

THE POTTER'S HOUSE

The Potter's House

Week 1

The Potter

(Jer. 18:1-4; 2 Tim. 2:20)

Daily Food
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Monday

Scripture Reading: Jer. 18:1-4; 2 Tim. 2:20

“But in a great house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also wooden and earthen; and some are unto honor, and some unto dishonor.” (2 Timothy 2:20)

The Potter's House

The Potter

Almost everyone knows what a potter is. A potter is a person who molds clay in order to make different objects. In times past potters worked the clay with their hands, forming it into different shapes. The clay was placed on a round wheel that was joined by an axle in the center to a smaller wheel close to the ground. When the potter pushed the lower wheel with his foot, the upper wheel also turned, and with his hands, he shaped the turning clay. In this way, vessels of clay were made according to the potter's will.

Once, God sent Jeremiah to the potter's house (Jer. 18:1-4). When we read this section, we realize that the potter is God Himself. Have you heard that God is the potter? We have heard that God is almighty and that He is sitting on His throne in heaven. Surely our God is omnipotent, but He is also a very practical potter who works with His hands to form His vessels.

The Potter's House

If God is the potter, then the potter's house is the house of God. The apostle Paul tells us clearly in 1 Timothy 3:15 that the church is the house of the living God. God is not an immobile statue adorning a piece of furniture. He is a living person and He has a living house. The book of Ephesians shows us that the church is God's family, the dwelling place of God in spirit (Eph. 2:19, 22). In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read that the church is the house of God (Heb. 3:5-6). Hence, the church is undoubtedly the house of God, the house of the Potter.

Romans 9:21-23 states that from the same clay the potter, according to his will, can make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor. God is sovereign and, as the divine Potter, He has authority over the clay to make from the same lump vessels unto honor destined for glory or vessels unto dishonor destined for destruction. Regarding God's choosing, everything depends on His mercy. It is only because of His mercy that we are vessels in His house, the church. We must be impressed with this matter concerning the vessels. What is the main thing we notice when we see the saints in a church meeting? Is it how they are dressed? Is it the way the sisters comb their hair? Is it possibly the way each one speaks? What do we see in the church meetings?

What do we expect to see in a potter's house? In God's house there are many vessels of mercy; every brother is a vessel and every sister is a vessel. Our God, as the Potter, is carefully working to shape His vessels. Hallelujah! In the church, in the house of the Potter, the vessels are being prepared unto glory!

The church is not merely a pleasant place where people are smiling and there are beautiful hymns. This is only what is seen visibly. In other words, the church, in reality, is the Potter's house where vessels of mercy are being prepared by the hands of the divine Potter. God is doing a great work on the earth: He is conforming us to the image of His Son. In the church He is working on each one of His children. We are upon the "wheels" and God is shaping us with His own hands by means of His word.

Key Point:

Vessels

Your Key Point:

Question:

What is God doing in His house?

Tuesday

Scripture Reading: John 15:16; Jer. 18:1-2a

“The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, Arise and go down to the potter's house.” (*Jeremiah 18:1-2a*)

Arise, and Go

We may think that these words are meant for Jeremiah in the Old Testament, not for us in the New Testament, and that we are not special servants like he was. However, we must never forget that the word of God is living, eternal and operative, and the One who chose us is God (John 15:16). We are children of God as well as His servants on this earth, consequently, every word of God is meant for us. We read in Jeremiah 18:1: "the word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah." As long as we have a heart with a pure motive, the Lord's word will come to each one of us and we can say with boldness, "The word of Jehovah that came to Jeremiah, to Joe, to Ian, to Jessica, to Sara, etc." In order for us to be faithful and useful servants in the hands of the One who owns us, each of us must want the Lord's word to come to us.

What did the Lord say to Jeremiah? He said, "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear My words." This is the same as saying, "Rise up! Wake up!," indicating that, on our part, we must be willing to actively follow the Lord. We must come out of our passive, inactive and indifferent attitude. To be passive is easy and comfortable; we only need to cross our arms and wait forever for things to happen. However, it is more difficult to rise up because it demands action. What can activate and motivate us and make us willing? A goal will activate and motivate us. The more precious our goal is, the more we will want to reach it. For example, if your goal is to be an excellent employee in the biggest company, you must give yourself for that. Because you want to be the best professional you have to study at the best school, and this implies

making an effort.

In the spiritual life our being willing is extremely important. Our goal is to gain Christ Himself with all His unsearchable riches. In order to reach the highest goal in the universe, do we not need to pay the necessary price? May the Lord have mercy on us and open our spiritual eyes more to see His lovable Person. The more we behold the Lord, the more we will be attracted by Him and will want to follow Him closely. There is a hymn that describes the desire of a young person who is consecrating himself to the Lord:

Lord, I want to follow You,
So I give my life to You.
I give You the best, the richest,
The most charming, desirable and precious:
Lord, I give my youth to You,
To follow You...
To follow You...

Key Point:

Follow

Your Key Point:

Question:

What price is the Lord asking you to pay to go on with Him another step?

Wednesday

Scripture Reading: Jer. 18:2a; Matt. 5:3; 1 Pet. 5:6; Phil. 2:5-7

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;” (*Philippians 2:5-7*)

Going Down to the Potter's House

Our youth is really the most desirable time of our life to the world and to Satan. Who will we give our life to, to Christ or to Satan, to the church or to the world? The decision is in our hands. We who know Christ and the church are already halfway there. Now we only need to persevere in following the Lord closely and cooperating with His move in this age.

Something that is fundamental for someone who wants to follow the Lord is to hear His voice. We hear His voice say, "Arise." We are not living like dead people who follow the trend of the age wherever it goes; we are vessels of mercy created for God. Even today we need to put ourselves on God's side and be ready to follow Him. We are willing to say, "Yes!" to God's interests and will, and we say, "No!" to the apathy and indifference that hinder us from following the Lord. We want to invest our life in something that has eternal value, which is Christ and the church.

After the Lord told Jeremiah to rise up, He added, "And go down to the potter's house." We know what the potter's house is and we also know that all who seek God's will must come to the potter's house sooner or later. Nevertheless, in order to come to the potter's house, we must go down. Why must we go down? The Old Testament says that all the people of God should go up to Jerusalem (because the city was on a mountain) to worship the Lord there. To go up indicates that the unique

place chosen by God is in an elevated position; this is in accordance with the will of God Himself. This is why this verse in Jeremiah is not a contradiction. God's will on earth is defined as the only place of worship, a place of high elevation, and demands that we go up, but we can never go up unless we first go down. The application of this is simple: to go down signifies to humble ourselves before God.

If, when we read these words, we are thinking: "Oh! I already know all this. There is nothing new for me in Jeremiah 18." this indicates that we need to go down, we need to humble ourselves. All who want to come to the house of the Potter need to humble themselves. If we see that the church is the Potter's house, the place where God is working and forming His vessels, we will understand how important and necessary it is to go down.

When Jesus decreed the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens, the first requirement He spoke was, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens" (Matt. 5:3). Whoever does not humble himself to the point of being poor in spirit, whoever does not empty himself in his spirit, cannot enter into the kingdom of the heavens. First Peter 5:6 says, "Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time." We cannot forget that we are vessels of mercy in the hands of the divine Potter. We should humble ourselves under His mighty hand that is shaping us through the different circumstances around us, whether in the house, at work, at school, in the street, while shopping, etc. We must be clear concerning this matter so that we will not be deceived by the enemy. Day by day, moment by moment, God is working through all of our situations to conform us to the image of His Son.

Whoever does not recognize or accept this and does not humble himself before the divine work will eventually murmur and hinder God

from touching certain areas of his life. How is it possible for a person who is always running away from God's hands to be conformed to His will? Hence, it is very important to let go of everything we know and all that we can do (these things only make us proud) in order to completely give ourselves into the hands of the Potter.

The Lord Jesus left us an example of humility. When He left His throne of glory, he emptied and humbled Himself, taking the form of a slave (Phil. 2:5-7). The Creator "came down," when He took the form of a human creature. Because Jesus submitted Himself completely to the Father's will, God eventually exalted Him as Lord and Christ, making Him the firstborn among many brothers. Today God is also expecting that we will go down to the Potter's house and trustfully give ourselves into His hands to be worked on by Him.

Key Point:

Humbled

Your Key Point:

Question:

What does it mean to humble oneself before God?

Thursday

Scripture Reading: John 6:63; Heb. 1:1-2; Acts 6:7

“For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (*Hebrews 4:12*)

And There I Will Let You Hear My Words

Everyone who is willing and goes down to the Potter's house will hear the words of the Lord. This shows us a very important principle: in order to hear the Lord's words, we firstly need to be willing; then we need to go down to the Potter's house and stay there in order to hear the word of God. On one hand, all the children of God who live in fellowship with Him know that He speaks to us wherever we are. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that there is a specific divine speaking that we can only hear in the Potter's house. This is why the Lord Jesus told Jeremiah to rise up and go to the potter's house; because there he would hear His words.

The words of the Lord are very important because they are spirit and life (John 6:63). Those who have already arisen and gone down to the Potter's house, the church, can testify of the abundance of the word they find there. Consequently, it is easy to prove that the word of God is abundant when we are in the house of the Potter. The words spoken in the house of God are spirit and life. God carries out His work when His word is spoken. Because of this, the Potter's house is characterized by God's speaking. It is through His speaking that the vessels are being molded. When there is no divine speaking, the vessels remain as they are and run the risk of becoming hard and breaking, thus becoming useless. How we need to love and seek the Lord's speaking! The Lord will bring all whose hearts are seeking Him to His house and in the house, they will hear His

speaking. Many people are seeking the rich speaking of the Lord, but all they find are superficial words which are like dry grass – they take up space, but they do not nourish. We thank the Lord that by His great mercy He brought us to the church. Here there is green pasture, fresh water and we never lack a supply. We want more sheep from God's flock to come out of their folds and come to enjoy the abundance in the house of the Potter.

God's purpose in speaking His word is to make us useful vessels in His house. There are so many riches in every meeting of the church! If we miss a meeting, we miss the words of life. If we do not value the speaking we hear, exercising our ears and our heart to listen to it closely, we will lose the opportunity of being fed and sanctified by God's word.

When we open our whole being to receive the divine speaking, the Lord's words enter into us and accomplish His work within us. The word of God is "living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). The words of God are living, therefore, we cannot undervalue them. God simply spoke when He did His work of creation. "For He spoke and it was; He commanded, and it stood" (Psa. 33:9).

The Lord's speaking always produces something. In the Old Testament God spoke to the fathers through the prophets; in the New Testament He speaks in the Son (Heb. 1:1-2). When we read the four gospels, we see that God simply speaks through His Son. After His death and resurrection, Jesus became the life-giving Spirit, and in the night of His resurrection, He appeared to His disciples, breathed into them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). The disciples lived with Jesus for nearly three and a half years, but now they were receiving Him into them. Satan always tried and tries to hinder God's speaking from

reaching men. Nevertheless, Christ consummated God's work on the cross. He died, resurrected, ascended to the heavens and became the life-giving Spirit. This is why He was able to appear and disappear to the disciples when they were behind closed doors and was also able to breathe the Spirit into them. From then on it was the very Lord Jesus who would speak from within the disciples as the Spirit who gives life.

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit reached thousands of people who believed in the words of the disciples and thus the church came into being. Through the church God's speaking was intensified and the word of God grew and multiplied (Acts 6:7). Satan may be able to shut the mouth of one son of God, but it is impossible to shut the mouth of the church. Furthermore, with the invention of the printing press, God's speaking goes beyond man's human limitations. The Bible and other books about the Bible cross the barriers of time and space. No one has ever been able to stop the divine speaking from conquering people. When the word of God is spoken, God's work begins to be carried out in each one of us. Therefore, it is fundamental that we constantly be listening to the divine speaking, either in personal fellowship with the Lord, in fellowship with the saints, or in the meetings of the church. In short, we must be very desirous to hear the speaking of our God everywhere and all the time.

The daily experience of each one of us proves how sweet it is to have fellowship alone with the Lord and how much we need to increase our times of enjoyment with Him. We may have such times anywhere because the Lord is always with us. However, we have to admit that the enjoyment of this lovely experience cannot be compared to what we enjoy in the church meetings. Our own experience causes us to understand why in Deuteronomy the Lord insisted on having one unique place of worship. When the children of Israel entered into the good land, they had to seek the unique place the Lord would choose to put His name there. That was the place to which they were to bring their offerings and the firstfruits of

their harvests and flocks. The place was Jerusalem, where the twelve tribes of Israel had to go up three times a year to worship God. We know that the city of Jerusalem typifies the church in the New Testament because the principle of the first place of worship is unchangeable; it is the testimony of the ground of the oneness of God's people.

No doubt, it is in the church meetings that we enjoy the best portion of the word of God. The word is the Lord Himself and is typified by the land of Canaan. In Deuteronomy 8 the Lord told Moses that the promised land that the people of Israel would enter into and dwell in was a very good land, flowing with milk and honey. In it there were streams, springs and fountains; there were wheat, barley, pomegranates, vines, olive and fig trees; and in the mountains there were copper and iron. This land was filled with unsearchable riches which were fully available to be enjoyed by God's people, who are a type of the church. God dispenses all these riches through His word, His divine speaking, which is so abundant in the church meetings.

Key Point:

The Lord's speaking

Your Key Point:

Question:

How does the Lord speak to His people?

Friday

Scripture Reading: Jer. 18:3; Matt. 7:24-27; Eph. 2:10

“And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ.” (*Ephesians 4:11-12*)

The Potter's Work

Even though the divine speaking in the church is so rich, God expects us to obey His words, just as Jeremiah did. When the Lord told him, "Arise, and go," Jeremiah did not argue or make suggestions. We do not see any resistance in him, such as, "Lord, why should I go down to the potter's house if You can speak to me right here?" Or, "Not today, Lord. I'll go when it suits me." Jeremiah had another attitude: "So I went down to the potter's house, and he was there doing work at his wheel" (18:3). Jeremiah's quick reply reminds us of the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 7:24-27. Everyone who hears and practices the Lord's word is like a wise man who built his house on the rock and nothing could bring it down; not winds or rains or rivers. On the other hand, everyone who hears the word and does not practice it is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The winds, rain and rivers dashed against the house and it fell and its ruin was great.

Jeremiah heard and, obedient to the Lord's words, went down to the house of the potter. When Jeremiah arrived there he saw a vision: "And he was there doing work as his wheel" (18:3b). There Jeremiah saw something. He said, "He was doing work," that is, the potter, God, was doing His work. This corresponds to the experience that the apostle John had in Revelation. Firstly he heard a loud voice and he turned to see who was speaking to him. Then he saw the Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, which were the seven churches in Asia (Rev.

1:10-13). The words of God, the divine speaking, always cause us to see more of Christ. Both Jeremiah and John heard the Lord's words, responded to His speaking and received a vision. In the Potter's house, the church, the first thing God wants to show us is Christ.

Jeremiah saw that the potter was intent on doing his work. Our God is the same. Contrary to what many think, He is not simply resting on His heavenly throne, rather, He is doing His work. In the Gospel of John we see that some Jews also had the concept that God is only resting, especially on the Sabbath. Because of this concept they persecuted the Lord Jesus, who had healed a paralytic on the Sabbath day. They even wanted to kill Him because He broke the Sabbath (5:16-18). Those Jews did not want Jesus to do any healing on that day because to them, God should not work on the Sabbath. Then Jesus said to them, "My Father is working until now, and I also am working." "Until now" indicates that God was even working on the Sabbath as well as Jesus. How we need to see what Jeremiah saw: the Potter was doing His work; God is working on His vessels. Many times when we consider our daily routine, we cannot see beyond the tiredness our work causes us, how difficult our studies are, our family problems or our anxieties. This shows that we are lacking in vision. In order to receive a vision we must rise up and go to the Potter's house to hear His words and obey them. What is the vision we need to see? We need to see the vision of the Potter doing His work. We need to receive the vision of what God wants to do and what He is doing in us. We are vessels of mercy and God wants to mold us that we might be vessels of honor in His house. God, who is in control of everything, uses the circumstances and people in our environment for the sole purpose of shaping us, transforming us, according to His will. God is concerned for each one of us so He sovereignly prepares the best environment in order for us to be transformed. Although many times we face difficult situations, we must see that the hands of our Potter are behind all of them. Once the situations have accomplished their purpose, they will no longer be seen as

problems. Therefore, we should not murmur when we face difficulties since it is God who put us there and knows that they are helping us very well.

Even though there are many vessels, God's work is unique. We are all His vessels; we are not His many works. We are not being worked on individually so that one day we may be sold and exhibited as a decoration in a display cabinet. No! God's work is corporate. He is working on us corporately to make us His masterpiece. In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul states that we, the church, "are His masterpiece." In this section, "masterpiece" has been translated from the Greek word "poima," indicating that we are His best work, God's masterpiece. An artist creates many works throughout his entire life and among all his works, there is one that is very special. It is the work that took him more time and demanded more concentration, more dedication and more love. In the end, the artist can appreciate the work in his hands and say, "It was worth it." Our Lord, God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, has done many wonderful works. We only have to look at nature to exalt God as the greatest artist that ever existed or will exist. What a wonderful creation God made, filling the whole universe with so many items worthy of our admiration: planets, stars, animals, birds, plants and man! Yet among all these works, there is one that God considers to be His masterpiece. What work is this? In Ephesians 4:11-12 we read, "And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ." Consequently, the work that God is working at is the building up of the Body of Christ. This is God's masterpiece. There is no other work in the universe that can compare to this. God is forming people, the members of the Body of Christ, so that He can build His Body with them.

Sometimes we ask: "Lord, why am I going through this situation?"

or, "Why are You allowing this, Lord?" This shows that in reality we do not see what God is doing. God is "taking great pains" on the details of His work and therefore needs to use many kinds of instruments. The Lord has even given brothers to the church who, through much time, have been perfected so that they can help to perfect the other saints. Such brothers were given to the church for the work of the ministry. The work of the ministry is the work of God and it is the work in which we are all involved. We have to see this clearly in order for us to cooperate with God. Everything that is related to us has a "dose" of God in it and nothing passes unnoticed before His eyes. We should not be afraid, because we are in God's hands.

Key Point:

Molding

Your Key Point:

Question:

What work does God consider to be His masterpiece?

Saturday

Scripture Reading: Jer. 18:4; Rom. 9:21-23; Acts 9:15

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Earthen Vessels

We have seen that God is the Potter, the church is the house of God and the work of God is to build up the Body of Christ. However, the book of Jeremiah reveals much more to us. The potter is doing his work, that is, he is working on the vessels. What is happening to the vessels? Let us read Jeremiah 18:4: "But the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand; so he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good for the potter to make."

The people of Israel were likened to an earthenware jar, a vessel (Jer. 19), and in the New Testament, we are compared to vessels. Romans 9:21-23 refers to us as vessels of mercy; Acts 9:15 shows that Paul was a "chosen vessel" to God to bear His name before the Gentiles and kings in many places; 2 Timothy 2:20-21 states that there are vessels unto honor and unto dishonor; in 2 Corinthians 4:7, the apostle Paul declares that within us, the earthen vessels, there is a treasure, which is Christ.

God created man of clay as a vessel to contain Him; this is why man is considered to be an earthen vessel. This simple earthen vessel exists for the sole purpose of containing God. Jeremiah saw a vessel being worked on by the potter's hands, which, for some reason, was spoiled. But then the potter made another vessel from the same clay. What does this mean in our experience? God has worked Himself into us through His word but for some reason sometimes we are rebellious. We may say, "Oh, why does God let these things happen to me? Why doesn't He take this problem out of my life? Because of this I'm not going to the meeting anymore. If He

doesn't do what I want, I don't want to know anymore about the Lord." It is then that we realize that the vessel has been spoiled. But, thanks to the Lord, the clay is still in the Potter's hands. As long as we are in God's hands, there is hope, because He can make another vessel out of us.

In Jeremiah 19:11 there is also a vessel that is broken but it cannot be repaired anymore; the clay became hard and thus became useless and ended up being buried in Topheth. Topheth typifies the outer darkness and the weeping and gnashing of teeth, which will be the place where the "broken vessels" (all the sons of God that did not allow Him to transform them) will remain for one thousand years, that they might be recovered. This does not refer to eternal perdition because we know that once we are saved, we will never lose our salvation. However, the children of God who do not obey His words or accept His discipline will receive discipline for a thousand years so that they will be able to enter into the New Jerusalem. Today we have the opportunity of choosing which kind of vessel we would like to be: either we will allow the Lord to work in us and transform us according to His will, or we will be molded and remade during a period of a thousand years. May we renew our consecration to the Lord and remain in His hands that He might work in us until we are fully conformed to the image of His Son. Let us place ourselves in His hands and not harden our heart to the Lord's will.

A vessel cannot be formed if the clay is dry or it will break. Therefore, the clay must be moistened frequently while it is being formed. Spiritually speaking, the same thing happens to us. We need to be constantly watered by the living water. The Lord is the fountain, the spring of living water that is flowing to quench our thirst and to form us. If we feel that our heart has become hard, we should immediately run to the fountain of living water. Only then can we be submissive and not risk being broken. This happens practically whenever we call on the name of the Lord and enjoy Him in His word, in fellowship with the saints and in

prayer. It is important to voluntarily remain in the hands of the Potter because, even though we may "break," we can repent and He can again make us into a vessel unto honor in His house.

God's desire is that we would be submissive in His hands. The work of transformation can only be carried out effectively by God Himself. Our responsibility is to remain flexible in His hands. Otherwise, how will He be able to form the hard clay without breaking it? We cannot be dry, we must always drink the living water, calling on the Lord at all times: Oh, Lord Jesus! Whenever we are in fellowship with the Lord Jesus and loving His words, we are like submissive clay, easy to be formed. This does not mean that we will not make mistakes. As long as we are alive we will be subject to making mistakes. Nonetheless, when we are soft, we can repent more quickly and turn again to the Lord. Then, when the Lord points out a mistake, we will not argue with Him. We will not say, "Why can't I do that if everyone else is doing it?" On the contrary, we will confess our mistake and our rebellion. In this way, when the mistakes of the vessel are exposed, the Potter has the freedom to undo the vessel and remake it again.

Key Point:

Moistened

Your Key Point:

Question:

What do we need to do if our heart is becoming hard?

Sunday

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 4:4; 1 John 1:9

“But in a great house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also wooden and earthen; and some are unto honor, and some unto dishonor. If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work.” (2 Timothy 2:20-21)

Vessels unto Honor

In 2 Timothy 2:20 it is written: "But in a great house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also wooden and earthen; and some are unto honor, and some unto dishonor." The "house of God" in 1 Timothy 3:15 is the genuine church in its divine nature, but the "great house" in 2 Timothy 2:20 refers to Christianity as a whole. In Christianity there are vessels of gold, of silver, of wood and of clay; and some are unto honor and others unto dishonor. Therefore, what is being spoken about here does not involve the matter of predestination as in verse 21, which says, "If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work." "These things" are all the dishonorable situations and conditions we can be in, and to be cleansed from them will determine whether we will be a vessel unto honor or a vessel unto dishonor. For this reason, if our desire is to really be a vessel unto honor, we will learn to cleanse ourselves from all that is dishonorable.

What determines what is honorable or dishonorable is the word of God and having intimate fellowship with Him. The values of today are rapidly becoming degraded. Have you seen this happening? Ten years ago, shameful things that people considered to be a scandal are today considered to be normal, and those who do not practice them are thought of as being abnormal. The great danger we face is losing our sensitivity and discernment in relation to what is normal and abnormal in God's eyes. If we lose our sensitivity we will certainly become vessels unto dishonor

and God will have no way to use us. We must watch and have discernment because the deceiving things of the world are so attractive and try to entangle us through what we hear and see without our realizing what is really happening. It is as if we are using transparent glasses that are gradually turning yellow. How can we be used by God in such an unclear situation? Why is it that many times we cannot advance spiritually? Why are there certain things that bind us? Why is it that, even after going to a rich conference about the word of God, our heart remains cold and stubborn in following the Lord? Why?

We need to know and see what is stopping us in order for us to be able to purify ourselves. In 1 Thessalonians 4:4 we are warned that we should keep our vessel, that is, our body, in sanctification and honor since the will of God is our sanctification and that we should abstain from fornication. We must keep our vessel clean and pure for the Lord. If we have become dirty in the past through certain practices, God will give us the opportunity to be enlightened and cleansed by repenting and confessing our sins (1 John. 1:9). The Lord wants to gain in our generation a people who love Him above everything, who will satisfy His heart, who obey His speaking. The Lord wants a new generation that is holy and pure, whose holiness and purity come from living in intimate fellowship with Him. In this way, we will become pure in our heart, in our mind and in our body. God wants to gain many vessels unto honor, who will depart from all unrighteousness, who have a pure heart, and who are sanctified and useful to Him, so that His work may be complete. If our desire is to be such a vessel unto honor, we must be willing to humble ourselves and go down to the Potter's house in order to hear His words and practice them.

How we need to be genuine people! In the house as well as at work, in school, in the meetings, we must be what we are. On one hand, we have the life of God in us, in our spirit; on the other hand, we are conscious that the seed of God's life in us needs to grow, spread from our spirit to our soul and saturate it with the Lord's purity and holiness. The more fellowship we have with the Lord by calling on His name, praising Him and meditating on His word, and the more fellowship we have with the

saints, speaking the words of life to one another, the more the divine life will grow in us, and spontaneously we will express God Himself before men.

Our God does not demand that we be what we are not and He does not want us to live by appearances. He simply wants us to seek Him with all of our heart, love Him with all of our being and never go away from Him. The things we talk about when we are with our friends are mainly sports, cars, parties, boy and girlfriends, fashion, etc. Why can we not speak about the things of the Lord in a very natural way? Many times some have a good appearance spiritually in front of the saints, but when they are away from them and from the meetings, they act differently and say, like Peter, "I do not know Him" (Luke 22:57). We find these difficulties even among married couples. A husband and wife may speak only about children, the house, shopping, prices, jobs, food and vacations, but when they speak about the Lord, they feel crippled. What is the problem?

If the Lord is the center of our life, everything else will revolve around Him. May we simply be an open channel so the spiritual life can "invade" our secular life. Only in this way can we really live a normal Christian life that is free from our effort to keep up appearances. May we firstly rise up, go down, humbling ourselves, then we can hear the Lord's words, purify ourselves from the dishonorable things, letting the Potter work in us and make us useful vessels in His hands. All of this is only possible and real in the Potter's house.

Key Point:

Cleanse

Your Key Point:

Question:

What does God want of us?

