



Sunday, December 30, 2018
Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Jeremiah 18:1-12

The illustration of the potter and the clay is a familiar one to Bible readers. In Isaiah 45:9, God forcefully denounces the arrogance of His people in questioning His planning or His ability to carry out His plans. That passage emphasizes the sovereignty of God over His creatures.

This passage in Jeremiah takes on a different tone, though. It includes elements of God's sovereign control over His people (v. 6), but the main thrust of the passage has to do with how the clay responds to the potter's work. God is sovereign, but in His sovereignty, He chooses to interact with His creatures in a way that honors their choices. Pastor Don referenced the book of Jonah, where Jonah brought God's message of judgment to those people in the shortest, least-inviting evangelistic sermon in history. And yet, God miraculously (and sovereignly) withheld His wrath when those people repented and turned back to Him. Thankfully, God uses His sovereignty ultimately for our good and is gracious and patient toward us (the clay) as He makes us more and more into the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

Context

This is one of the more famous passages in Jeremiah. Jeremiah was no stranger to object lessons (13:1). But this object lesson had profound impact. Perhaps that is partially due to the echo of Jeremiah's own call having to do with "plucking up" and "tearing down" kingdoms. This object lesson has to do with God's sovereign control over global politics. But, it also has to do with an extension of God's grace toward His wayward people—a people who remained stubborn and rebellious even after Jeremiah's preaching (18:12), going so far as to publicly beat the messenger Jeremiah only a short time later (20:2). God truly is a patient and longsuffering God!

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Jeremiah 18:1-12

“The Potter and the Clay”

I. God is in total control

- We have potential because God is the Potter
- He is not arbitrary, He has a plan
- Utility and beauty

II. God is hands on!

- Sometimes His hand is hard upon us
- Sometimes His hand is light

III. God is determined

- God doesn't give up
- Failure is not final in the Christian life
- The victorious Christian life consists in a series of new beginnings

Applications:

- 1) Yield
- 2) Hope

Discuss

- 1) Why do you think some people have such a hard time with the idea that God is sovereign over everything in our lives?
- 2) What does repentance look like in your life? (Is it a daily discipline? Is it “as needed”? Or is it only when you are confronted by another person about your sin?)
- 3) How comforting is it to you to know that failure is not final in the Christian life? That God doesn’t give up on His people?
- 4) Pastor Don noted that the Christian life is “messy.” It is not a clean pattern of growth. How have you seen that play out in your own life?
- 5) How can this new calendar year serve as a “new beginning” in your relationship with Jesus?