

Clay in the Potter's Hand

by G. Campbell Morgan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God's sovereignty and recognizing His love in shaping our lives as clay in the potter's hand.

Scripture: Psalm 139:14, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18:6, Matthew 6:25-26, Romans 9:21, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 2:13, 1 John 4:19

Topics: "Sovereignty Of God", "Submission to God's Will"

Description

G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes the profound truth of God's sovereignty over our lives, likening us to clay in the potter's hand, as stated in Jeremiah 18:6. He explains that just as clay yields to the potter's will, we must acknowledge our weakness and submit to God's divine purpose, trusting in His love and wisdom. Morgan highlights that God's governance is rooted in love, and our understanding of His kingship leads to a deeper relationship with Him. He encourages believers to embrace God's will without resistance, recognizing that even through trials, God is shaping us for our good. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a complete surrender to God's will, affirming that true blessing comes from yielding to the Potter's hands.

Transcript

"As the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel." (Jeremiah xviii. 6.)

This is, in the first instance, a national statement, but since the greater includes the less, we may argue that the principles which regulate national life must also influence individual life. The only social and national upbuilding possible must result from the upbuilding of the individual life and character. From this great national statement, made to God's chosen people, we shall take the principle and consider it in its individual application.

Let us first examine the principle itself; second, our relationship to that principle; and third, the deep underlying truth, which makes this principle one in which we may rejoice.

Look first, then, at this principle. "As clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel."

Can anything convey the truth of God's sovereignty more forcibly and simply than these words? If you have ever seen the clay on the potter's wheel, being moulded and fashioned by the thought and will and activity of the potter himself, as the wheel revolved, you must have been impressed with the thought of surrender; for without desire expressed or suggestion made the clay was yielded to the hands of the

potter. It was plastic to his will and touch. God says, "As clay is in the hand of the potter, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel."

God has designed and created and sustained me, and I have absolutely no appeal against His will. God has supreme right to do whatsoever He will with the earth, and the nations, and with each particular individual in the nations. If God chooses to mark a line, and say, "There thy service ends," have I any right to complain? If God were to take me right out of my present circumstances or out of this world to-day, no matter what use I have made of my opportunities here, have I any right to complain or appeal against it? None. Whatever God chooses to do, He has the right to do. God has never ceded His sovereign right to the

Devil or to any one else. Though He still permits evil to exist in the world, He holds the reins, and the Devil could not touch a single hair upon the back of a single camel that belonged to Job until God gave him permission. God reigneth! He is neither dead nor deposed.

The tendency of this day is to a loose doctrine of divine government, which is producing impious blasphemy in the way that men look into the face of God, and tell Him what He ought and ought not to do. Blessed be His name that His ways are not our ways, neither are His thoughts our thoughts, or how many a man would be smitten and stricken to the very death! How long-suffering God is! Clay in the hand of the Potter: that is our position, and He can make or break, mould or fashion us, as He will, so far as our right of resistance or questioning or complaint is concerned.

What is my relation to this great principle of divine government? There is this difference between the clay and myself: I have intelligence, I have will, but my will is to omnipotence as the materialism of the clay is to my will. The clay is infinitely below the potter, and must submit to his pleasure. In the hands of God I am yet more powerless than the clay in the hands of the potter.

What, then, is my relation to this principle? My proper attitude is to acknowledge my weakness, and to say that I have no power to alter my own shape or substance. What I am I am, and out of that I can never evolve anything better. That which is flesh is flesh. That is my state by nature, and the part of wisdom is to acknowledge it, and take that place before God.

The next step is to use that will about which we talk so much, and to act on the truth which Tennyson saw when he said:

"Our wills are ours, we know not how;

Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

We show our wisdom when our weakness is acknowledged by yielding ourselves to God and lying plastic in His hand that He may work His will in our lives. There is to be perfect acquiescence in the will of God.

That is better than resignation, but there is something even beyond acquiescence, it is delight in the will of God. There must be no desire as to the shape I am to take, or as to the manner of my preparation. We must be willing to let God work out His purpose in our lives; by sickness, if He so wills it, by suffering, by sorrow, by bereavement, by breaking us in order to make us. If I set my will up against that, then I am thwarting the Potter, and I am hindering His purpose. In brief, I must abandon myself to God. I must abandon myself to Him without questioning as to whether it is to be there or here, this way or that way, under these circumstances or those; the one question for me to ask must be, "What is Thy will?" God is

King, and I am to say Amen to all His will.

Now look at the purpose of God underlying all His dealings with us. Let everything else be put out of the vision. When we get to this point, though it be through heartbreak and disappointment, everything else vanishes from sight, and only the thought that God is doing a great work stands before us. We never saw this when God was dealing with us. At first we simply stood in the presence of God and yielded ourselves to His will.

Underlying this is a deeper truth. It is contained in that old text, which no preacher has ever exhausted, which every child loves; a truth contained in three short words; a truth which every child seems to feel, and which every aged saint confesses to have hardly touched the fringe of; a truth which holds all revelations and blessedness in it--GOD IS LOVE.

What has that to do with it?

Everything. I am clay in the hands of God, and I tremble; I am clay in the hands of Love, and I trust. God is love. My creation is the creation of love. His purpose in creating me was love. His government is the government of love. He alone understands me and knows all my possibilities. I might live among you for years, and you would not know me. There are depths in every nature that no man knows. No man hath seen God at any time; it is equally true that no man hath seen man at any time. We do not even know ourselves, but God knows us through and through; He understands our thoughts afar off, and there is no hiding ourselves from the searching of His eye. God is love, and consequently when He surrounds me with law, it is love that fences me round.

It is not a hard, capricious taskmaster that says, "Now I have a being in my hands, I will enjoy having my way on him."

That is human. No, it is devilish! God says:

"This is the child of My heart, this is the highest work of My creation, made in My image, and I will hedge him about with law and commandments, because I love him and know all the depths of his nature. If I lead him through tears and suffering and sorrow, they shall be but the sweet ministers of My tender love and infinite compassion for him."

Love is on the throne. How can I learn that? By submitting to the kingship.

Many people have said to me:

"We don't love God. We reverence Him and adore Him, but we do not really love Him. What shall we do?"

My answer is, "We love, because He first loved us."

How do we find this out? Only as we face this first fact of His kingship and begin to obey Him. By obeying the law a man discovers the love in the law.

Let me earnestly warn you against dividing God into halves and saying: "This is law and that is love." His law and His love are identical. A man should never talk about the providence of God as though it were a sort of afterthought by which He helps a man to bear the severity of law. God's providence is God's government, and no man ever passes into the realm of love until he recognises God's kingship, and submits at the foot of the cross to that kingship.

Take that exquisite teaching of our Lord when He says: "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." He has been speaking to His disciples about food, and clothing, and the necessities of this life, and then He says, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." If I could see God as my Father, I could love Him. How, then, am I to come to see Him as my Father? What does Jesus say? "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

You will find the fatherhood in the kingship of God, the love of God in the law of God; you will discover the exquisite tenderness of the divine compassion when you submit to the sovereignty of God, and yield yourself to His absolute control. How have I come to realise my mother's love to me and my father's love more than I ever could in my childhood? It has been by coming to understand that the very restrictions which they placed upon me of old were the restrictions of an intense love for me. I used to think they loved me when they let me have my own way, but I have discovered they loved me most when they did not let me have my own way. So men get an insight into the deep love of God by obeying the law of God, which at first seems irksome, and by submitting to this great supreme truth of the sovereignty of God.

On and on God is leading you, putting His hand on this and that, hedging you in here, and holding you up there; and it is always love that does it. There is always a more marvellous unfolding of His love in these acts of God, and you will only discover the love of God as your own heart responds, and as you submit yourself to His kingship.

Most reverently do I take the supreme illustration of the love of God from the life of my blessed Lord. It was He Who said, "I delight to do Thy will." And why? Because in His perfect, unquestioning obedience to the will of God He knew what the love of God was.

All the divine blessings which we are seeking are conditioned upon this, that we do recognise God's kingship, and submit to it really, absolutely, with thorough abandonment of all questioning. Some people tell us that we should always count the cost. We ought, in everything except this. Here there should be no counting the cost; and by refusing to count the cost we count the cost in the best way; by refusing to attempt to reckon up God and ourselves by the puny laws of human mathematics we reach the divine mathematics which take good care of us all the way, and see to it that we abide in Him forever. To rebel against this law is to take my life for a little while out of the hand of the Potter, and by so doing to render it purposeless and shapeless, so that it is to become loss and ruin. To rebel is useless. God's law and righteousness are vindicated in human failure as well as in human success, and the man who makes shipwreck is the man who, knowing the will of God, disobeys, and goes out into the darkling void where God is not. That man in his eternal loss vindicates the kingship of Jehovah. But, my brother, what God wants is your submission, because He loves to take you, perhaps to break you, but for your good, for I read that the potter broke the vessel on the wheel, "and he did make it again." The secret of all blessing is:

"I worship thee, sweet will of God,

And all thy ways adore;

And every day I live, I learn

To love thee more and more."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/g-campbell-morgan/clay-in-the-potters-hand/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net