



MAY 2019

Hemyock Baptist Church

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; **so he made it again** into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. *Jeremiah 18:4*

Like it or not, we are but clay. Our lives are a gift and our destiny, in earthly terms at least, is death. "For dust you are and to dust you will return" (Gen. 3:19). Clay is weak, yet it has potential. Every newborn child is weak, and nobody knows what he or she will become. A clay jar may not be valuable, but what it contains may well be – and *we are made in the image of God*. And without Him, we may never discover our possibilities and achieve our full potential.

So, we are reminded that *God is the potter*. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground" (Gen. 2:7); this is the picture of the potter at work. God reigns and can plan for us and make of us whatever he chooses; but that doesn't mean we are helpless puppets in a controlled world, because the Lord has decreed that we co-operate with him as he makes our lives. Remember that Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often I wanted to gather your children together... but you were not willing" (Luke 13:34). Keep in mind also that "God is love" (1 John 4:8); his decrees demonstrate his love for us, so we need never fear God's will. We don't spin the potter's wheel, we yield to his hands.

The potter's wheel represents human life. God arranges circumstance so we can get to know him, ourselves, others and the opportunities life presents to us. "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Eph. 2:10). As we submit to God's will, we ourselves are prepared for what he has in store for us. The clay on the wheel Jeremiah was watching didn't want to co-operate and resisted several times – in fact the potter might well have thrown it away – but he kept working and "made it again". God never gives up on us. How many examples are there in the Bible of those who failed but ultimately became successful? Moses, David, Jonah, Peter, John Mark, to name but a few. The Potter is in charge, and if we yield to him he will see to it that we accomplish what he has planned for us.

Jeremiah's experience helps us understand *what success is*. It's not about fame, power or wealth. Success is surrendering to the Lord and obeying his will (Rom. 12:1-3), permitting him to shape us as he desires. When we fail, we ask him to make us again and we continue to serve. The marred vessel was *still in the potter's hands!* God makes us, sin mars us, but the Potter can mend us and keep working on us. The potter takes each vessel and puts it into the furnace, where it's hardened and given a finish. Otherwise, the vessel wouldn't be much use -we don't enjoy furnaces, but we need them.

Judas wouldn't submit to the potter and died in shame. The religious leaders bought a "potter's field" with the money Judas returned to them and made it a cemetery where strangers could be buried. If only Judas had known what it meant to submit to the Potter! We can be successful in God's eyes if we submit to him and believe he can make us again...

Pastor Steve



Lunch with Laurie

On **Saturday 8th June** we'll be hosting a hot-fork lunch for the village and welcoming Laurie Burn as our guest speaker. Laurie is a keen wildlife photographer and will entertain us with his wonderful images and insights about local birdlife. Laurie's other passion is music and he makes bespoke acoustic guitars by hand in his workshop – so we'll see if he'll bring one along and share a tune or two with us as well! Look out for more information on the HBC noticeboard and website – tickets available soon...

