

We are the Clay

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- [0 : 0 0] And if we could, this evening, for a short while, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read. Isaiah chapter 64. Isaiah chapter 64.
- Page 754. And if we take as our text the words of verse 8. Isaiah 64 at verse 8.
- But now, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay and you are our potter. We are all the work of your hand.
- I once heard the story of a man who went to visit a ceramic studio up in Caithness. And it was a place in which pottery was produced, I suppose you could say, on quite a large scale.
- But when this man walked through the entrance of the building into the pottery studio, he encountered a sign in the reception area which read, Workshop, Downstairs, Showroom, Upstairs.
- [1 : 1 3] And the sign had relevant directional arrows pointing which way to go. And so the man visiting the ceramic studio, he thought, well, it's best to start downstairs in the workshop.
- And so he proceeded to descend down the stairs and he came to the entrance of the workshop. Now, the workshop was said to be set out in order of stages in which the clay had undertaken, was had to undertake.
- And the first stage was just this lump of clay which hadn't been handled yet. It was untouched and it was without form and without fashion. It was just a lump of clay.
- But the second stage which the man came to look at was the stage where the potter had a lump of clay on his potter's wheel. In which it was spinning round and round, being slowly transformed from a lump of clay into something that was recognisable with smooth edges and some sort of shape.
- Then the third stage was the drying area where the pots were put out to dry slightly before they were put into the kiln. Because when the pots were put into the heat of the kiln, they were fired at over a thousand degrees Celsius.
- [2 : 3 2] And then after the process of being in the kiln, the pots were cooled and they were ready to be painted. And once the pots were painted, they were put back into the kiln to be glazed.
- And having followed the process of the clay from the lump to the kiln, the man at the pottery studio, he reached the last stage. And by the kiln, there was a sign which read, showroom upstairs.
- And so the man proceeded to climb the stairs to the showroom. And when he opened the door to a large room, he saw all sorts of different items of pottery. All shapes and sizes.
- And they were all on display for everyone to see. And if the man so wished he could buy an item of pottery for himself. But what struck the man in the pottery studio wasn't just the beauty of the finished article.
- But also the contrast between the lump of clay in the workshop and the painted and glazed pot in the showroom. And this contrast between the initial lump and the completed pot, it only proved how much work and effort the potter had to put in.

[3 : 46] So that his lump of clay would look like a beautiful pot on display in the showroom. Now of course, the story of the man in the pottery studio is one which describes the Christian life.

In which there is this process from the lump in the workshop downstairs to the pot on display in the showroom upstairs. But what we are being reminded this evening by Isaiah and by the catechism which we are looking at is that we are not the potter.

God is the potter and we are the clay. Now, O Lord, you are our father. We are the clay and you are our potter.

We are all the work of your hand. And without doubt, they are some of the most beautiful words in the Bible. Because they give to us this vivid description of God, our Heavenly Father, moulding us and shaping us into something glorious.

But what's important is that he is doing the work and not us. And that's what we were singing in our opening item of praise in Psalm 100. Where the psalmist said, know that the Lord, that he is God and that indeed without our aid he did us make.

[5 : 13] Without our aid he did us make. And that's what I want us to see as we look together this evening at the doctrine of sanctification. I want us to see that this is God's work in our lives.

And I'd like us to follow the process of the lump in the workshop downstairs to the pot on display in the showroom upstairs. And I'd like us to do so under four headings.

Destruction, Declaration, Development and Display. Destruction, Declaration, Development and Display.

So we look firstly at Destruction. Destruction. Destruction. And so we begin downstairs in the workshop. And the first stage of the clay is a lump.

It's unformed, it's unshaped, it's untouched and it's just a useless lump. But God is our potter. And as we know at the beginning of creation God took that lump of clay and he said, let us make man in our image and after our likeness.

[6 : 20] And those words in the original language of Hebrew, they're expressive of the actions of a potter taking clay and spinning it on his potter's wheel.

And that's what we're told God did with Adam. That the Lord God formed Adam from the dust, the clay of the ground and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living being.

And this means that when Adam was created, he was formed and fashioned out of the dust of the ground. He was made in the image of man. But he was also made in the image of God.

Which was an image of knowledge, righteousness and holiness. That was the image which Adam possessed at creation. The image of God.

An image of knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Because he didn't physically look like God because God is a spirit.

[7 : 19] Therefore God doesn't actually have a body or an appearance or an image. The term image of God, I can use this word, it's an anthropomorphism. Which means that God describes himself in human terms.

Which make it easier for us to understand him. That's what we were singing in Psalm 8. When I look up into the heavens which thine own fingers framed. And to the moon and to the stars which were by thee ordained.

That's what he's saying. God is describing himself in human terms. Because the truth is God doesn't have hands. He doesn't have fingers. He doesn't have feet. He doesn't have eyes.

He doesn't have ears. They're all anthropomorphisms. Because God is a spirit. Infinite, eternal and unchangeable. Therefore the image and likeness of God which Adam was created in.

It wasn't a physical image but a spiritual image. An image of knowledge, righteousness and holiness. In which Adam was formed and fashioned at the beginning of creation.

[8 : 21] In all perfection. But being left to the freedom of his own will. Adam fell into an estate of sin and misery. And when Adam fell.

That perfect image of knowledge, righteousness and holiness. It was marred beyond recognition. The image and likeness of God was lost. The perfect pot which God had formed and fashioned on his potter's wheel.

And made into the beauty of holiness. It was shattered and destroyed. And because of the greatness of the fall. The damage was, you could say, irreparable.

Just like when you smash a glass. The shards of glass go everywhere and it's impossible to glue it back together. So too was the mess of Adam's fall.

Where he was left as a broken, unformed and unshaped lump of clay. And you know, that's the illustration which Isaiah is giving to us here. In Isaiah chapter 64.

[9 : 21] Because at this point in his prophecy. Isaiah is praying to God. That God would intervene in the sinfulness of mankind. And change their ways. He's saying, oh that you would rend the heavens.

And come down. That the mountains might quake at your presence. And Isaiah, he's confessing to God. The extent of Adam's fall. He's confessing the brokenness.

Brokenness. And then he says in verse 6. We have all become like one who is unclean. And all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

We all fade like a leaf. And our iniquities like the wind take us away. And what Isaiah is saying is that because of our fallen and sinful condition.

Our cry is the very cry of the leper. Who was put outside the camp. Where if the leper was to be seen in the vicinity of anyone. He would have to cry unclean.

[10 : 22] Unclean. Unclean. And Isaiah says we are all as an unclean thing. We are outcasts from God. Our sin has exiled us from his presence.

We are broken. And our image is destroyed. And we are unable to save ourselves. We are unclean. But Isaiah goes even further when he says that our righteousness.

The righteousness which we possessed at our first beginning with Adam. Where we were created in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Our righteousness he says.

Filthy rags. We are like a polluted garment. Which has been tarnished and tainted. And contaminated by our fallen nature. And as a result of spiritual corruption.

Isaiah is confessing. He is saying that we are like a faded leaf. We are like the autumn leaf. That has died. And fallen off its branch.

[11 : 21] And because of our iniquity. Because of all the crookedness in our own heart. We have been blown away with the wind. We are like the wicked in Psalm 1.

Where we are likened to useless chaff. Which the wind drives to and fro. And because of our fallen condition. Isaiah is envisaging that. There is no other end for sinful mankind.

Than to be cast from the presence of God. And burned. Because he says in verse 7. There is no one who calls upon your name. Who rouses himself to take hold of you.

For you have hidden your face from us. And have made us melt. In the hand of our iniquities. Isaiah is expressing the desperate nature of our condition. They are like a pot.

Which was once formed and fashioned so beautifully. It has been broken and destroyed by sin. And he says. We have been made to melt. Into a lump of clay.

[12 : 23] At the hands of our own iniquity. We have become an unfashioned. Unformed. Unshaped. Useless lump.

And yet that's not where Isaiah ends his prayer. He has confessed that our sinful condition is one of uncleanness. And brokenness. And destruction. But.

But. But. He says. But now O Lord. You are our father. We are the clay. You are our potter.

We are all the work. Of your hand. And with this declaration from Isaiah. He knows that the potter is going to get to work on the clay. And that's what I want us to see secondly.

I want us to see God's declaration of this lump of clay. And so we've considered destruction. And our sinful condition. But secondly. Declaration.

[13 : 22] Declaration. And so the outcome of Adam's fall. It's left us broken. Unformed. Unshaped. This lump of clay. In which we're unclean.

Unrighteous. And full of iniquity. And completely incapable of improving our status. Or saving ourselves. And yet. Isaiah is saying. But now.

O Lord. You are our father. We are the clay. You are our potter. We are the work. Of your hand. And you know. I can't help but see that this is what Paul.

Is echoing. In Ephesians 2. In the New Testament. Where Paul has been speaking about the brokenness. And the depravity of our condition.

And he says. We were dead. In trespasses and sins. Walking according to the course of this world. God. Fulfilling the desires of the flesh. And of the mind. And we were by nature.

[14 : 17] Children of wrath. But God. Says Paul. But God. Who is rich. In mercy. For his great love. Wherewith he loved us.

Even. When we were dead in sins. He has quickened us. Together with Christ. By grace. Are you saved. Through faith. And that. Not of yourselves. It is the gift of God.

Not of works. Lest any man should boast. But then Paul says. And I think this is what's so beautiful. He says. We are his. Workmanship.

Created. In Christ. Jesus. Unto good. Works. And of course. Paul is using the imagery. Of the potter. And the clay. And he is. Downstairs.

In the workshop. And Paul is. Describing to us. That sinful lump of clay. Which is lost. And incapable. Of any self-reformation. And yet God.

[15 : 12] In his grace. And his mercy. He reaches down. And he. Picks up. That lump of clay. Off the shop floor. And he.

Places it. Onto the potter's wheel. But what we must see. Is that. Before any work. Begins on. Reforming. And reshaping.

The clay. In that action. Of picking up the clay. And putting it. Onto the potter's wheel. In that action. The sinner.

Is declared. Holy. And this is the initial stage. Of the potter's work. In which the sinner. Is set apart. And declared.

Holy. And this is what we call. Definitive. Sanctification. Now. Not to confuse you. Or make things difficult. Definitive.

[16 : 08] Sanctification. Is an act of God. In which the sinner. Is taken. And declared. Holy. Taken from sin. And declared.

Holy. And that's what the word. Sanctify means. It means to be made. Holy. It's to be set apart. And so. It's a one time act. It's a one time act. Of setting the sinner. Apart. And declaring the sinner.

Holy. But in this. Contrast. It's a contrast. To what we'll look at. In a wee minute. Of progressive. Sanctification. But definitive.

Sanctification. It's an important part. Of the sinner's experience. It's an important feature. Of this. Lump of clay. Because although. The lump of clay. Is still a lump.

The status of the clay. Has completely changed. It's no longer. Declared a sinner. It's now a saint. And a saint.

[17 : 03] Being someone. Who is declared. Holy. And that's what every Christian is. They are a saint. It's not someone. Who's died. Hundreds. Hundreds of years ago.

And they've been venerated. To the position of sainthood. Every Christian. Says the Bible. Is a saint. Because when Paul wrote. To the church in Corinth. The church in Corinth.

They had many problems. And they needed a lot. Of sanctification. And yet. From the outset. Of his letter. Paul. Referred to the Corinthians. As saints. Those who had been.

Declared holy. And he says. It says. In. First Corinthians 1. It says. Paul called to be an apostle. Of Jesus Christ. Through the will of God. And sustenies.

Our brother. To the church of God. Which is at Corinth. To those who are sanctified. In Christ Jesus. And called. To be saints. With all. Who in every place.

[17 : 58] Call upon the name of Jesus Christ. Our Lord. So this change. In the life of a believer. From being a sinner. To a saint.

It's. A change. Because of the Holy Spirit. And that's what we've been looking at. In the past few weeks. Of when we're studying the catechism. At the death of Jesus Christ.

On the cross. And his. Resurrection. It's applied to us. By the Holy Spirit. In which the Holy Spirit. He works faith in us. By revealing Jesus. To us.

That is the primary work. Of the Holy Spirit. In revealing Jesus. To us. He illuminates Jesus. He exalts Jesus. Christ to us. As he's presented to us.

In the gospel. And as we've said. On previous occasions. We've said that the Holy Spirit. Does this by. Making us alive again. By regeneration.

[18 : 54] And he's. He does it by. Our union with Christ. In which we're. Inseparably. United to Christ. By our effectual calling. Where we hear the gospel.

We hear. The call to come to Christ. Pressing upon our heart. God. And because we respond. To the call. We receive all the benefits. And our status. As a sinner changes.

Where we are declared. Righteous in God's sight. Because of our. Justification. We are declared. A son. Or a daughter. Of our heavenly father. Because of our adoption.

And this change. Of status. Which the sinner experiences. It's a remarkable change. And it's all of grace. From beginning to end. From being a useless.

Lump. Of clay. On the workshop floor. That is outcast. And distant. From God. A useless lump. Which was once. Glorious. And beautifully formed. And fashioned.

[19 : 50] At creation. And yet. It's broken. And destroyed. By sin. And we became. As an unclean thing. Where our righteousness. Says Isaiah. It's as filthy rags. Our iniquity. Melted us.

Into a lump of clay. But God. Who is rich in mercy. He changed us. He transformed us. He gives to us. A new beginning. He gives to us. A new heart. He gives to us.

New desires. Where he took us. From all our brokenness. Of sin. And he made us. All over again. Because in Christ. We became. A new creation.

The old. Passed away. All. Became new. Our uncleanness. Was made. Holy. A righteousness. Which was filthy. And disgusting.

It was. Replaced. With the righteousness. Of Christ. Christ. Where he became. Sin for us. Who knew no sin. In order that we would become.

[20 : 43] The righteousness of God. In him. But more than that. More than that. From all our estrangement. And rawness.

And slavery. To sin. We became. Saints. And sons. And daughters. Of the king. We became. A precious. Piece of clay. In the hands.

Of our potter. And this change. It's expressed. By Isaiah. Here. When God describes us. When he describes God.

As. Our father. But now. Lord. You are our father. We are the clay. And you are our potter. We are all the work.

Of your hand. Now. As a. Holy lump of clay. Sitting on the potter's wheel. God is not finished with us. We're not the finished article.

[21 : 41] No. No. He's going to work in us. And through us. For his own good pleasure. And glory. Which brings us to the third stage. Of God's work. We've looked at destruction.

Now. Broken. And sinful condition. As the unlovely lump of clay. We've considered declaration. We're declared. Holy. Taken. From the workshop. Floor.

And placed upon the potter's wheel. But now. We see. The. The potter. Potter's. Development. Of that piece. Of clay. Into something.

Beautiful. So. Thirdly. Development. Development. In the prophecy of Jeremiah.

In chapter 18. We're given a vivid picture. Of the work of our potter. Because we read that. The word came to Jeremiah. From the Lord saying.

[22 : 38] Arise and go down. To the potter's house. And there I will cause you. To hear my words. Then I. Jeremiah. Went down. To the potter's house. And there he was.

Making something. At his wheel. And Jeremiah says. 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. Then the word of the Lord. Came to me. Saying. Oh house of Israel. Can I not.

Do with you. As this. Potter. Says the Lord. Look. As the clay. Is in the potter's hand. So are you. In my hand. Oh house. Of Israel.

And what the Lord. Said to Jeremiah. Is what the Lord. Is saying to us. Tonight. Can I not. Do with you. As. With this. As this potter.

[23 : 33] And of course. This is. What Isaiah. Is reminding us. Too. That we are the clay. We don't have. The potential. Or the ability. To reshape ourselves. Into something beautiful.

Or even useful. Which is. Which is why Isaiah. Is confessing. You are the potter. We are all the work. Of your hand. Therefore God.

Is not only a potter. In creation. When Isaiah. Says that. He is the work. Of his hand. He is emphasizing. That God. Is our potter.

In salvation. And that is what. The catechism. Is teaching. It is teaching. Progressive. Sanctification. Because the catechism.

Differentiates. Between justification. And adoption. With sanctification. By saying that. Both. Justification. And adoption. Are acts. Of God's free grace.

[24 : 26] But sanctification. It is a work. Of God's free grace. It is a work. Which has an alpha point. And an omega point. It begins with God.

And it ends with God. Therefore. Sanctification. It is a process. To make a person. Holy. Now this doesn't contradict. What we said about.

Definitive sanctification. Where we are declared. Holy. Because. Through all. The things that happen to us. Through our. Regeneration. Our union with Christ.

Our effectual calling. Our justification. Our adoption. We are declared holy. A holy. Righteous child of God. But even though. We are holy. In God's sight. Through the work.

Of Jesus Christ. On our behalf. Even though. We are holy. In terms of our. Status. Before God. Where we are. Declared. As holy. As God. Yet at the same time.

[25 : 22] We are. Far from holy. In our thoughts. In our words. And in our actions. And God's gracious work. Of sanctification.

It progressively. Seeks. To close that. Gap. Between the holiness of God. And our sinful nature. And if the gap. Between. God's holy standard.

And our sinful nature. If that is closing. If that is closing. Then. The gap. Between our desire for sin. And our grip of sin. And our closeness.

To the world. That's widening. Widening all the time. Because that's what holiness does. That's what it means. To be holy. And to be sanctified. It's to be set apart.

More. And more. Further and further. From the world. And from sin. And to draw nearer. And nearer. To God. Following closer and closer. To the teaching of his word.

[26 : 20] It's to die to sin. To live to righteousness. And you know. You might look at yourself. And see your sinful heart. And your sinful desires.

And your weaknesses. And you may wonder. If there is any change. Taking place at all. Because all you seem to be saying. Is what Paul said. The good.

That I would like to do. I don't do it. And the evil. That I. Don't want to do. That's the very thing. I keep on doing. And we're all like Paul.

But we have to remember. That this is a lifelong process. It's a great work. But it's a slow work. You know. I remember when.

I was. A student for the ministry. And I was. Being interviewed. By the presbytery. And after the interview. With the presbytery. One of the elders.

[27 : 15] That were present there. He asked me. Murdo. Are you still growing? And of course. The elder wasn't talking about. My height. Or my waist. But he was speaking. In the spiritual sense.

And I had to think about it. Because like most people. I can't see much growth in myself. If anything. I feel I'm getting worse. Because I don't feel any more gracious.

And I don't feel I look. Any more like Christ. Than when I first started. Following him. But what I must. Do. And what we must never do. Is go on feelings.

Or go on what we think about ourselves. Because as Martin Luther said. Feelings come. And feelings go. Feelings are deceiving. My warrant. Is the word of God.

Not else. Is worth believing. Therefore we must go on. What God is saying about us. And what God promises. About us. Because the work of sanctification. Is not my work.

[28 : 15] Yes. I have the responsibility. To put off sin. And to put on Christ. To put to death. The deeds of the flesh. And to be found. Reading the Bible. And praying.

And confessing sin. And to be in the fellowship. Of God's people. Whether that's in church. Or in the prayer meeting. Or in Bible studies. We have a responsibility. But the overarching work.

It's all of God. And it's all of grace. And is that not what Paul reminded. The Philippians. When he wrote his letter to them.

Paul loved the Philippians. And he enjoyed their fellowship. In the gospel. But what made Paul rejoice. Was that. He knew that the God. Who had begun. That good work.

In them. Promised that he would. Bring it on. To completion. And later in his letter. Paul. Is speaking to the Philippians. And he's speaking to them.

[29 : 11] About his own experience. Of becoming a Christian. And he explains to them. That when God entered. Into his heart. Everything changed. He says. Those things that.

Were once gained to me. Those things of the world. And sin. And self-righteousness. They were once gained. They were the things. I held on to. And cherished. But whatever gain.

I had. Says Paul. I counted as loss. For the sake of Christ. Indeed. I count all things. Loss. Because of the surpassing. Worth.

Of knowing Christ. Jesus. As my Lord. And Paul goes on to say. Not that I'm already. Perfect. But I press on. Towards.

The mark. Of the high call of God. In Christ Jesus. Therefore my friend. If you want to know. Whether or not. God is working in your life.

[30 : 07] Then there will be this desire. To be more and more. Like Christ. There will be a dissatisfaction. A dissatisfaction. With self. And with sin. Where you will see your sin.

More and more. And you'll see your need of Jesus. More and more. And there will be this striving. To be more holy. And to be more Christ like. There will be this desire.

To emulate his character. And imitate his actions. And follow his teaching. There will be this desire. To count all these things. As loss. That you may.

Win Christ. More. And more. And more. And that's what it was like. For David in Psalm 51. Which we were singing earlier.

Because. As you know. David wasn't perfect. But God was working in his life. David made mistakes. He made big mistakes. He committed adultery.

[31 : 04] He lied. He was even an accomplice to murder. And in the eyes of the world. He should have been cast out of God's sight. But that's the very thing.

David pleads with God. Not to do. Because. He comes before God. And he. Confesses his sin. And his weakness. And his. Complete inability. To save.

Himself. And he says. All mine iniquities. Blot out. Thy face. Hide from my sin. Create. A clean heart. Lord. Renew.

A right spirit. Me within. And in these words. David is not asking to be saved. He's not asking. To become a Christian. No. As a Christian. He is pleading for God.

To cleanse him. He's pleading for God's. Work of. Sanctification. To. Continually take effect. In his life. He's pleading for renewal.

[31 : 59] He's pleading. That the original sin. That. Broken condition. Of the fall. Which is still present with him. He's pleading. He's pleading that God would. Renew in him.

A right spirit. After the image of God. That image which Adam had. Before the fall. David was pleading for God. To forgive him. And renew. Within him.

That image of knowledge. Righteousness. And holiness. My friend. That should be our daily prayer. Create. A clean heart.

Lord. Lord renew. A right spirit. Me within. Or as the hymn writer put it. Have thine own way Lord.

Have thine own way. Thou art the potter. I am the clay. Mould me and make me. After thy will. While I am waiting. Yielded.

- [32 : 56] And still. That should be our prayer. As our potter works. In our life. But as many of you. Have come to know already. Our potter not only shapes us. And moulds us. Through his word. He also shapes us.
- And moulds us. Through providence. In our lives. The things that happen. In our life. Because our master craftsman. Knows our every need.
- And he knows our every experience. But when we are in his hands. Like. The clay. On the potter's wheel. There are no better hands.
- To be in. Than the hands of our great potter. Because he's holding us. At all times. And he's shaping us. Through every providence. And every circumstance. In our lives.
- [33 : 52] Where he is continually. Working in our lives. By shaping. And trimming. And cutting things away. That are. That are of no use. As far as his design is concerned. And you know.
- Sometimes my friend. There are. As clay in the hands. Of the potter. There are. Times. We have to go through. The kiln of affliction. When we experience.
- The heat. Of trial. And temptation. Where there is the pain. Of sadness. And loss. When there is. The difficulty. Of. Loss. And loneliness.
- And yet. The comfort. In it all. Is that our potter. Will not let us go. He promises.
- To us. On the pages. Of scripture. Fear not. For I have redeemed you. I have called you. By name. You are mine.
- [34 : 49] When you pass. Through the waters. I will be with you. And through. The rivers. They shall not. Overwhelm you. When you walk. Through the fire.
- You shall not be burned. And the flame. Shall not consume you. For I am the Lord. Your God. The Holy One. Of Israel. Your Savior.
- That's his promise. I will be with you. Through all the tears. And all the worries. And all the doubts. And all the failures. And all the pitfalls. And all the difficulties.
- I will be with you. Our Potter. Will be holding us. In his hands. Because all the time. He has his design.
- In his mind's eye. And what he's creating in us. Is something that's going to be. Magnificent. And so. Beautiful. That only he can make it. Because our Potter.
- [35 : 44] He's in the business of. Doing something that will. Emerge from his hand. Because at the end of his. Creative process. He will.
- Produce in something. Something in us. Remarkable. Something which we could have. Never done ourselves. Because he says. We will appear. And we will be like him.
- Oh my friend. What a project. He has undertaken. That he would use. Useless lumps of clay. To be vessels. Of display. For his own glory.
- Which brings us. To the last stage. Of this wonderful process. We've been in the workshop. Downstairs. And we've seen destruction.
- Our broken condition. And. As an unlovely lump of clay. We've considered the declaration. The fact that we're picked up. Off the workshop floor.
- [36 : 41] And placed upon the Potter's wheel. We're declared holy. And on the Potter's wheel. We saw the development. That that piece of clay. Had into something beautiful. But after the process.
- In the workshop. Downstairs. After it's complete. The finished article. Is to be put on display. Upstairs in the showroom. And so.

Destruction. Declaration. Development. Display. Display. Clay. But now. Lord. You are our father.

We are the clay. You are our potter. We are all the work. Of your hand. The outcome of the Potter's. Patient and delicate work.

Is always what he had in mind. I've never tried it. But. I've. Watched. Programs about it. And I know that.

[37 : 35] Working with clay. And producing pottery. It's a difficult skill. And. An intricate art form. You could say. And throughout. A working day. A potter. Will often make many mistakes.

And he'll have to. Start all over again. From scratch. But not so. Without Potter. Because he knows. What he's making. And he knows.

What the end product. Will look like. Because it's to. Emerge from the workshop. Downstairs. Resembling. Jesus Christ. And that's the promise.

That when we see him. When we see Jesus. We will be like him. And see him. As he is. Now. What that means exactly. I don't know.

I don't know. But what I do know. Is that. It will be nothing. Like we've ever experienced before. But I do think.

[38 : 30] That what Paul gives. To us. Is an insight. As to what we. May look like. In the showroom. Of heaven. Because he says.

In 2nd Corinthians 4. That the God. Who commanded light. To shine out of darkness. Has shined into. Our hearts. To give the light. Of the knowledge. Of the glory of God.

In the face. Of Jesus Christ. The God who. Created this world. He says. And the God who created us. From the clay of the ground. He has revealed.

The glory of God. To us. In the face of Jesus. But then. Paul went on to say. We have this treasure. In jars of clay.

To display. The surpassing power. Which belongs to God. And not us. Which means. That the showroom. Of heaven.

[39 : 25] Will not only be. Completed works of grace. They will be. Trophies of grace. Which will reflect. The beauty. And the glory. Of Jesus Christ.

Christ. My friend. Those who die. In Christ. Having undergone. The workshop. Downstairs. Will be put.

On the showroom. Upstairs. As vessels. Made for his glory. As vessels. Filled. With his glory. And vessels.

Overflowing. With his glory. My friend. Is it any wonder. That the psalmist.

In Psalm 17. He concluded. With those beautiful words. Of hope. But as for me. I thine own face.

[40 : 21] In righteousness. Will see. And in thy likeness. When I wake. I satisfied. Shall be.

It's a wonderful thought. To be made. As a vessel. For the glory of God. May we all make sure.

That we are in the hands. Of our great potter. And that he is working in us. And he is working. Through us. That in everything. We go through in life.

We are trusting in him. That he will make. In us. And for us. A vessel. For his own glory. Amen. May the Lord bless. These thoughts to us.

Let us pray. O Lord our gracious God. We give thanks to thee. That thou art our father. And we are the clay. And thou art potter.

- [41 : 21] And that we are the work. Of thine own hand. And O Lord. We do plead. That in everything. In our lives. That thou wouldest continue. To work. To draw us to thyself. To draw us. O Lord. With cords. That cannot be broken. That we O Lord. Would see. The great work. Going on. That thou art going. To complete that work. In the day of Christ Jesus.
- Bless us Lord. We pray. Bless us in the week. That lies ahead. O a week. That is unknown to us. A week. That we do not know. What lies ahead. But. O we bless thee. That we are in the hands. Of our potter. Who knows. What is best for us. And who knows. And who is working. All things together. For good. Do us good.
- Then we pray. Cleanse us. We ask. And go before us. For Jesus sake. Amen. We shall conclude.
- [42 : 20] In Psalm 17. Psalm 17. In the Scottish Psalter. Page 217. Psalm 17.
- We are singing. Verses 5 to 9. And then the last verse. Verse 15. Psalm 17. Hold up my goings.
- Lord may guide. In those thy paths divine. So that my footsteps. May not slide. Out of those ways. Of thine. Down to the verse. Mark 9. And then verse 15. But as for me.
- I thine own face. In righteousness. Will see. And with thy likeness. When I wake. I satisfied. Shall be. These verses. To God's place. To God's place.
- Hold up my goings, Lord, beguide in those thy paths divine, So that my footsteps may not fly, I talk those ways of mine.
- [43 : 44] I call it up on thee, O God, because thou wilt me hear, That thou mayst hearken to thy feet, To me in thine I hear.
- Thy wondrous lovingkindness show, The glad by thy right hand.
- Saves then, I trust in thee from those That up against them stand.
- Have God the Lord the Ivey keep, In thy wings shake me close.
- From little preser's compasses May round us deadly foes.
- [45 : 29] But ask for me by thine own face, In righteousness we'll see.
- And with thy likeness when I wake, I satisfied shall be.
- The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all, Now and forevermore. Amen.