

The Vincennes Voice

"...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight..." (Matt. 3:3)

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THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

Larry R. Ping II

The Lord called the "Weeping Prophet" to "go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words" (Jer. 18:2). There, Jeremiah viewed how the potter "wrought a work on the wheels" (Jer. 18:3). He witnessed the potter feel the need to scrap his first project and begin another. About this the Lord said, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel" (Jer. 18:6). In this context, God was referencing His ability to "pluck up," "pull down" and "destroy" a nation or kingdom. As well, it is God who can "build" and "plant" a nation or kingdom (Jer. 18:7-9).

In many others ways, however, the clay and potter and imagery works well. However, the problem with many in society, yea, even some members of the Lord's body is they have attempted to switch roles with God. They have assumed the potter role and relegated God as the clay.

Here are some of the areas where this has occurred and still is occurring.

1) Salvation From Sins. God made it very clear through the New Testament authors how one is saved from his sins. It involves hearing (Rom. 10:17), believing (Jn. 8:24), repenting (Lk. 13:3,5), confessing Jesus as Son of God (Matt. 10:32), being baptized (I Pet. 3:21) and remaining faithful (Rev. 2:10). Nevertheless, many today teach other paths to salvation. What these folks are doing is trying to mold God into something they want. My good friends, it does not work this way at all.

2) Marriage. Very early on, God defined marriage by saying, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Later, the Son of God affirmed by saying, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matt. 19:4-5). Nonetheless, many today are attempting to force their definition of marriage upon God, whether it be two men, two women or some other variation. My good friends, it does not work this way at all.

3) Divorce. The Son of God made very clear when uttering, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9). The only Biblical reason one may put away his spouse is fornication. There is no other allowable reason. Any other divorce for any other reason is a sin, as Jesus said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6). Nevertheless, we live in a world where the words "irreconcilable differences" are part of every-day language.

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY *cont.*

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We live in a world in which a divorce can be sought and given for any reason whatsoever, many times without the consent of the one being divorced. Even sadder, there are members of the Lord's Church who twist Scriptures like I Cor. 7 into saying divorce is allowable for "certain" reasons. My good friends, it does not work this way at all.

4) Remarriage. The Bible permits remarriage in two possible scenarios. One who has put away his spouse for fornication is free to marry another who has the right to be married (Matt. 19:9; Matt. 5:32). Also, one whose spouse has passed away may remarry another who has the right to be married (Rom. 7:2-3; I Cor. 7:39). Yet, scores of folks today instruct others they are approved to marry another, something to which they have no right. My good friends, it does not work this way at all.

5) Homosexuality. Paul, in writing to the Romans, made several inspired remarks about this sinful lifestyle. He

noted it was an act of "uncleanness" (Rom. 1:24). Those who practice such "dishonour their own bodies between themselves" (Rom. 1:24). The affections associated with this sin are "vile" (Rom. 1:26). Those involved in this sin are changing "natural use into that which is against nature" (Rom. 1:26-27). It is an "unseemly" act (Rom. 1:27) which is "worthy of death" (Rom. 1:32). In spite of that, we have scores of leaders and media saying it is an acceptable (God-approved) choice. My good friends, it does not work this way at all.

6) Bible Discipline. God has always been One who approved the disciplining of those in the wrong. In the New Testament instruction to the Lord's Church, He gave a Divine pattern for such chastening. When one fails to hear the rebuke of an individual and his witnesses, Jesus said, "tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17). Paul commanded the Romans to "mark them

which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). The Corinthians were charged, "no not to eat" with those Christians involved in sin (I Cor. 5:10-12). The Thessalonians were directed to "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thess. 3:6). All of these instructions were for the good of the one in sin, so he may "be ashamed" (II Thess. 3:14). However, many in the Lord's body spurn His teaching on this subject, citing several unfounded reasons. My good friends, it does not work this way at all.

We must always remember; God is the Potter and we are the clay. He fashions and molds us. We, in no way, are in position to make any mandates to God as to how we think He should be or how He should rule. Paul said it best, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Cor. 5:11). Let us be satisfied to be the clay!

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MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm