as our content, we are a senseless contradiction.

B. Fellowship how to let the Lord to dig more deeply in us.

We need to pray and ask the Lord to dig more deeply in us and make more room in us so that the Holy Spirit can fill us. God wants to fill the hungry with good things. If God has already created a seeking heart within us and if He is digging and emptying us, we ought to believe that He will certainly fill us. God will only send away empty those who think that they are rich.

Day 3 —

A. Why do we say that mercy is the most far reaching of God's attributes?

Mercy is the most far reaching of God's attributes. Mercy goes further than grace. God's love does not reach as far as His grace, and His grace does not reach as far as His mercy. If I am in a good condition and my standing matches yours, and you give me a gift, that is grace. However, if I am a poor, and you give me a gift, that is mercy. This illustrates the fact that God's mercy is more far reaching than His grace.

B. Explain in Hebrews 4:16 how God's mercy and grace to reach us.

Hebrews 4:16 says that first we need to receive mercy, and then we can find grace for timely help. Oh, how much we need God's mercy! We should treasure His mercy as much as we appreciate His grace. It is always God's mercy that qualifies us to participate in His grace.

Day 4 —

A. Describe the relationship between love and mercy in Ephesians 2:4.

In Ephesians 2:4 we see that God is rich in mercy because of His great love toward us. The object of love should be in a lovable condition, but the object of mercy is always in a pitiful situation. God's mercy reaches us for His love. God loves us because we are the object of His selection. Therefore, we need God's mercy to reach us to save to a condition that is suitable for His love.

B. Explain Paul's thought being fully occupied with God's mercy as he wrote Romans 9.

It is altogether a matter of God's mercy that we are believers and that we are in the church life. The expression sovereign mercy means that God's mercy is absolutely according to His sovereignty. Being a vessel of mercy is not the result of our choice; it originates with God's sovereignty. It is of God's sovereignty that He created us vessels of mercy to contain Himself.

Day 5 —

A. Look back everything that happens to us is a matter of divine mercy.

If we look back upon our past, we shall realize that our steps have been of Him. Before we were born, He selected us and predestinated us and arranged everything related to us, including the time and place of our birth. Everything that happens to us is a matter of divine mercy. Our being in the Lord's recovery today is of God, the One who shows mercy.

B. Describe how to know God's mercy in the selection of grace.

We must know God's mercy in the selection of grace. The more you worship the Lord for His mercy, the more you will be uplifted. Instead of striving to bear responsibility, you will find that, in His mercy, the Lord is bearing you. For our future we trust not in ourselves, but in Him and in His marvelous mercy.

Day 6 —

A. Explain that we have this treasure in earthen vessels in Second Corinthians 4:7.

Second Corinthians 4:7 says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us." This treasure is the Christ who dwells within us. We are containers of honor because Christ Himself is honor. Although we have this treasure in earthen vessels, this treasure has not yet been manifested.

B. Explain in 2 Corinthians 4:6, seeing the face of Jesus, we sense His preciousness.

We will never sense that we have a treasure within until we see the face of Jesus. When we are enjoying His presence, we sense that He is such a precious treasure within us. It is only when we are living in His presence, looking at the index of His being, that we will sense that He is such a treasure to us. In the whole universe there is nothing so precious as to behold the face of Jesus.

III. Conclusion:

In Jeremiah 15 through 17, though his heart was tender, Jeremiah was able to reflect God's heart. However, He often wept over the situation of God's people, but He still carried His natural being somewhat, especially when He felt that God seemed too harsh or even too much in punishing His chosen people. Therefore, chapter 18 is God's response to Jeremiah and God's answer to Jeremiah's questioning. God revealed to him the vision of His sovereignty, which is very real, but quite hidden. When Jeremiah saw the vision, his view, his perspective, and his prayer changed. We are also in difficult times today and need a revelation of God's real but hidden sovereignty. Let us be a vessel of mercy through His mercy and let Him have absolute freedom in us to do what He wants to do.