

SSP

The Church of Jesus Christ



There's a Potter at Work

Are you letting him turn you into his masterpiece?

I can't believe I got stuck with ceramics next semester! How lame is that?

By Bro. Jonathan Scolaro

Round and round on the wheel, He forms me gently with love, an earthen vessel below, made by the Master above. 'Vessels of Gold' No. 73, *The Songs of Zion*

If you've gone through high school, or maybe you're currently enrolled, you've probably had to take some sort of elective classes — you know, those "artsy" or "techy" classes that fill up the extra hours between Algebra and English.

This year my brother is taking ceramics, and it has brought back youthful memories of my own merry escapades behind the potter's wheel. I know, you're thinking, "This guy likes ceramics? What a dweeb." Although this may be true, sculpting clay on a

potter's wheel, or "throwing" as it's called, is a lot cooler than some may think.

If you have no clue what I'm even talking about, check out this video and get the basic concept of how a clay pot is made:

<http://ceramicartsdaily.org/bookstore/beginning-to-throw-on-the-potters-wheel-with-robin-hopper/>

This guy makes it look easy.

At this point, you're probably wondering what ceramics has got to

do with God, Jesus, Church, or anything spiritual at all.

Isaiah 64:8 says, "But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."

What does this tell you about your relationship with God? Who is in control, the potter or the clay? Does the little lump of mud spinning on the wheel say to the artist, "Hey! You up there! Yeah, you! Hurry it up, would ya?" No way. The slick, wet clay yields in complete submission to the supple

hands of the skilled artist. The artist sculpts a pot with patience and precision, transforming the lump into an elegant masterpiece.

So my question is: what kind of clay are you? And what kind of pot do you want to become? Let's take a look at some characteristics of pottery making and see how it applies to us.

1. What kind of clay are you?

Clay must be soft and malleable to be suitable for the potter's wheel. How about you? Do you yield to God's will in your life? Are you willing to say, "God, you know what's best for me, so I can be flexible," when choosing a school, choosing a mate, finding a job, buying a car — everything? If clay is hard and crusty, it must soak long and hard in a bucket of water before it's soft enough to be useful.

Alternatively, clay can be so wet and mushy that it doesn't hold any shape. We can't expect God to do everything for us; he expects us to put forth our best effort. This includes standing up for what's right and making positive choices.

So how do we become clay that is just the right balance? By actively seeking God's direction through prayer, counseling, and reading his word as we progress through school, work, and our daily lives.

2. What type of vessel is God sculpting you to be?

In Acts 9:15, God describes the Apostle Paul, saying, "for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

The possible shapes and sizes of clay vessels are infinite. A vessel can be used for eating, watering, storage,

decoration, and more. Have you asked God what job he made you for? And are your eyes open to the opportunities around you at church, school, and work to do a job for Him? Maybe it's teaching the little kids, writing a card, playing an instrument, or telling someone you love them.

3. Is your vessel clean?

2 Timothy 2:21-22 says, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

You would never want to eat from a filthy dish. Can you imagine having guests over for dinner, reaching into the cupboard, and finding only grimy bowls to serve with? God needs us to be spiritually clean and shiny, ready for when he needs us.

So ask yourself, does the music I listen to, the movies I watch, the language I use, and the people I hang out with hinder or help me in my service to God? Sometimes we need to run ourselves through the dishwasher, spiritually speaking, and do away with some of our bad habits. We want to be clean vessels, ready for the Master's use.

4. Are you going through the firing process?

1 Peter 1:6-7 says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto

praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"

After a pot has been sculpted and dried, it must be fired in a kiln at over 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. (That's 1093 degrees Celsius for our Canadian friends.) The extreme heat transforms the clay into ceramic. Only after firing is a clay pot useful. If you find yourself going through a difficult time, perhaps God is preparing you for a work that he has for you in the future. View this trial as an opportunity to glorify God, even through the tough times. You will emerge from the fire stronger, wiser, more empathetic, and ready for the Maker's use.

I could go on endlessly drawing spiritual analogies from the potter's wheel. But, if there's one thing you should remember above all else, it's that the Maker loves you. You are his valued artistic masterpiece, and God is molding you for a purpose. Fulfilling his purpose for us is where we will find the greatest happiness. So let's be patient through the sculpting process and eager to serve when he pulls us from his cupboard.

Reflect

Read Isaiah 26:19.

This verse affirms that God made you and has shaped you into the person you are today.

Are you taking credit for God's work? Do you feel that your talents are a result of your own efforts?

Have you ever wished that God made you different? Taller? Smarter? Ask God to work good from your perceived "flaws."