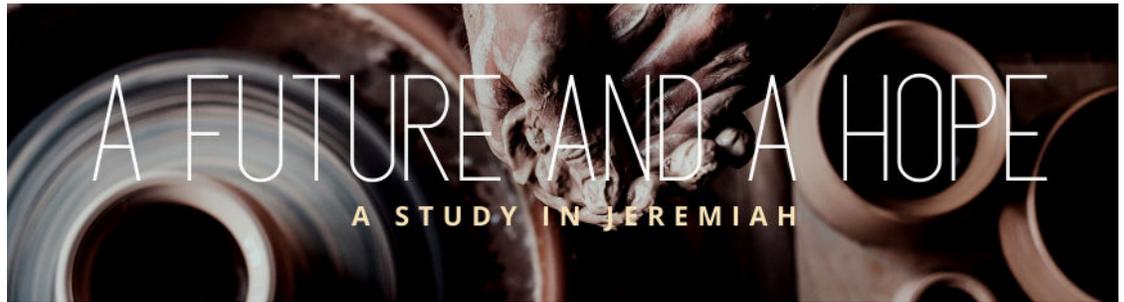


GROWTH GROUPS
WEEK 6
WEEK OF JULY 19



Growth Group Summer 2020

The Potter's House

Week 6 – July 19, 2020 - Jeremiah 18:1-10

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at a church. In this time of Corona19 and “social distancing” please don’t meet in person, but do continue to check in with each other. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at connect@ljpres.org. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

Setting the Context

In Jeremiah 18, God tells Jeremiah to go down to the potter’s house. Every village or community would have had at least one potter’s house. People would know where the potter’s house was and perhaps would have spent time watching the potter create bowls, plates, platters and other vessels. This time, though, God wants to show Jeremiah that God is the true potter and He is seeking to form and shape the nation of Judah.

The potter is at work. In the days of Jeremiah, a potter’s wheel would have consisted of two wheels or stones. There were two stone wheels on a vertical axis, the lower of which was spun by kicking with the feet and the upper of which carried the clay which the potter shaped. The key to doing pottery effectively is to always keep the clay centered on the wheel. If the clay gets off center, there are problems.

However, the problem in the book of Jeremiah is not the centering of the clay, but the quality of the clay. The quality of the clay was not suitable for what the potter was trying to create. God was “showing” Jeremiah that Judah was resisting the shaping that God was trying to do. God was trying to mold and shape them into a nation that would follow Him, but Judah was pushing back.

From the earliest part of Scripture (Genesis 2:7) we see the Hebrew word “yatzar” which means to form, shape or create. What is interesting is that the word “potter” is derived from this Hebrew word. God shapes and creates in Genesis and the image is of the potter and the clay. God is the ultimate potter. God is the creator!

The second part of our text for today calls for Judah to repent. God keeps working with this nation, but he wants Jeremiah to see that God can choose to uproot and tear down, or God can choose to plant and build up. This is reminiscent of the story of Jonah, when God chooses to use Jonah to save the city of Nineveh – a town which most Jewish people would have said deserved to be destroyed. Yet, Nineveh repented and God saved the city. Throughout the book of Jeremiah, we are reminded of God’s sovereignty, yet also God’s willingness to continue to show mercy, if people will repent and follow Him.



Exploring the Text

Read Jeremiah 18:1-10

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

⁵ Then the word of the Lord came to me. ⁶ He said, “Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?” declares the Lord. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. ⁷ If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, ⁸ and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. ⁹ And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, ¹⁰ 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.

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Have you ever failed in a creative project?
- 2) In chapter 18, God chooses to teach Jeremiah using an object lesson with a potter and clay. Can you think of other times that pottery/clay has been used in scripture?
- 3) Why do you think the clay was marred in the potter’s hand? What does that mean?
- 4) One of the keys to being a successful potter is keeping the clay centered on the wheel. As you think about your faith journey, what has been helpful in keeping you centered on Jesus?
- 5) Have you ever had a time in your life when you felt that God was trying to mold and shape you and you kept resisting? What was that like?
- 6) Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-10. How does this text connect with what we read about in Jeremiah 18? Do you find the image of being a jar of clay helpful, as you think about being a disciple of Jesus?
- 7) Pastor Paul talked about how we can minister to others out of our own brokenness. What are some ways that you have either ministered to others out of your own brokenness, or had others minister to you in their brokenness?
- 8) Read Isaiah 64:8 and then watch/listen to the song “Canvas and Clay”, by Pat Barrett.

The link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcDRp0zWGIw>. If you don’t have access to the internet, you can read the lyrics below. Share your thoughts about this song and scripture.

In my mother’s womb You formed me with Your hand’s Known and loved by You Before I took a breath. When I doubt it, Lord, remind me I’m wonderfully made. You’re an artist and a potter I’m the canvas and the clay.

You make all things work together. For my future and for my good. You make all things work together. For Your glory and for Your name. There’s a healing light, Just beyond the clouds, Though I’ve walked through fire I see clearly now

I know nothing has been wasted. No failure or mistake. You’re an artist and a potter. I’m the canvas and the clay. You make all things work together. For my future and for my good. You make all things work together. For Your glory and for Your name.