

BROKEN PEOPLE FAITHFUL GOD

A STUDY ON JEREMIAH

STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, November 9, 2025

Teaching Title: Hope in Brokenness

Key Scripture: Jeremiah 18:1–11

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Jeremiah 20

Tuesday: Jeremiah 21–22

Wednesday: Jeremiah 23

Thursday: Jeremiah 24–25

Friday: Jeremiah 26–27

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY TOPIC:

Hope in Brokenness

MEMORY VERSE: Jeremiah 18:5–6 NLT

Then the Lord gave me this message: "O Israel, can I not do to you as this potter has done to his clay? As the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand."

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

We live in a time when people tend to accumulate a lot of stuff. And when something breaks, we just toss it and get a new one. But what if the thing that's broken is... me? What happens then? What does God do with me? In Jeremiah 18:1–11, God uses the image of a potter and his clay to teach His people that He doesn't just throw them away. Instead, God lovingly reshapes and restores us when we repent. Just as a potter sits at the wheel and reworks spoiled clay into something new, God's mercy gives us a fresh beginning. He can take what's been damaged and make it into something beautiful. We must yield to the hand of the Potter by repenting of our sin and seeking revival—because recognition leads to repentance and repentance leads to revival.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: What is your favorite board game, and why?

1. Read Jeremiah 18:1–11 together as a group. Why do you think God didn't just tell Jeremiah the message, but instead sent him to watch the potter at work?
2. What did Jeremiah see when he got to the potter's house? Describe the scene in your own words.
3. What caused the pot or jar to be broken? What might this represent in our own lives?
4. According to 18:4, what did the potter do with the clay? What does this tell us about God?
5. How does the illustration that God gives in 18:5–6 comfort and challenge you?
6. According to 18:7–8, what happens when people turn from sin and repent? Can you share an example of a time when repentance changed the outcome of your situation?

7. In 18:9–11, God gave Judah a clear message to turn from their evil ways and do what's right. He's calling them to yield to God and be moldable instead of resisting God. What would it look like for you to yield to God instead of resisting him?
8. What actions can you take to embody a spirit of repentance in your everyday life?

NOTES

Pastor Neal shared a beautiful illustration at the end of the message:

Kintsugi: In Japan, when pottery breaks, they don't hide the cracks. They repair them with liquid gold. The finished piece is more beautiful than before. The brokenness becomes the story of strength.

This is the gospel. God doesn't throw you away. He repairs your cracks. He fills them with His grace. And when He's finished, your life can display His glory in ways it never could have before.

DIGGING DEEPER

How does this passage form our understanding of human free will versus divine sovereignty?

Here is an explanation from an Old Testament scholar, Dr. Jason Staples, from his article "Vessels of Wrath and God's Pathos" from Cambridge.org.

"... potters speak of clay as though it has a 'mind of its own' and emphasize that clay has a reputation for behaving as though it were willful and stubborn, requiring patience and dynamic improvisation to produce a good outcome. In this light, the potter/clay relationship provides an especially apt analogy for God's dynamic and responsive interaction with willful and stubborn humanity. This is, of course, precisely the function of the potter analogy in Jer 18, the earliest, longest, and most famous of the scriptural potter passages, where the potter/clay relationship serves as an object lesson for how God dynamically and responsively interacts with willful and stubborn humanity with exactly the sort of open-ended intention practiced by master potters, being both sovereign and relationally responsive to the clay. In this passage, Jeremiah is instructed to watch a potter at work, where he observes a vessel fall apart in the potter's hands only to be reworked into another vessel, 'as it seemed good to the potter to make it' (18:4), at which point the word of YHWH explains: 'Can I not do the same to you as this potter, O house of Israel?' YHWH declares: 'See, you are in my hand like the clay in the potter's hand, O house of Israel' (Jer 18:6).

The following verses (18:7–10) explain that although YHWH is indeed free to do as he chooses, his plans are malleable and responsive to his creations—that is, YHWH operates interactively and according to justice. If YHWH declares blessing or destruction upon a nation and that nation changes its behavior, YHWH can and does change the final outcome (cf. also Ezek 18). That Jeremiah's application of the potter/clay metaphor has attracted essentially the same complaints that have been lodged against Paul's notion of patient endurance in Rom 9:22 ironically reinforces the thematic connections between these passages. The lesson is that although YHWH does shape the destiny of people and nations, YHWH does not do so unilaterally or arbitrarily, nor is the impending destruction (18:11) of Jerusalem the result of an immutable plan of YHWH but is instead his response to their insolent and stubborn behavior."