

GOD - THE POTTER
Follow Christ
Banska Stiavnica, 30th April 2023

Jeremiah 18:1-11 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." ³ So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴ And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. ⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶ "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷ If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸ and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. ⁹ And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, ¹⁰ and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. ¹¹ Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: "Thus says the LORD, behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds."

τῷ Μωϋσεῖ γὰρ λέγει· ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ καὶ οἰκτιρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτίρω. ¹⁶ ἄρα οὖν οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος οὐδὲ τοῦ τρέχοντος ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ. ¹⁷ λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή τῷ Φαραῶ ὅτι εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐξήγειρά σε ὅπως ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν δύναμίν μου καὶ ὅπως διαγγεῖν τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῆ. ¹⁸ ἄρα οὖν ὃν θέλει ἐλεεῖ, ὃν δὲ θέλει σκληρύνει. ¹⁹ Ἐρεῖς μοι οὖν· τί [οὖν] ἔτι μέμφεται; τῷ γὰρ βουλήματι αὐτοῦ τίς ἀνθέστηκεν; ²⁰ ὦ ἄνθρωπε, μενοῦνγε σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ ἀνταποκρινόμενος τῷ θεῷ; μὴ ἐρεῖ τὸ πλάσμα τῷ πλάσαντι· τί με ἐποίησας οὕτως; ²¹ ἢ οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν ὁ κεραμεὺς τοῦ πηλοῦ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυράματος ποιῆσαι ὃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν σκεῦος ὃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν;

Romans 9:15-21 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." ¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. ¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" ²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use?

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0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. PROPHETIC SIGN-ACTS

- From chapter 13
- **Jer 19:1** "Go, buy a potter's earthenware flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests... → ...**Jer 19:10** "Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you,
- potter: regarded as an inferior trade → God is likened to a potter (Isa. 29: 16; Rom. 9)
- The Israelites worked at the trade while in Egypt, Ps. 81:6(?) "basket" or "pot"



0.2. TWO QUESTIONS

- of contemporary man ("humans"). → (1) What is God like? (2) How shall we live?

0.2.1. WHO IS GOD?

- C. S. Lewis: *God in the Dock*, a constant temptation for the moderns...

0.2.2. WHAT IS FREEDOM?

[BAER-KAUFMAN-BAUMEISTER *Are We Free?* p. 3] the term **free will** didn't even merit an entry in the recent eight-volume *Encyclopedia of Psychology*; in fact, it didn't even appear in the index. Sometimes it's like a six-ton elephant sitting in the room, however—a thing very hard to ignore.

- **Rom 7:25** So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin (ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοῦ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ τῇ δὲ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας).
- **Rom 8:2** For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death

1. SEEING GOD AS...

1.1. ...THE AUTHOR

- **Rev 4:11** "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (ἄξιός εἰ, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅτι σὺ ἐκτίσας τὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημά σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν)

1.2. ...THE ARTIST

- **Ps 139:14-15** I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made (כי נוראות נפְלִייתִי). Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret (עָשִׂיתִי בְּסֵתֶר), intricately woven (רָקְמִיתִי) in the depths of the earth.

1.3. ...THE SOVEREIGN

- **Isa 29:15-16** Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" ¹⁶ You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

- → Platonism (creation evil)

[I. A. Il'in *The Philosophy of Hegel II*, p. 250] The immersion of the Divinity in empirical existence caused its life to lose its *unity*, its logical *rationality*, and its organic *purposiveness*. (Погружение Божества в эмпирическое существование сделало то, что жизнь его утратила свое единство, свою логическую разумность и свою органическую целесообразность.)

2. THE BENEFITS

2.1. THE MEANING OF EXISTENCE

- purpose in God's
- → Genesis 1 (rule over creation)
- → Romans 8 (conformity to Christ)
 - **Col 1:16** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him.
 - **Rom 8:27-29** And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

2.2. THE SENSE OF BELONGING

- **1Cor 6:19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own (οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐαυτῶν),

2.3. THE REASON FOR SURRENDER

- **Heb 12:9** Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject (ὑποταγησόμεθα) to the Father of spirits and live?
[CHAMBERS *The Servant as His Lord*] that in the Providence of God there is, as it were, a surgical knife for each one of us individually, because God wants to get at the things that are wrong and bring us into a right relationship to Himself.

3. THE COOPERATION WITH GRACE

- dead in Christ → **Rom 6:3** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
- alive in Christ → **Rom 6:8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

3.1. "PASSIVE ACTIVITY"

- not empty "meditation" (eastern style)
- Waiting on God

[MURRAY *Waiting on God*] If salvation indeed comes from God, and is entirely His work, just as creation was, it follows, as a matter of course, that our first and highest duty is to wait on Him to do the work that pleases Him. Waiting becomes then the only way to the experience of a full salvation, the only way, truly, to know God as the God of our salvation.

- **Submitting to:**

- creation (gender, gifts, talents, handicaps...)
- family (nationality, social environment; economic opportunities...)
- history (times of peace; times of war → Ecc 2)
- politics (leaders;)
- circumstances (weather; happenings...)

[CHAMBERS *The Psychology of Redemption*] Spiritual reality is what is wanted. “I surrender all”—and you feel as if you did, that is the awkward thing. The point is whether, as God engineers your circumstances, you find that you really have surrendered.

[*Not Knowing Where*] There is a difference between circumstances and environment. We cannot control our circumstances, but we are the deciders of our own environment. Environment is the element in our circumstances which fits the disposition. A man convicted of sin and a man in love may be in the same external circumstances, but the environment of the one is totally different from that of the other. Our environment depends upon our personal reaction to circumstances. “Circumstances over which I have no control” is a perfectly true phrase, but it must never be made to mean that we cannot control ourselves in those circumstances. No matter into what perplexing circumstances God’s providence may lead us or allow us to go, we have to see to it that in our reaction to those circumstances, which dance around us so perplexingly, we exhibit a personal relation to the highest we know. It is only by living in the presence of God that we cease to act in an ungodlike manner in perplexing circumstances.

3.2. “ACTIVE PASSIVITY”

- **2Tim 2:20-21** Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable.²¹ Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.
- zealous → initiative with an open ear to God (Paul to Bithynia - Acts 16:7)
- **Titus 2:14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.
- initializing:
 - witnessing (**Eph 5:16** ...making the best use of the time (ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν), because the days are evil.)
 - helping church members (**Gal 6:10** So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.)

4. TO REMEMBER

- The sovereignty of God is meant for our good.
- We as the “clay” in his hands are not passive receivers of pre-determined results.
- To be formed into a vessel for honorable use we have to submit to him in loving trust.