

Transcript – The Potter's Clay

I have a message today called, *The Potter's Clay*. And here in front of me, I have a piece of clay. And really, this is you. This is me. This is your life, Don Esposito. Everybody can see that. I don't want to pass it around. It could be a little dirty. But I'm going to leave it here because this is literally potter's clay. This is the way before a potter would start to work with clay that it would look. And it's interesting, in the Bible, we're referred to as potter's clay. I did a message a long time ago on *Sheep and Goats*, if you remember that. A lot of people like that message. I do too. But that's more of an analogy to our personality, right? This is pretty literal that we're called potter's clay. Genesis 1:26.

Genesis 1:26 *And Elohim said, let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heaven, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and over all the creepers and creeping things on the earth.*

So, Yahweh said, *Let Us make man in Our image and in Our likeness*. And we're made in the image of Yahweh. If you look in the Bible, Yahweh has eyes, Yahweh has hands, Yahweh has a nose, a mouth, He has feet. But we have to **grow** into His likeness. We're not like Him when we're born. Why? Because we're humans. We have human nature that's corrupted. So, **we're made in His image, but we have to grow into His likeness**.

Deuteronomy 30 ... Deuteronomy 30 and verse 11. So, think of it like this clay. You start out when you're born as just a square mold, right? But we have to be molded. We're going to have to be molded. So, it's really interesting. I don't know if anyone else has ever done this, looked in the scriptures that talk about this and what it really means, but that's pretty much what I'm going to do today. Deuteronomy 30 and verse 11.

Deuteronomy 30:11-15 *For this command which I am commanding you today is not too wonderful for you, nor is it too far off. It is not in the heavens that you should say, Who shall go up in the heavens for us, and bring it to us, and cause us to hear it, that we may do it? ... talking about Yahweh's commandments, His Torah ... And it is not beyond the sea that you should say, Who will cross over for us to the region beyond the sea and take it for us, and cause us to hear it, that we may do it? For the Word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. Behold, I have set before you today life and good and death and evil, ... Drop down to verse 19.*

Deuteronomy 30:19 *I call Heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, that you and your seed may live,*

So, we are created with free will. Yahweh doesn't create us like rubber pencils. We are starting just like that clay, right? And we are going to see how He is going to mold us and how He is going to work with us, the way that a potter would with clay. It is very interesting because the way that a potter makes clay is parallel to what Yahweh is doing in our life. So, I hope we find that interesting.

But we also have a fallen human nature. So that's why I say we are created like Yahweh in His image, but we have to grow into His likeness. Yahweh has to mold us with His likeness to become like Him in thought and character. And I think the one thing that people take for granted ... Like I said, the normalcy bias. One of the things of the normalcy bias is that we make our own decisions. It's just normal. We do it from the time we are born, right?

I'll bet you today just since you woke up, you made at least, every one of us made at least 20 decisions: What time you were going to get up, whether you got up and you took your shower first or you did something else first. Did you study your Bible? Did you pray? Did you pray before you studied your Bible? What time did you come to breakfast? What are you going to eat at breakfast? Are you going to skip the liquid? Are you going to skip the meat? Are you going to skip this? And after breakfast, should I go out and pick this up or should I come to the service first? How should I dress for the service? What am I going to wear? So just here early in the morning, you've already made at least 20 decisions in your life.

And **are you thinking with every decision you make, putting all under the submission of Yahweh?** Remember, *take every thought into captivity*, which means how you dress should be according to the Bible. The Bible tells us not to wear clothing

with mixed fibers, right? We're supposed to wear all cotton, all linen, but we're not supposed to wear polyester and cotton together. So, when you dress, are you thinking that way? The Bible tells us not to eat pork, not to eat shellfish. So, when you're eating, are you making decisions that way?

Everything in our life ... And this is what all judicial order is, it's only the structure that Yahweh set out. And unfortunately, like I say, because of the Garden of Eden, our forefathers, Adam and Eve, chose another path and sent us outside of Eden. Every one of us has walked on that path. And that's what the restoration ministry is all about. It's about coming back to the Torah. **It's about allowing Yahweh to mold us**, right?

Wilco gave an awesome sermonette on a child being born. They're being molded in the womb, right? But that's only the beginning of life. What happens when you get out of there? Everything we do in our life is choices. And like it says here in Deuteronomy 30, they're not really that hard choices, but you have to make those choices. **You have to consciously surrender your will to the will of Yahweh so He can mold you**. And we're going to see what happens. It's really a interesting parallel to what happens with a real potter making clay to the Master Potter of the universe making clay with us. Let's go to Job 10 ... Job 10 and verse 8 ... Job 10 and verse 8. He says:

Job 10:8 *Your hands have made me and shaped me together all around; yet You engulf me.*

Comment: Just like a potter, right? That's what He's doing, right? *Your hands have made me*. Look at that picture. It's just like that.

Job 10:8-9 *Your hands have made me and shaped me together all around; yet You engulf me. Remember, I beseech You, that You have formed me as clay; and will bring me to dust again?*

Comment: So, like I say, *The Sheep and the Goats*. I love the sermon, one of my favorite. But that's a mental thing, right, of the character of a sheep compared to the character of a goat. This is reality. Every one of us is that [pointing to the clay]. We are dirt, and we are water. That's all we are. *To dust you are, to dust you shall return*. And we kind of forget that, in our pride, right? Once you go to school, you get a couple of letters after your name, or you get a little piece of paper that says, I'm this and I'm that, and we forget that we're dirt.

We forget that every one of us came from dirt, and every one of us is going back to the dirt. And in our life, in between is this [pointing to the picture of a potter molding clay]. In between is the hands of Yahweh on our life, shaping and molding us not only in His likeness but in His image—His image and likeness, both of them; that we're being created to be like Him. *You bring me to dust again*.

Job 10:10-13 *Did You not pour me out like milk; yea, curdled me like cheese? You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knitted me with bones and sinews ... Right? It didn't just happen. Yahweh did this. No such thing as evil-ution. It's Creation ... You have made me have life and favor. Your providence has kept my spirit. And these You have hidden in Your heart; I know that this was from You.*

Wow! So, like I say, look at that clay as I'm giving this sermon. Every one of us, that's us. That is our life. Jeremiah 18 ... Jeremiah the 18th chapter. Because there's really a lot in the Bible about this. I never heard a sermon given on it. Maybe there have been. I haven't heard every sermon in the world. But there's a lot on this that you would think we might hear more about it. Jeremiah 18.

Jeremiah 18:1-2 *The Word which was to Jeremiah from YAHWEH, saying, Rise up and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My Words.*

Comment: So now Yahweh's giving a mental visualization by going to the potter's house. And He's going to share something.

Jeremiah 18:3-6 *Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he was working a work on the wheel ... just like the picture ... And the vessel that he made in clay was ruined in the hand of the potter. So repeating he made it, another vessel, as it seemed good in the potter's eyes to make it. ...Right? ... And the Word of YAHWEH was to me, saying, O house of Israel, can I not do to you as this potter? says YAHWEH. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.*

Whoa! You know, there's a lot in that little saying. Because what is He saying? As the clay was ruined in the hand of the potter, he simply got rid of it and started all over again. And Yahweh's saying, can that be you?

And it's really interesting because yesterday ... You know, it's always funny to me, ironic, whatever you want to call it, when people are here for the first time. Because as we're walking in a tel, someone will look down and say, "Look! It's a piece of pottery!" And I say, "Yes, there's about 100 million of them here." They are! Everywhere you go. Any tel you go in you will find literally hundreds of millions of little pieces of pottery. You're not to pick them up because you don't know if they dig there. They may take all those little pieces and try to put them together. We've been many times to The Antiquity Labs where someone's job is to put all those pieces back together. So, it's illegal to take them and you could get arrested at the airport. But that's another story.

But the point of it is, if we're looking at this analogy of pottery and clay, there's millions of pieces that are laying there, right, that are not been used, that are broken, that are useless. More than anything else here in Israel is pottery like that. **We are our Potter's clay on the wheel in the hand of Yahweh. We must be pliable, moldable.**

So, what I want to do now is I want to go into the **seven steps how a potter actually makes clay**. The seven steps. **The first step**, number one, **you must choose clay**, right? There's all different kinds of clay. This is one type of clay here you see in front of us, but some clay is more pliable. Some clay is harder to work with, right? But the potter has to choose his clay. John 15 and verse 16 ... John 15 and verse 16.

John 15:16 *You have not chosen Me, but I chose you out and planted you, that you should go and should bear fruit, and your fruit should remain, that whatever you should ask the Father in My name, He may give you.*

So again, **the potter chooses the clay. The clay doesn't choose the potter. So, every one of us, Yahweh chose us!** Never forget that in your life. I say that when people say, "Wow, I can't believe why He's chosen me. Why would He chose me?" And I say, sure, say that when you're first called; say that maybe the first few months of your calling; say that until your baptism, but don't keep saying that 30 years later, okay? Because we know it. Yahweh shouldn't have called any of us.

You know why He called each of us? Read **Corinthians 1:26**. *Yahweh calls the weak of the world to confound the mighty.* So, if you think you're too weak for Him to call you, that's exactly why He called you. He's not calling the governors; He's not calling the presidents; He's calling the weak of the world. So, it humbles us, right? But never forget the fact He chose you. Like the potter and the wheel, He's choosing us ... He's choosing us. John 6:44.

John 6:44 *No one is able to come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up in the last day.*

So, Yahweh is calling us. The Father is picking us. And just like that clay here, He's picking us out, not as a finished vessel. He's picking us up as just a block of clay that He's going to mold and He's going to work with. And that's why we really—this is important—you have to look at what a potter does with his clay and what Yahweh says He's doing with us, because we're going to see the end result what happens if the clay doesn't come out good. There is an end result that comes from that.

Romans 9 ... Romans 9 and verse 15. And what I say at the end of the day, why Yahweh called you or didn't call you really doesn't matter, the reason. The matter is you're sitting here. The matter is He did call you, and the matter is what do we do with that? How do we functionally fulfill the calling to the best of our ability? Romans 9 and verse 15.

Romans 9:15 *For He said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will pity whomever I will pity."*

Comment: You know what? So, face it. Really interesting, there's a man who is a reporter for many, many years. His name is Charles Krauthammer. Maybe some of you have heard of him. He was a young man going to be a doctor, and he jumped in a swimming pool and hit his head head-first. He wound up being a paraplegic and just recently ... He's older man now. He's had children. He's married. Really nice guy. It seems to be anyway. I don't know him personally ... But they asked him in this interview, "Do you ever ask why you?" And he said, "No." He said, "Actually, I ask, why not me? If somebody has to be a paraplegic, why not me?"

The same way. If you maybe found out you had cancer, and say, "Why me?" Somebody has to have it, why not me? Why not me? Somebody has to be crippled. Somebody has to be blind. Somebody has to be everything. So instead of asking the question when something wrong goes, why me? It's not a good question to ask. The question is why not me, right? There's a reason why Yahweh chose you. And I say this sometimes, especially for people with handicaps. One of the reasons I believe I probably wasn't given a handicap is I don't have the patience to make it through it. So, Yahweh will never give us more than we can handle. And whatever He's given us, there's a reason for it.

There's a movie called, *The Robe*, an old movie from the 1950s if you remember that movie. And there's one thing in that movie that really impressed on us was ... It's about the man who put the spear into Yahshua and killed Him. Fiction probably, although somebody did do it, but I don't know if the movie is supposed to be nonfiction. But anyway, this man is being convicted by his own conscience that he killed the Messiah. And he's being convicted. And as he's going everywhere, he's thinking he's being spooked or something, but it's his conscience convicting him that the believers are true.

So, he goes to this village of believers trying to, you know, he's like undercover and he's going to hand them in and get them in trouble. And as he's going around, he's becoming more and more convicted. There's a little boy there who has nothing and he has a bed leg. And this boy was given a donkey by this man. And the next day he says to the boy, "Where's the donkey?" And he says, "Oh, I gave it to my friend." And he's like, "That is the best thing you're ever going to get in your life, and you give it to your friend? And all these people in the village keep telling him about Yahshua. "That's the way Yahshua taught us." "Yahshua told us give." "Yahshua told us to love our neighbor." And he's really getting convicted.

So, there's a woman there who's crippled. And she's still crippled. So, he goes in to her and he says, "What about you? What about you? You saw Yahshua. Why are you still crippled? Why didn't He heal you?" And she said, "You know something? After He was here that day, I thought about that for a long time." She said, "But if you would have saw me before He came, I was bitter and I was always upset because I was this way. After He was here, I am the happiest person in the world. And I can glorify Him more now being crippled. Because if I wasn't crippled, everybody could be happy."

That's the way our life is. **Whatever is given to us in life, glorify Yahweh by it. Don't be upset. Don't ask why.** I say this, the quality of your life is in the quality of your questions you ask. You sit there and say, "Why does this always happen to me?" The answer is going to come, "Because you're a dummy." That's not a good question. You ask better questions. It's not "Why does this happen to me?" It's "How can I overcome this?" "How can I learn what Yahweh is teaching me this?" And "how can I enjoy the process?" It's not just getting there. It's enjoying the process. And the quality of questions is the quality of answers. And that's the way your life is going to be. That's how the Potter is molding us to shape this. So, in Romans 9 we see this. To some He makes some way, some He makes another way. Verse 19.

Romans 9:19-23 *Perhaps you will say, Why does He find fault? Who can resist His will? Rather, O man, ... Right? Better questions ... who are you to question against Elohim? Shall the thing formed say to the One forming it, Why did You make me this way? Or does not the potter have authority over the clay, out of one lump to make a vessel to honor, and one to dishonor? But if Elohim, desiring to demonstrate His wrath, and to make His power known, endured in much long-suffering vessels of wrath having been fitted out for destruction, but He poured out His mercy on the vessels of favor, which He before prepared for the glory of YAHWEH,*

And that's what I say. The greatest witness I can give to someone that what I believe is true is my own life. Because I know where I came from, and I know it would be impossible for me to change on my own. There had to be some kind of

intervention by the Holy Spirit that happens that way. So that's what's great about it. I'm not asking the question, "Why would you ever call an evil person like me?" I'm saying, "Wow, thank You, Yahweh, that You can work with somebody who came from that background." That's the way it is. But if we want to show Him glory, the greatest way to show Him glory is not to stay in that state. And if you just keep asking the questions, why did You call me when I don't have the give, you're never going to move on to be that finished vessel. You're never going to move on to be the vessel that the Potter wants you to be.

Step two. After you choose the clay, **you must let the clay age.** You can't just pick the clay out now. This clay has just been opened up today. I can't use that yet. I have to let that clay age some, right? Because when it ages, it will ferment. And you know what? Start to stink when it ferments. It's going to start to stink, and that's why many people (potters), they actually keep this for months in containers because it smells so bad, right? The same way ... If we go to Isaiah 64 ... that our self-righteousness, our sins, is a stench in Yahweh's nostrils. So, Isaiah 64 and verse 6.

Isaiah 64:6-8 *But we are all as the unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as a menstruation cloth ... Wow, I would have never used an analogy like that, but Yahweh did. That says a lot, right? ... And we all fade as a leaf, and like the wind our iniquities take us away. And there is not one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You. For You have hidden Your face from us, and have melted us away into the hands of our iniquities. But now, YAHWEH, You are our Father. We are the clay, and You are our maker; yea, we are Your handiwork.*

Right? So again, in the world, before Yahweh called us, that's what we were like. He already set us apart from birth. But while we were in the world and we are going through this thing, we were fermenting and we were stinking, right, in His eyes with the things we did. But He called us out of that. Isaiah 44 and verse 9 ... Isaiah 44 and verse 9.

Isaiah 44:9-11 *Those who formed a carved image are all of them vanity. And their delights do not profit; and they are their own witnesses. They do not see, nor know, that they may be ashamed. Who has formed an El, or poured out an image to no profit? Behold, all his companions shall be ashamed; and the craftsmen, they are from men. They shall assemble, all of them shall stand; they shall dread; they shall be ashamed together.*

So, He is equating this with idols that are being made and the worthlessness that comes from it. Just like our life, every one of us, our life was worthless. It doesn't matter what you did to the point you were called; our life is worthless without Yahweh the Master Potter shaping and molding our life.

Third point that our potter uses is **before the clay is ready to use, it has to be beaten and smashed, pounded to get the lumps and the imperfections out.** So, like I said, He calls us from birth, right? Just like a potter has to pick the clay, and then he has to let it age. So, all of us go through the world; we see that that way is no good. And then before it's ready to use, it has to be beaten and smashed. If not, you're going to have all these bubbles and lumps that are inside of them. Isaiah 41 and verse 25 ... Isaiah 41 and verse 25.

Isaiah 41:25 *I have raised up one from the north; and he shall come from the east; he will call on My name. And he shall come upon rulers as on mortar, and as a potter tramples clay.*

So now He's talking about an army coming in and trampling the people. And what is He comparing to? He compares it to the potter trampling clay. Because if you don't, what's going to happen? The clay will never work. If you don't beat it and trample it and get all those bubbles out, once you make it, it will explode. It won't work when you get to the next phase in the process.

Hebrews 12 and verse 5 ... Hebrews 12 and verse 5. So, what is this showing us? That the clay has to be beaten, smashed, pounded. **It's talking about the trials we go through.** That we should never ask Yahweh **why** we're going through things, right? Because when we read Hebrews 12 and verse 5, look what He says:

Hebrews 12:5-6 *And you have forgotten the exhortation which He speaks with you, as with sons, "My sons, do not despise the chastising of YAHWEH, nor faint while being corrected by Him. For whom YAHWEH loves, He chastens, and disciplines every son with whom He is pleased."*

Comment: I get worried when things are going too good. Because then you wonder, well, if Yahweh chastises every son He loves, you need a little bit of chastising, right? You don't want too much. And the more you are surrendering to Him, the less you have to have. But all of us need some. We all need it. And we should be happy with it because it's showing Yahweh's love for us.

Hebrews 12:7 *If you endure discipline, YAHWEH is dealing with you as with sons; for who is the son whom a father does not discipline?*

Comment: And that's the main thing we need in our life. Because as human beings, right, without discipline, nothing else would matter. It doesn't matter how much you know the Bible; it doesn't matter how gifted you are with Scriptures; it doesn't matter if you can speak in 10 languages. If I can't discipline my flesh, I will never become a son of Elohim. It's just that simple.

Because how could He give me that power to be a spirit being if I don't have discipline to handle it? Remember John and Jacob, when they were coming to that village who wouldn't accept it? And he said, "Master, should we call down fire from heaven on them?" And He called them the Sons of Thunder from that, right? Now they changed a lot before [should be **after**] that, we see, especially John, the apostle of love. But, wow, can you imagine if you're a spirit being that's the way you look at it? "Someone doesn't listen, I'm just going to wipe them out." That would not work too good.

Hebrews 12:8-11 *But if you are without discipline, of which all have become sharers, then you are strangers, and not sons. Furthermore, indeed we have had fathers of our flesh as correctors, and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and we shall live? For they truly disciplined us for a few days according to the things seeming good to them; but He for our profit, in order for us to partake of His holiness. For all discipline for the present does not seem to be joyous, ... and that's true ... but grievous; but afterwards it gives back peaceable fruit of righteousness to the ones having been exercised by it.*

I'd say this when we left United States, and we were down in Honduras, or whatever it was, seven, eight, nine months, whatever it was that we were down there. And wow, it was the hardest time in our life. It was a crash course learning everything, faith, the whole bit. We lost everything we owned. Am I happy it happened? Absolutely. I feel like I grew, 10 years it would have taken. Would I want to go through it again? Absolutely not. So that's what it is. At the end of it, you're happy you got through it.

It's kind of like boot camp, I guess, although I've never been to physical boot camp. I haven't been in the service. But it would be the same thing. It's not happy when you're going through it. But once you accomplish it, you are happy because now you're ready to go to the next step. 1st Corinthians 5 ... 1st Corinthians 5 and verse 6 says:

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 *Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the lump? Then clean out the old leaven just as you may be a new lump, just as you are unleavened. For our Passover is Messiah who was sacrificed for our sake. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, ... It's talking about the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread ... not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and evil, but with unleavened bread of purity and holiness.*

So, this is the thing. **We are a new lump after we've been prepared, but we have to get all those little bubbles and all those imperfections out if we're going to be a new lump.**

Number four, the next thing the potter does now ... Like I said, first he chooses the clay; then he lets it age; then he has to beat the clay to make it ready; and **now it's time to mold the pottery**. Now it's time to mold it. But what do you need to mold it? You can't just mold the pottery. **You have to add some water and a little bit of oil to it to make it more elasticity.** If not, the thing will just crumble apart.

So, Acts 2 and verse 37. So, this is all our life before being a believer. This is the part until we get up to Yahweh. But now it's the time where He's really ready to deal with us. So, think about it. In every one of our life, you just didn't get called. You didn't say, well, I was a non-believer until I was 20, 30, 50, 60, whatever. Yahweh knew you from your birth.

So, some people He calls into the faith. Your parents are believers, and you are born into it. Other people come in. I happened to come in when I was around 16 years old. I wound up; somebody gave me the *Plain Truth* magazine. I was still in high school. None of my family was in the truth. None of my friends were. Nobody. But I used to read that for several years, and then Yahweh called me through this. But He knew me from my mother's womb. And then, like I said, He has to allow us to go through the world. We have to ferment and age, so to speak. It's the stink of the world so that we see the difference between it.

Unfortunately, many second-generation believers, at least in Church of God, about 80% of them left the congregation. Can you imagine? Something is wrong here. You know, last year I gave many sermons on childrearing: *Where Have All the Fathers Gone, Where Have All the Mothers Gone, Where Have All the Children Gone*. Really good messages to listen to, because it's not just with Church of God and this age. It's something that has been since Creation. Like I said, the first two boys there, Adam and Eve ... not Adam and Eve, but Cain and Abel, he kills his brother. Like I said, he didn't have an iPod; he didn't have an Internet or nothing else. So, there is a problem with childrearing from the very beginning.

So don't just think, "Oh," I've heard people say, "I wish I was born into the truth, then I wouldn't have had to go through the things now." Not true. Yahweh called you, like I read in Romans, exactly like where you needed to be called. We had to go through things; because if you didn't go through those horrors of Satan's world, you would never know the difference of it. Like we say, what is darkness? There's no such thing as darkness. Darkness is just simply the absence of light. That's all it is. But if you don't have light, you wouldn't know what darkness is. There has to be a contrast to everything. What is evil? There's no such thing as evil. It's just the absence of good. But if you didn't have good, you couldn't have evil.

So, your life, where you are when Yahweh calls you is exactly what you needed to contrast in your mind good from evil. So never think, "I wish I was called before," "I wish I was called at this point." You're called exactly when the Master Potter wanted you. You're the clay He took when He needed at that point. And, like I said, at this point now, now that He's ready to put you on a wheel, you have to add some water and a little bit of oil to make elasticity. Acts 2 and verse 37.

Acts 2:37-38 *And hearing, they were touched in the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men, and my brothers, What shall we do? And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, each of you in the name of Yahshua YAHWEH for the forgiveness of sins, that you may receive the gift of the Spirit of Holiness.*

So, everything up to this point was only to get you ready to get you on that wheel now. Now that you're on the wheel, unless you're baptized, unless you get that Spirit of water and oil, there's not much that's going to happen except you're going to crumble on the wheel and you really can't be worked with.

Number five, now, now after you get on that wheel and you are spun, what's the next point? **Now the clay is plunged into the fire so that it could be set for good.**

As long as it's on the wheel ... And I don't know, has anybody ever seen a potter work with clay? It's really neat because as that thing is spinning, he can make it big; he can make it small; you can make it into anything you want; you can start all over. And then you see it collapsing, you are thinking, "Aw!" You feel bad. It's like, "No, no, no, I can do that right again." And he does it. But once you're ready to put it into the fire, then it's going to be set. Now it's going to be set, and it's not going to change from that point.

It has to be dried long enough, though, to put into the furnace or the kiln. So again, once you take it off the wheel, you have to give it time for it to set, just like us. Yahweh doesn't say to us, "I want you to change, and change now!" It's a lifelong process. We could be on that wheel for a long, long time. But once we get off the wheel, now He's ready to set our character for good.

1st Peter 1 and verse 5 ... 1st Peter 1 and verse 5. Because what does this mean? Now it means we're getting ready to go into the fire. **This is where we're at now, getting ready for the baptism of fire.** 1st Peter 5 ... or, I'm sorry, 1st Peter 1 and verse 5. He says:

1 Peter 1:5-7 *While you were kept by the power of Elohim, being guarded through faith to a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time; wherein you will rejoice forever, not withstanding, at the present time you are pressed a little, by the various trials that have come upon you; so that **the proving of your faith**, much more precious than perishing gold, but **having been proved through fire**, may be made manifest to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Yahshua Messiah.*

So now like I said, at this point, the fifth point, the clay is ready to put into the fire. But if it's not ready, it's not going to last. And it's the same with us. If Yahweh puts you through the baptism of fire before you're ready, you're not going to make it. So, you have to mature to a certain point to be able to go through this.

On the other hand, ... 1st Corinthians 10:13 ... Because you want to know something? Before you put that pot into that fire, you have to make sure the fire is not too hot to crack the pot, or the fire is not hot enough that it won't harden it. So that fire has to be exactly the right temperature. Can't be too hot, and it can't be too cold, almost like Laodicea. But in 1st Corinthians 10:13, it says:

1 Corinthians 10:13 *No temptation has taken you except what is human; but YAHWEH is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested above what you are able. But with each trial, He will make the way out, so that you may be able to bear it.*

So, the baptism of fire will be different for every one of us. It's not going to be the same, because we're all at different points, right? We're not all the same vessel. Every one of us is a different vessel. Every one of us, Yahweh has worked with different. But at the same rate, we know that that fire has to be perfect. And Yahweh won't give it to us too hot, the more we can handle, but He's not going to make it not hot enough where we're not going to learn from the baptism of fire. It has to be just right.

Number six, sixth point, **after hardening by fire**, what do we do? **We put the finishing touches that are on the glaze.** So now, when it comes out and it's set, now you glaze it, you decorate it, and you make it the vessel that you wanted to do. 1st Corinthians 12. These are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is what Yahweh is putting on us. 1st Corinthians 12 and verse 4.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 *And there are diversity of gifts, but there is only one Spirit; and there are diversity of ministries, yet YAHWEH is first. And they are diversity of powers, but the same Elohim is working all things in all. And to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit as a help to him.*

1 Corinthians 12:8-12 *For through the Spirit is given to one a word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; and to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another, workings of power, to another, prophecy, to another, discerning of spirits, to another, different kinds of languages, and to another, interpretation of languages. But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing separately to each as He wills. Even as the body is one, and has many members, but all the members of the one body, being many, are one body, so also is Messiah.*

So as these gifts are distributed to us, that's what the decorations are. And that's the glaze now that's being put on there, that everyone is different. It's like you go into a shop that sells pottery, right? They're not all the same way. They're different colors. There's different things on there. And then you look, and you pick out what is best for you. **The gifts of the Spirit are like the glaze of the decorations on the pottery; each one is different.**

Then the last point, **the seventh point**, there has to be a second burning. **There has to be a second burning to secure all the decorative work that was done after the sealing.** So, the first burning is to seal the jar itself, and then you're putting

all the painting and the things on it, then it has to go back into the fire again in order to make sure that everything from there is set. Jacob 1 and verse 1 ... Jacob 1 and verse 1 ... Jacob 1:1.

Jacob 1:1 *Jacob, a slave of Elohim and the Master Yahshua Messiah, to the twelve tribes in the Diaspora among the nations, greeting:*

Comment: And if you read Jacob, it really is an end-time book. So, it's really a book for us in the last days. And who is it to? The twelve tribes in the Diaspora. Here we are, sitting here.

Jacob 1:2-4 *My brothers count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the proving of your faith works patience. But let patience have its perfective work, that you may be **perfect** and complete, lacking nothing.*

So again, like I said, the first kiln was to make the inner character, the inner pot itself. But the second one is to make that decorative work that's on it secure. So, like he says, *so that Yahweh may have His perfective work*; the work has to be perfected. All those little spots and blemishes have to come out, whatever they are. Can't go into the Kingdom that way. Why? Because in the Kingdom everything is constant. Today we live in time, and everything can change. When the Kingdom comes, it's eternity. It's a constant. That's why I say you don't want to go into eternity with a broken leg, because you will have a broken leg for eternity. So, we need to get all those spots and wrinkles out now before that. Right? Matthew 24 and verse 13.

Matthew 24:13 *But the one who endures to the end, that one will have eternal life.*

So, this is the spot we're at now. We're at that spot where we have to endure to the end. We have to get every spot and wrinkle out. What does it say in Revelation 7? Revelation 7:1 through 3.

Revelation 7:1-3 *After these things I saw four cherubs standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that wind should not blow on the earth, nor the sea, nor on every tree. And I saw another cherub coming up from the rising of the sun, having a seal of the living Elohim. And he cried with a great voice to the four cherubs to whom it was given to them to harm the earth and the sea, saying, Do not harm the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we **seal** the servants of our Elohim on their foreheads.*

So, **you can compare this, this last glazing, this last setting to this: the sealing of the people.** Also in the end times, Revelation 19 and verse 7, what does it say?

Revelation 19:7-9 *Let us rejoice and let us exult, and we will give glory to Him, because the marriage of the Lamb came, **and His wife prepared herself.** And it was given to her that she might be clothed in fine linen, pure and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he said to me, Write: Blessed are the ones having been called to the marriage supper. And he said, These Words of YAHWEH are true.*

So, wow! **The bride has made herself ready. She has gotten out every spot and wrinkle out of those garments. And this is what the second burning is referred to.** So, this is the seven parts, literal parts, that a potter will use when he's making pottery. And very interesting, every one of these parts is equated with how Yahweh is working with us.

Let's go to Isaiah 29. Because now we want to start analyzing it a little bit. And like I said, we're living in a world where the normalcy bias is, "I'm free," "I can make all the decisions myself," "I don't have to listen to anybody else." But can a piece of clay just go on a wheel? Like if you were a potter and you went to bed and you left that clay sitting there, are you going to wake up and it spun itself into something and came out like that? Then you're going to say, "Wow, he did pretty good! Pretty good clay." No, no, a clay cannot mold himself. He can't. It's impossible. Isaiah 29 and verse 15.

Isaiah 29:15-16 *Woe to those who go deep to hide their purposes from YAHWEH; yea, their works are in the dark; and they say, Who sees us? And, Who knows us? Oh your perversity! Shall the former be counted as the clay? For shall the work of its maker say, He did not make me? Or shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, He does not understand?*

Right? You see it out there, the atheist: "I'm not accountable to anybody," "I don't believe in Creation," "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Nobody created me." But yet there's a day coming where they'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Every single human being ever created was made by Yahweh, the believer as well as the atheist. Everyone is that piece of clay. Everyone is to be molded. Let's see what happens—shortly, what happens—when you refuse to be molded. 1st Corinthians 6:19 and 20.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit in you, which you have from YAHWEH, and you are not of yourselves? You were bought with a price; then glorify YAHWEH in your body, and in your spirit, which belong to YAHWEH.*

You were bought with a price. Like I said, slavery is biblical. Every single human being is a slave to something. There is nobody ... It is the worst lie of Satan that you are free. "I'll never follow a man. No one's going to tell me what to do." And you know what? You are. You are not following a man. You are following Satan the Devil, and it's a one-way ticket to the Lake of Fire. Because if Yahweh took His breath away from this room right now, none of us would last more than a couple of minutes. Nobody is free. Everyone is a slave to something. But you have the freedom to choose: Who do you want to obey? Righteousness to eternal life, or sin unto death? It's your choice. **Yahweh gives you that free choice. He gives you that free will for you to choose.**

But believe me when I say, **there are consequences to your decision, and they always come around.** They always come around. Sooner or later, they come around. You can only disobey Yahweh for so long. It doesn't matter whether it's the family structure, like we are talking about. It doesn't matter whether it's the food laws. There are people when you are 20, you think you are king of the earth and nothing will ever come back to you. But believe me, 20 gets into 40, and 40 gets into 60 real quick. And the things you are doing in your life when you are younger will come back to you. And that's why Yahweh has food laws; He has family laws; He has congregational laws; He has judicial order to everything. And **the more that we simply just follow what He says, the happier we're all going to be.**

And that's what the molding of the clay is. Are we allowing Him to mold us? Or are we trying to push ourselves into something else? Is He making us into an oil lamp and we want to be a vase? **You have to allow Him to mold you as He sees fit because we are not the Potter. We're the clay.** Matthew 26:39. This is when Yahshua is in the Garden of Gethsemane, right, right before He is ready to be crucified.

Matthew 26:39 *And going a little further, He fell on His face, praying and saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.*

Not as I will, but as You will. Do we say that? Are we submitting our will to the will of Yahweh? Like I said, you know something? If I needed to get somewhere, if I had to go to, wherever, to Morocco next week because there is people there waiting for baptism, I don't have to pray to Yahweh for an airplane; I don't have to pray to Yahweh for a train; I don't have to pray to Yahweh for money. All I have to do is tell Him I need to get to Morocco, and He will decide.

If He wants me to swim, He will give me a boat. If He wants me to fly, He will give me an airplane ticket, or maybe He will even give me wings, or maybe He will translate me. I don't know. But I don't have to tell Him how to do His job. He is the Potter; we are the clay. All I have to do is pray. You know what? I really don't even have to pray because He says He knows it beforehand. We are praying for us, for our faith, not because He doesn't know what we need. He knows it before we even start. But we don't have to mandate to Him.

This whole thing, name it and claim it, that's not where it's at. That's the whole prosperity gospel that came from Babylon. And it's not what Yahweh is doing in the end time. What we have to understand is we are the clay; He is the Maker. We have to let Him mold us. We have to let Him put us into the vessel that He wants us to be.

Romans 9 and verse 27, very scary scripture. I've read this before, but now in this context, it's probably the best scripture to look at to really show us the soberness of all of this. Romans 9 and verse 27.

Romans 9:27-29 *But Isaiah cries on behalf of Israel, "If the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, ... billions upon billions ... only a remnant will be saved." But He is bringing the matter to an end, ... the days we're living in ... and He has been cut short "in righteousness, because YAHWEH will do a thing cut short on the earth." And as Isaiah said before, "If YAHWEH of hosts had not shown favor to us as a remnant, we would have become as Sodom and we would have become as Gomorrah."*

The ones that are on the tour, we're going to go to Gomorrah. You see it. Many of you have seen it before. There are ashes there. There is nothing there. For almost 4,000 years now, it is nothing but ashes except the sulfur balls that destroyed it all, right?

So, wow, look at this analogy. When I was talking about this, if you go into the Israeli Museum, how many ancient clay jars are in this land today? Not that many. There probably are hundreds of them, maybe even up to 1,000, but probably not more than 1,000. But there is a lot of clay jars. But how many pieces of broken pottery that have been discarded are laying there? Billions ... billions, right?

Although the remnant, like he says here, if the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant will be saved. There is more than a billion Israelites in the world today. How many are sitting in the chairs listening and being believed? It is a sobering scripture to think about, and it is reality.

And there is a reason why Yahweh allowed those millions and millions and millions of little pieces of pottery everywhere you walk. Because He is showing us that this is what happens, that if you don't let the Potter mold the clay, that is going to be you. You will be nothing. When you see those little pieces, tell me what they are. Were they an oil lamp? Were they a pot? Unless you have a rim, you have no idea. It is just a sober reminder of what will happen if we don't follow the will of Yahweh.

Jeremiah 19 ... Jeremiah 19 tells us what happens when the pottery (the clay) rejects the Potter and is not usable anymore. Jeremiah 19, verse 1 and 2.

Jeremiah 19:1-2 *So says YAHWEH, Go and buy a potter's earthen jar, and gather from the elders of the people, and from the elders of the priests. And go out to the valley of the son of Hinnom ... the Lake of Fire ... by the entry of the Potsherd Gate ... Right? Wow, the Potsherd Gate is right next to the Valley of Hinnom ... And there declare the Words that I will speak to you.*

Comment: So, here it is. This isn't just about pottery and clay. There is really a meaning here. Because he is telling us exactly where this is happening, the very place where the Lake of Fire is. Verse 8.

Jeremiah 19:8-11 *And I will make the city a waste and a hissing. Everyone who passes by shall be amazed and shall hiss because of its plagues. And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters. And they shall each one eat the flesh of his friend in the siege of distress in which their enemies and those who seek their life shall oppress them. And you shall break the jar before the eyes of the men who go in with you, and say to them, So says YAHWEH of Hosts, Even so I will break this people and this city, as one breaks the potter's vessel that cannot be restored again. And they shall bury in Tophet, ... Tophet is the back side of the Valley of Gehenna, the Lake of Fire, where they used to burn the children ... And they will bury in Tophet, since no place is left to bury.*

Wow. Serious stuff ... serious stuff. Revelation 20 and verse 11. We see in the White Throne Judgment, right? And it's a reality that, yes, we don't have to fear our salvation if we're walking in faith of Yahweh and being obedient. But we should every day of our life work out that salvation with fear and trembling to make sure we are walking in obedience. Revelation 20 and verse 11.

Revelation 20:11-15 *I saw a Great White Throne, and One sitting on it, from whom the face the earth and the heaven fled; and a place was not found for them. And I saw the dead, the small and the great, standing before YAHWEH. And books were opened. And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of the things written*

in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead in it. And the death and the grave gave up the dead in it. And they were each judged according to their works. And death and the grave were thrown in the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And if anyone was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown in the Lake of Fire.

Matthew 13 and verse 36 ... Matthew 13 and verse 36. And like I said before with the baptism of fire, everyone's going to go through it. It's just a matter of will you be purified in fire, like the earthen vessel that's been prepared? Or will you crack in that fire and be no more? Because if you're not prepared ... Remember, He's the Potter; we're the clay ... If those steps I gave, if we don't allow Him to get us ready by the time you go in that fire, you won't make it. You will not make it through it. Matthew 13 and verse 36. But if you have prepared, that fire will actually, you know, you go in the kiln and it will strengthen you. It will make you last forever. Matthew 13 and verse 36.

Matthew 13:36-39 *Then sending away the crowds, Yahshua came into the house. And His disciples came to Him saying, Explain to us the parable of the tares in the field. And answering, He said to them, The One sowing the good seed is the Son of Man. And the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; but the tares are the sons of the evil one. And the enemy who sowed them is the Devil, and the harvest is the end of the age, and the cherubs are the reapers.*

Matthew 13:40-43 *Then as the tares are gathered and are consumed in the fire, so it will be in the completion of this age. The Son of Man will send forth His cherubs, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who practice lawlessness. And they will throw them into the furnace of fire; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The ones having ears to hear, let him hear.*

Wow. So here it is, like I said, everybody goes in the fire. Are we going in the fire as a finished product to harden our character forever? Are we going in the fire as one that didn't listen and we won't make it? Isaiah 30 and verse 8 ... Isaiah 30 and verse 8. I'll read 8 and 9, and then I'll drop down to verse 12 ... Isaiah 30 and verse 8.

Isaiah 30:8-9 *Now come, write it before them in a tablet, and note it in a book, that it may be for the latter day, until forever; ... So, here we are in the latter day. There's a message, so listen very carefully ... that this is a rebellious people, lying sons; sons who are not willing to hear the Torah of YAHWEH;*

Comment: So, this is, again, He's talking to the ones who are unwilling to repent and change. Drop down to verse 12.

Isaiah 30:12-14 *For this reason, so says the Holy One of Israel, Because of your rejection of this Word, and your trust in oppression and perversity, even resting on it; So this iniquity shall be to you as a broken section falling, like the bulging out of a high wall, the breaking of which comes suddenly, in an instant. And it's smashing is as the smashing of a potter's vessel; when broken in pieces, he has no pity; for in its breaking there is not found a shard to carry fire from the hearth, nor to skim water from the marsh.*

So, the thing is at the end of the process ... Like I said, the potter picks the clay. He ferments it. He beats it before he's ready. And then he molds it into the pottery. He puts it in the fire. He hardens it. He decorates it. He puts it in the second time. When it's done now, it's still up to the potter to decide if it's the way he wanted it. Because even if it didn't crack on its own, he might look at that and say, "It's not really what I wanted," and break it. So, **that's really the last part of the process of a potter making a vessel is his decision whether that vessel is useful or not.** And that's the part like us, if you can imagine, like I said, we are dirt. We are clay. Genesis 3:19.

Genesis 3:19 *By the sweat of your face you shall eat your bread until you return to the ground. For you have been taken out of it; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

Sheep and goats are great. Tells us about our personality. This one is what we are [pointing to the clay] ... this one is what we are. We are dust and water basically, and we have to realize that. Why is the book of Ecclesiastes read at Sukkot? *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Because Sukkot is a time for us to reflect on the whole life cycle. Like we said, Yahweh works in the

circular. Equinox to equinox; the beginning of the year to the end of the year. We just passed the autumn equinox, the end of the growing season. We have a new one coming. Everything goes in circular patterns.

But **every year at Pesach and every year at Sukkot, we should be reflecting on our life and saying, are we fulfilling what the Potter wants us to be?** Are we fulfilling? There's reasons why Yahweh gives us gifts, like I said. There's reasons why He puts these decorations. Can you speak four languages? Are you using it in the congregation, or are you just using it for yourself? Are you a builder? Can you build a house? Are you building houses for the people of Yahweh in the congregations? Are you building your own mansion? Every single gift that's been given to us is to use for the body of Messiah for the building of the Kingdom, not only for ourselves.

Doesn't mean we can't use the gifts for ourselves also. Yahweh wants us to. But what does it say? *Do well unto all men, especially those of the household of faith.* The first thing we should be thinking is, whatever I have ... I've had people tell me, we do this at the Bible school, we evaluate your spiritual gifts. And many people come and they say, "I don't know what my gift is." I say, "Don't worry. You'll know by the time you left." I've never had a person come to the school in all the years we're doing it that did not know their gift when they left.

You know how they know? Because all the people that are there in the school with them will tell them. Because if you're with people for a short period of time, you pretty much know the gifts pretty quick. A lot of you just met this week. But I'll guarantee you, you can tell each other's a lot of the gifts that each other have. You see it. You can tell right away. And now once you have that gift, what's the next thing? Get a plan of action, right? I'm going to get a plan because that gift isn't for me. That gift is for Yahweh. He's the Potter; I'm the clay. And if He molded me and He made me a certain way, there's no way I want Him looking at me at that vessel and saying, "Uh-uh, this one didn't do what I wanted it to do." Smash.

As somebody who lives here, every time I walk and I see those little pieces of pottery everywhere, that's what's on my mind: That could be me, and that I don't want it to be me. Not for me, but for Yahweh. He invested a lot in me, right? He made me. He knew me from my mother's womb. Think of the investment that He's had in me for 53 years, including the investment of all the other people He had in my life. The investment He had bringing me here. The investment He has helping and teaching you. I don't want to let Him down. Of course, I want to be there also. I don't want to cease to exist.

But **first and foremost, if He put that much desire on me to make me into something, I want to fulfill His wishes. Because He's the king of the universe. He's the Master Potter. I want to allow Him to finish what He wanted to do in my life.** And that's how each of us should be. And that's why I say, it's a matter of submission. Every one of us is given free will, but are you submitting to Yahweh or are you submitting to Satan? It's one or the other.

When a potter makes a vessel, even if it's perfect, it's only a pot or a jar or a vase on a shelf, right? So, when we look at this analogy, and it's a real good analogy because it's real, right? Yahweh uses the analogy. But at the end of the day, even this when it's perfect is still just a pot. We're human beings. We're made in Yahweh's image, right? We're made in His likeness. He's creating us to be like Him, His character like Him. So how much more, if this is important [pointing to the pottery], are we important to Him? And this is everything that Yahweh's doing takes to it. So, let's take to heart the message of the potter's clay. Like we said here, *to dust we are, to dust we shall return.* It's really real. We are dust, and we will return to dust. Lamentations 4 and verse 2 ... Lamentations 4 and verse 2 says:

Lamentations 4:2 *The precious sons of Zion are weighed against pure gold. How they are counted as earthen vessels, the work of a potter's hand!*

The sons of Zion are weighed against pure gold. How are they counted as earthen vessels, the work of a potter's hand! Each of us is a work in the Potter's hand. We are made in the image of Yahweh, but we must grow in His likeness, His character. We must allow Him to mold us as a potter does with clay. We must surrender our own will to His will. We must go through the baptism of fire and allow Him to get every impurity out, even the ones we don't know. And we must never forget to dust we come, to dust we shall return. We are the Potter's clay. **May Yahweh fulfill that work that He's doing in each and every one of us.** Yahweh bless. Chag sameach!