



Broken Pieces

“ A master artist can create something out of nothing, they have a vision that no one else can see, and God has a vision and a plan for our lives that only He can see.”

- French Miller -

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. -Jeremiah 18:4

In my line of work I deal with stained glass windows at times. Most of us never look at the way they are made or how they line up with our lives. Most churches have stained glass windows and we sit and admire the beauty, never thinking about the process of using broken pieces to create such a work of art.

The process of a stained glass window starts with taking shards of broken glass and shaping them to fit like pieces of a puzzle. The pieces of glass laying there without shape or form may look like just a pile of broken glass, but to the artist it's the start of a beautiful work of art, something that will have meaning and be admired by many.

That is how God sees us, as a thing of beauty waiting to take form for the whole world to see and admire His handy work.

When God spoke to Jeremiah He told him to arise and go down to the potter's house and there He would announce His words to him. When Jeremiah arrived at the potter's house he saw the potter making something on the wheel. The vessel that was being made of clay was spoiled or another way of saying this, is that it was broken, or not right, messed up like our lives have been at times, so the potter remade it into another vessel and it pleased the potter.

Then the word of God came to Jeremiah saying,

"Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as the potter does?" declares the LORD. "Behold like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand".

No matter how broken our lives may seem or what we may have done in our past, God can and will fix it, He is our potter and just as the potter takes what is not right and reforms it, God will do the same with us. God uses broken pieces to create things of beauty, He shapes us and molds our lives to fit His will if we allow it. When God said "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as the potter does?" He was saying, you may be broken at this time, but if you will surrender to Me, I can shape you and make you into a thing of beauty.

Some of our lives consist of broken families, broken relationships, and a broken past. My life consists of all of the above. I never could have imagined that God could shape me into anything other than the mess that I was. Depression had taken over my life for so many years, anger and hate was my best friend, my life was like the start of a stained glass window, a pile of shard glass.

As a young boy I was abused by my father. He had a very serious problem with alcoholism and I was on the receiving end of his anger. My grandmother and grandfather raised me and tried to shelter me from his drunken rage, but living next door made things hard for them. When my father would come home drunk my grandfather would take me and head into the wooded area near our home until my father had passed out. After the death of my grandfather in 1973 it felt as if my life was over. The person who I knew as a dad, my protector, my world, was now gone, and the abuse became much worse.

Over the years my father's abuse grew stronger and as a teenager he even tried to take my life several times. The rage from my father became a part of me, I was getting into fights and taking out my rage on others the way my father vented his onto me. I became broken and the older I became the more broken I became, my life was a mess and I hated my life, I hated the world, and I was ticked at God for my childhood.

Then a master artist by the name of Jesus, took those broken pieces and started shaping them, He took all the broken pieces of my past and started bringing them together to form that which He wanted me to become.

Just like the starting process of the stained glass window, I had to be broken.

The breaking process is a painful process but also a necessary process. The brokenness allows the master artist to rearrange or discard the pieces of our lives that don't fit into His work of art. The pride, the self centredness, the anger, the hate, are some of the things that have to be discarded in reshaping our lives.

When an artist paints a picture or creates a stained glass window, it is created in a way that tells a story. The brokenness of our past is the same with God our master artist, He takes those broken pieces of our past and places them together in a way that tells our story. A master artist can create something out of nothing, they have a vision that no one else can see, and God has a vision and a plan for our lives that only He can see.

Moses had to be broken before God could call him to deliver His people from bondage. Moses grew up in the home of Pharaoh, raised by Pharaoh's daughter as her own son, and taught as an Egyptian, he lived a privileged life. Moses went from the life of privilege in the house of Pharaoh, to a life of hiding and tending to the flock of his father-in-law in the land of Midian.

The man that was once a Prince had been broken and God from the brokenness, brought forth a Prophet and a leader, that freed his people from

years of bondage and led them into the land of promise.

In the reshaping process at times we have to experience the hardship and pains of others to better understand how to relate to their problems or needs. It would be hard to understand the effects of alcoholism on a person's life, or the people around them, if you have never endured it in some way. I have never been drunk or done drugs, but I have been able to enlighten others about what it does to those around them because that is what I endured in the past. Moses had to be broken so he could better understand the suffering of his people, he could see what they endured each day, but as long as he lived the life of a Prince he would never fully understand the true depth of their suffering.

My grandmother would always tell me "never judge the life of another until you have walked a mile in their shoes."

God sometimes has to allow those who have followed Him for a long period of time to be re-broken. Our way of thinking can become self-centered, we forget to place ourselves in another person's shoes because of our length of time as a Christian. Just as the potter will reshape the clay, God has to once again place us on the potter's wheel. Just as a horse that has not been ridden in a while will sometimes become stubborn and refuse to be mounted, the horse will then have to be broken again and we as Christians are no different, and when that happens God breaks us, to shape us.

God is a master artist, He is the potter and we are the clay, if we surrender our lives to Him, He will take the broken pieces of our lives and create a work of art. God does not waste anything and He never makes a mistake, God can, and will, use the brokenness. He will take our past and use it to shape our future. If you ever start to wonder why things are happening the way they are in your life, stop and think about the stained glass window and remind yourself that it too started from being broken, but in the right hands became something to admire. □