

PURPOSE: HOW TO STAY ON THE WHEEL IN PURSUIT OF THE WILL

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message". So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the Lord.

(Jeremiah 18: 1-10).

God gives Jeremiah a detailed description of how he works in his children. The potter mixes the clay, and places it on a wheel. The wheel spins the clay while the potter presses and shapes the clay into the desired shape.

When we pray "the Lord's Prayer", there is a dangerous statement in that prayer – what I call the dangerous prayer. It's the part which says, "Your WILL be done". That is a dangerous prayer.

When you ask for his WILL, you open yourself up to his WHEEL. ***The potter's wheel spins you and shapes you, until you become what you are supposed to be.***

When you ask for God's will, he removes some people from your life that you do not want to lose; he closes some doors that you do not want to close; he will stop you from going to places that you do not want to stop going to... The pursuit of purpose places you on the potter's wheel.

1. The potter selects and separates the clay

- The potter selects the type of clay: quality, strength, and colour.
- The selection depends to the end use: PURPOSE. Clay type selection depends on the final intended purpose
- God sees the end before the beginning. For example, when you want to build a house, you first of all decide how you want to live, then you make plans to suit your lifestyle. The plans (drawings) get approved by council before you can even start construction. The purpose comes first, the plans, then the construction. Purpose must come first. It is purpose that determines the plans, and the construction.
- ***"I make known the end from the beginning; from ancient times I make known what is still to come. I say 'my purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please'"*** (Isaiah 46:10);
- The clay goes through a sieve to separate impurities (organic matter, rocks, etc). **Clay cannot be worked by hand if it's not smooth. Sand and organic matter deform the shape, can cause it to leak, and crack.**
- God does not want cracked fathers, leaders, pastors, and mothers. So, God makes sure that the clay (us) is sieved to remove the organic matter or rocks which can cause cracking.
- The potter demands sanctification: everybody wants celebration, but nobody wants sanctification. God wants us sanctified so that we do not become cracked pots. God can re-arrange and separate you from certain people, places, acquaintances, etc.

2. The Wheel is spinning

- The potter's wheel continuously spins the clay (you). As the wheel spins, the clay is in an unstable condition so that the potter can make it stable. Spinning the clay through the wheel is a necessary process to achieve the end purpose. That is the difference between process and purpose. Process is unstable, painful, and difficult, but the end purpose is stable, constant.
- The process can spin, change, cause pain, but the purpose remains constant. Your marriage, career, business, finances are spinning; but the purpose remains constant.

- Our circumstances around the world are changing every day due to Covid-19, but our purpose remains constant. Our God is never changing, so our purpose never changes. The wheels of change will continue to turn around us like the potter's wheel, but the purpose of God is constant.
- How long is it going to last? How long will the wheels of the world continue to turn? How long will the Covid-19 situation last? **The process will take however long it takes**, as long as the potter is working. Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years. So, it will take however long it takes.
- *"For he does not willingly bring affliction to anyone"* (Lamentations 3:33). God does not take any delight in your suffering. Please stay on the wheel.

3. Water makes the clay workable

The clay has to get mixed with water before it can be shaped

- Water makes the clay soft and workable.
- The Holy Spirit makes the clay workable. The word of God will soften your heart when things get tough

4. Don't walk away from your purpose

Jeremiah saw that something spoiled the clay: an intrusion such as a piece of wood, rock, etc. The potter had to crush the whole pot, then rebuild again.

- Sin disfigures the purpose of God on your life
- Sin causes clay to walk away from its purpose
- The clay cannot fix itself; it needs the potter.
- God breaks down the clay and starts again – it's a painful process. If God does not do it, it will not be done
- God says I am not giving up on the clay, so he starts again. It's a picture of God's grace. Don't give up on yourself because God is not giving up on you.
- God removes blemishes from the clay and starts again

5. The potter's hand is upon the clay

- The wheel spins the clay, but the potter's hand is always working on the inside. God's touch is always upon your life.
- The potter knows how much pressure to apply. **The potter never applies too much pressure to break the clay apart, just enough to shape it;**
- *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it"* (1 Cor 10: 13).
- God never applies too much pressure, he knows how much you can handle. **God knows what he is doing, don't lose sleep over it. The world as we know it may have changed, but God knows what he is doing, don't lose sleep over it.** The post Covid-19 world may be very different (or not), but we know that either way, God is in control, the potter is in charge.
- The hand of the potter is always upon the clay, working on the inside. The hand of God is always upon your life, working on the inside.

Lessons from the story of ARCHIE WILLIAMS

He was in prison 37 years for a crime he did not commit. How did he survive 37 years in prison? Why? Why did it take so long? We will never have all the answers, but here are some lessons we can learn

from him. We learnt these lessons from what he said during several interviews:

1. *"Freedom is in the mind. I went to prison, but my mind never went to prison".*

The corona virus situation can put you out of your job, take you to hospital, etc.; but do not let your mind go to prison. The Bible says we are in this world, but we are not of this world. Do not let the environment determine who you are.

2. *"I did not let 37 years of prison get to me.... You can choose to be weak, or you can choose to be strong; I chose to be strong ... I learnt to forgive".*

Do not let losing your job get to you. Do not let lockdown or quarantine get to you. One of the hardest things would be if somehow you got the virus and you passed it on to your family and others. You may begin to blame yourself and send yourself to prison. It is normal to feel that way. The hardest thing is to forgive yourself. Learn to forgive yourself and forgive others. Do not let 37 years of prison get to you.

3. *"Every time I was down, I would pray or sing.... I prayed every day.... By the grace of God, I am still hoping and praying ..."*

Do not stop praying. Do not stop hoping and praying.

4. *"I ministered to others through music. I used music to reach out ..."*

This was one of the first things he did when he got to prison. Do not stop ministering to others. The environment we are in, is an opportunity to minister the word of God. While people are uncertain and unsure, it's an opportunity for us to let them know that there is a God who is sure and who is certain.

5. *"I watched America has got talent while I was in prison, and I visualised myself on the stage".*

Now Elton John wants to do a show with him. He is doing shows everywhere. His vision and his purpose is getting fulfilled, 37 years later. When he went to prison at 22, he had always wanted to be a musician. The dream is now coming true, 37 years later. Do not lose your vision because of hardships. The purpose of God never changes.