

Spring Series: “Emmaus: Walking with Jesus”

Sermon #4.5: “Cracked Pots”

Scriptures: Psalm 139:13-16

Text: “Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are our Potter. All of us are the work of your hand.” -Isaiah 64:8

Blurb: Cracked Pots

You are fearfully and wonderfully made! That is what the Bible says about you. God made you, and, as the saying goes, God doesn't make trash! Yet, do you feel like trash? Do you see yourself as far from wonderful, far from the way God wants you to be? Do you feel broken and full of cracks? This Sunday we're talking about your cracks. You don't have to be perfect to be in God's plan. In fact, God does something wonderful with your brokenness. Come and find out why your cracks are so important to how God is using you!

Gathering Song: “All Who Are Thirsty” - Sanctify

Welcome - Pastor David

Welcome: Introduction, Welcome Center

New web site

Turn off cell phones but like us on Facebook first. Can from our website.

Graduation Sunday

Holy Communion - Open Communion

We come as we are, giving ourselves to God just the way we are!

Songs: “Here I Am to Worship” - Sanctify

“Come Just As You Are”

Worship Prayer - Angie

Kid’s Invited to Kid’s Church - Pastor David

Celebrations for the Graduates - Pastor David

Introduce the Graduates

Graduates explain their foreseeable plans

Presentation of quilts to the graduates

Prayers of blessings over the graduates

Opening Video - For the sermon series “Emmaus: Walking with Jesus”

PP#1: “Emmaus: Walking with Jesus”

“Cracked Pots”

“Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are our Potter. All of us are the work of your hand.” -Isaiah 64:8

“Emmaus: Walking with Jesus” “Cracked Pots” Isaiah 64:8 “Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are our Potter. All of us are the work of your hand.”

PP#2: *Image of graduates celebrating*

Today we celebrate the graduation of these three young ladies, and so many others that we know. Perhaps there are some in your family!

We celebrate them because we are so proud of them, of all of their accomplishments to earn their diploma, pass this milestone in their education, and also because this, in a way, marks how they have grown up into amazing young women. We celebrate because you have done amazing things!

But we celebrate you here in church, to also say to you, you have not done this on your own. Your parents, family and friends have all invested heavily in you. That is part of what made you who you are today.

PP#3: *Image of a potter's hands working clay on a potter's wheel*

But here today we also say thank you to God, who has made you, shaped you, and helped you grow each step along the way. God has been working on you, in you, and through you!

I must say, God has done a pretty good job! Wouldn't you say, church?

The Bible uses the image of clay to talk about how God makes us. God is the potter, and we are the clay. God created us as clay. But God didn't let us just form on our own. He takes each of us in His hands, and begins to work and shape. Now, the potter's wheel is a bit like life. It spins and keeps going round, and everything seems to get out of control. But God's hands keep us centered, and applying the water of the Holy Spirit, uses the spinning to shape us into a beautiful shape. It's fired in the kiln to make it hard. What do you think, graduates, has High School been kind of like a kiln, a firing process? Has it made you sturdy and ready?

[Hold up/show clay pot.]

The end result is a beautiful and useful vessel!

This is what you are! Beautiful! Strong! Ready! Useful!

Church, this is all of you, too! God is your potter, and He has made you beautiful!

PP#4: Isaiah 64:8

Lord, you are our Father.

We are the clay, and you are our Potter.

All of us are the work of your hand.

Let's all say this verse together. It's on the screen: **“Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are our Potter. All of us are the work of your hand.”**

This clay pot has a purpose. It's not just pretty. It is made to serve.

So are you, graduates! So are you, church! God has made you wonderful and useful, and God has made you for a purpose!

PP#5: Psalm 139:13-16 (CEB)

13 You are the One who created my innermost parts; you knit me together while I was still in my mother's womb. 14 I give thanks to you that I was marvelously set apart. Your works are wonderful—I know that very well. 15 My bones weren't hidden from you when I was being put together in a secret place, when I was being woven together in the deep parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my embryo, and on your scroll every day was written that was being formed for me, before any one of them had yet happened.

Psalm 139 puts it poetically: “You, [O God,] are the One who created my innermost parts; you knit me together while I was still in my mother's womb.”

Now look at this next line, “I give thanks to you that I was marvelously set apart.” See that? God makes people, and then sets them apart, makes them for a purpose!

That's worth celebrating! “Your works are wonderful—I know that very well.”

God made you, graduates, church, with a plan. “My bones weren't hidden from you when I was being put together in a secret place, when I was being woven together in the deep parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my embryo, and on your scroll every day was written that was being formed for me, before any one of them had yet happened.”

Before you were born, God looked upon your embryo, and set you apart for great things. He looked ahead into your life, and wrote down all of His intentions and plans for you.

PP#6: *Images of clay pots being used in a variety of ways.*

You are not just random clay that happened to evolve into you. You are intentionally created clay, shaped and formed on purpose!

This is why we gather in church to celebrate your graduation! We come to affirm into you that your life has meaning, that you are important, that our world needs you. God made you, and did an outstanding job! And still today, God is doing wonders in our world, and you are part of how God is doing that!

God's plan for you is what will make you fully who you are. It's what will make you truly happy, and full of sustaining joy. It's better than your understanding right now, if you try to sort it out all by yourself. It's a matter of trusting in your Potter. I know you've struggled to do that. We all have. But those around you here, today? We're here to tell you that we've found that God's plans are better than what we may think is best. We've tried going it alone, and it doesn't work. It's only when you trust your Potter that you will find yourself used for amazing and wonderful things.

God's plan for you can be hard to discern sometimes. But, as you listen to your heart, and to the voices of those around you who love you and whom you trust, and season that with God's will told in Scripture, you will hear God's Spirit whispering to you. It may not always be clear, maybe not even now, but over time, if you commit your life to the Potter, He will use you to make a difference.

Everyone, turn to your neighbors, and inform them, “I am marvelously set apart!”

PP#7: *Images of natural disaster, relationship breakups, hospital/medical crisis, other hardships.*

[Put clay pot in cloth sleeve.]

Now, the mixed joy of graduation is that it's scary out there. Not everything goes the way it is supposed to. And sometimes, when you try help, and try to reach out, and try to make a difference, you will be resisted, pushed back, hurt. You won't be appreciated, sometimes not even acknowledged, you'll be caught into drama; others will use you. The Bible says that the world is full of trouble.

[Show hammer.]

You will face tough times. There will be times when your world will be wrapped up in terrible storms and you will be terrified. There will be those times when devastating heartaches will smash apart all that you know. And there will be times that you won't make it. You'll be devastated, ruined, crushed, broken.

[Smash the pot in the sleeve!]

God never promised you a life without problems-and some problems are so huge, so powerful, so crushing, that you will feel completely broken. Just ask those around you here today.

PP#8: *Images of broken pottery/pots.*

[Show broken pieces of pottery.]

This is why you need God. You won't be able to make it. You won't be able to control everything.

But, the Potter who made you, will also restore you. These are the times that we discover that this is when God does some of His finest work. And the amazing thing about our God is that when God does restoration, He doesn't just put things back the way they were. No! He makes something better! God uses your brokenness to make you even a greater blessing!

[Put the broken pieces of pottery into the box.]

PP#9: *Image of Jesus dying on the cross, with an image of bread and juice as well.*

Jesus...was crushed. He was defeated. He was even killed. But God was up to something...something far better.

After a bit, we are going to celebrate Holy Communion. Holy Communion is about remembering; it's a way that we remember how Jesus suffered, how He was crushed, how He died. But it is also a time that we proclaim that God brought out of all that defeat: forgiveness, new life, eternal life for so many, for us!

Remember the words Jesus said the first time? Jesus took bread, blessed it, and then He said, "Take, eat: this is my body, *which is broken for you*" (1 Corinthians 11:24).

PP#10: *Image of the resurrected Jesus, revealing His scars.*

You see, God took Jesus' broken body, and resurrected it. But the Bible says the scars were still there! It is by His brokenness that we are healed.

Hear this: God does not promise to spare you hardship. God *does* promise to always restore you. But even better than that. You will get to keep your scars, and God will use your brokenness to heal and help others. It will be part of the way that God will use you to make a difference in our broken world!

[Show restored pottery.]

See this pot? It's obviously been broken. The scars are so noticeable.

[Light candle and put it inside.]

But look now: because of the cracks, the light within it shines out. The light shines out *through* the cracks. Others are blessed because of the cracks.

PP#11: *Image for broken people helping others through their brokenness.*

Listen to me. Yes, the tough times will scar you. But God promises to use those scars to show His light and life to others *through* you! It's the cracks that let others see the work of God in us. It's the cracks that actually help bring Light (of God) to a dark and confused world. Being broken, in God's hands, is not ruined. It is an opportunity for God to make you a blessing to so many!

Just because you graduated doesn't mean you put away your books. Well, at least not this one!

[Show Bible.]

This book is a book of broken people. These people faced the worst that life could throw at them. And time and again we see, they point to their brokenness, and say, "See this crack? That's when God worked a miracle in my life. Let me tell you what God did." "See this crack? Well, the whole situation started out bad, but God led me to something GREAT because of it." "See this crack? Well, because of that, God changed my life into something really good."

PP#12: *Image of a clay pot used as a lantern (light shining out), streaming light, or useful*

God is your Potter. He made you wonderful! And He put His Light in you! That's your purpose! God has a plan for you, and He sends you out into the world on a mission. It won't be easy. It'll get ugly. You will get hurt. You will be broken.

Maddy, Kelsey, and Kassi, I give you each a broken pot to help you remember that when life does fall apart, you have a God who will not only restore you, but make you even better! And God will use all of that brokenness to make you a blessing. You will show the world God's Light!

Once again, congratulations on your achievements! Blessings!

Amen.

Special Music: “We Are” -Graduates

Holy Communion & Offering - Pastor David

[Note: Holy Communion and Lord’s Prayer slides]

Introduction

Prayers of Confession

Words of Assurance

Great Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

The Lord’s Prayer

Invitation to receive the elements

Offering

Servers - Graduates

Sanctify eats first.

Songs: “Make Me a Vessel”

“Just As I Am”

Closing Song: “I Surrender All” (“All to Jesus I Surrender”) - Sanctify

Announcement & Benediction - David

Reception for the graduates

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR JUNE 7, 2015

Spring Series: “Emmaus: Walking with Jesus”

Sermon #4.5: “Cracked Pots”

Scriptures: Isaiah 64:8 and Jeremiah 18:1-6

Opening prayer

Introductions:

Introduce yourself and share about some way that you were “broken,” and later God used that brokenness as a blessing to someone else.

Read Isaiah 64:8.

1. What does this verse mean?
2. How does this meaning guide your life today?

Read Jeremiah 18:1-6.

3. If anyone has ever made pottery, or seen a potter at work, please share what you experienced?
4. In what ways can clay become “spoiled” or “marred” while being shaped by a potter? Share in terms of the composition of the clay, the spinning of the wheel, and the experience of the potter.
5. Where is the good news in this passage?
6. Share a connection you make from this passage to something you have experienced in your life.

Read Isaiah 45:9

7. What is the relationship of the clay to the potter?
8. If we see God as the Potter, and we are the clay, what does this passage say to us?

Application: What will you take away from these passages? How will you live it out?