

Faculty Work Comprehensive List

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Marred Clay

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Marred Clay

Abstract

"If you have been wronged by another person's sin, or if you have wronged another person, God has taken that awful thing and used it to shape you."

Posting about God's purposes in our lives from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<http://inallthings.org/marred-clay/>

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Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 119:161-168](#)

[Jeremiah 18:1-11](#)

[Matthew 11:20-24](#)

“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.” (Jeremiah 18:4)

Throughout the Old Testament, God’s people lived in a constant cycle of obedience, disobedience, and repentance. In our reading today, God uses a pot and potter as an object lesson. The people of Judah are like the clay pot. God had been forming and shaping his people for hundreds and hundreds of years. They started as one family and grew into a powerful nation before dwindling down to one tribe.

Throughout their history, His people were marred along the way, both by the sins they committed and by the sins committed against them. They faced many challenges as they sometimes stayed true to their covenant relationship with God—and sometimes, did not.

They were **a marred people**, but the potter, God, was **shaping them as seemed best to him**. He did not discard them, as a potter might do to an insubordinate piece of clay. He stayed true to his promise that through them all nations on earth would be blessed. Every time the Israelites wandered away from God, God brought them back. In this process of falling away and being returned to the fold, he shaped and formed them for his purpose. He remained true to his promise that through them **all** people would be blessed. Even though they were marred by sin, God remained faithful to them. He continued to shape them as it seemed best to him so that his story would be fulfilled.

We, too, are **a marred people**; and the potter, God, is **shaping us as seems best to him**.

If you have been wronged by another person’s sin, or if you have wronged another person, God has taken that awful thing and used it to shape you. He does not discard you like a potter might do to a marred piece of clay. Instead, like the potter in Jeremiah’s object lesson, the potter-God reforms you and shapes you in the way that seems best to him. Sometimes, that forming and shaping is a long, hard journey.

When the people of Israel stood with their toes in the Red Sea and the Egyptian army nipping at their heels, God was reshaping them from being a people of slavery into a mighty nation.

When the people of Israel threw all their gold into a fire and watched it melt into a calf which they then worshiped (Exodus 32:24), God reshaped them by calling them back into a right relationship with him.

The shaping and re-shaping journey for the people of Israel was long and hard. Whether God was taking a bad thing that happened to them and making something good out of it, or taking a bad thing they had done and teaching them through it, God was all along shaping them as he saw fit.

May the marred pot and the reshaping potter’s wheel be an image of hope for us, marred pieces of clay as we are.