

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

Real quick before we get started, as Pastor Leitu announced on Sunday, as a reminder, on Saturday, the 27th, we're going to have our Rally for Jesus. It will begin at noon and go till 3:00 p.m., and set up will be at 10:00 a.m.

And then also really, really, really looking forward to next Thursday. So here's the drill: We're going to have -and, by the way, for those of you that are online, we're going to start right at 7:00, not with the worship, but we're going to have a testimony, a powerful testimony of the power of parents praying for a prodigal.

And we're going to have Gabriel, along with his mom and dad, up here, and they're going to share about just the power of prayer, and so powerful, as we talked about on Sunday, that it can get that wayward daughter, that prodigal son, out of the LGBTQ lifestyle. That's how powerful a praying parent is.

So that's next Thursday, and again, we're going to start right at 7:00, no worship. Usually we start with worship at 7:00, but we'll actually start right at 7:00 and go till 8:30-ish, heavy on the "ish" as the Lord leads. But no, really looking forward to that. And then Gabriel's going to on Sunday morning both services, right, also announced this, so looking forward to that next week. So we will not be in Jeremiah until the following week, Lord willing.

All right, two chapters tonight! Yeah. I love it when you do that! I love it when you respond like that! It's very encouraging to me. I guess it would be very discouraging to me if your response was ugh. So thank you for that. Why don't we pray? We'll ask God to bless our time together in His Word.

Father in Heaven, thank You so much. God, we're so grateful to You. It's really impossible. There are no words in the English language, let alone any language for that matter, that can adequately express to You how thankful we are. Lord, thank You so much for this time that we have tonight. We're really looking forward to what it is that You have for us, what it is that You're going to speak to us, what it is that You're going to show to us in our time together.

And especially with these two chapters; there's quite a bit here, and we're just really looking to You and trusting that the Holy Spirit will be our teacher and our guide because we don't

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

want to miss anything that You have for us tonight. That's why we're here. So Lord, would You just pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us, fill us anew, baptize us afresh, and bless our time together, bless this study tonight in Your Word to our understanding, the application of it to our lives, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

All right, so these two chapters, actually I - they go together and that's why we're going to take them together. I'll try not to rush through it, because, again, there's so much here. But God, through the prophet Jeremiah, speaks with yet another visual prophecy.

Remember Chapter 12, the visual with the sash? Well, this time there's another visual, only it's going to be concerning the Potter's House, and namely that of God being the Potter and the people being the clay in the hand of the Potter, which, by the way, that's what we actually and literally are: Clay, dirt.

You okay?

He created us. In fact, they have researched and found that the same elements in the dust of the earth are the same elements present in these fleshly tents we call our temporal bodies. We were literally created from the dust of the earth. And we are but clay in the hands of the Potter.

However, as we're about to see, sadly, God was unable to have His way with His people in what He desired to do with the clay. So let's jump in.

Chapter 18, verse 1. **“The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: “Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.” Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.**

And [Verse 4] the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.”

So here we go; we're starting off with Jeremiah being given yet another visual, this time of a Potter who is having difficulty with the clay. The problem is not the Potter. The problem is the clay. And it had become marred in the Potter's hands.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

“Then [Verse 5] the word of the Lord came to me, saying: “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?” says the Lord. “Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!

The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

And the instant [Verse 9] I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.”

Wow! In other words, it's on you. It's on you. If you will but obey My voice, take heed to My word, I will relent and not do that which I was going to bring against you. And conversely, if you would (not) obey My voice, I'm still going to relent, but what I'm going to relent concerning is the good with which I said I would benefit you.

In other words, you obey; I'm going to relent from the evil. You disobey; I'm going to relent from the good.

The lesson here is quite clear. God, as the Potter, is willing to take the marred clay and shape it according to His will and His plan. Whether good or bad, the choice is theirs. He's at the ready, as we're going to see.

“Now therefore, [Verse 11] speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now [emphasis NOW] every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.””

I mean, God is doing everything and stopping at nothing to get His people to turn, to repent so He can relent. And the emphasis is on NOW. And Jeremiah has to speak this to the people.

Here's the Potter at the ready. And He's already warning them that on My wheel, I am shaping and fashioning a disaster. I am devising a plan against you. It doesn't have to be this way. Return now, every one from his evil way.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

Oh, oh, and by the way, I should probably warn you, now is as good of a time as any. The evil was unspeakable. It's going to get very graphic. I want to warn you ahead of time. For those of you that read ahead to stay ahead, you know what's ahead. It's hard to read, let alone imagine.

Verse 12, "And they said [Now this is their response] 'That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one [That's interesting that detail, every one of us] obey the dictates of his evil heart.'"

Are you kidding me right now? For real? I mean, again, I - it's hard to imagine. I mean, God is the God of endless chances, is He not? But they're going to reject Him, and how in your face, in the face of God can you be? I mean, don't get Your hopes up, God. This is hopeless. We're not going to repent.

In fact, not only are we not going to repent, we're going to continue to walk according to our own plans, our own ways. We're going to do our own thing, and we're going to follow the dictates of our evil heart.

This is a period of time in Israel's history, and please, we've talked about the disconnect, our proclivities and our propensity for there to be a disconnect between them then and us now. And usually that disconnect will look something like this. Oh, I would never do that.

Oh, really? Follow the dictates of your evil heart?

We just got done, right, learning about - famous verse - the heart is deceitfully wicked. It is incurable. There's no hope. And you don't even know it. That's how deceitful and incurable your heart is unless and until God, as only He can, changes your heart, gives you a new heart.

Now we know also from - I think it was the previous chapter. Actually, it was two chapters; I think it was 16 where we're told that their sin was so ingrained in them. It had become such a part of them that it was like taking a stone tablet and engraving and etching it indelibly on the tablets of their heart.

So not to excuse it, but maybe in some way to explain it. They were so entrenched, they had become so evil that they reject the Lord, His offer to relent if they would repent. And they

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

reject it, they hardened their hearts, and as we're going to see shortly, they stiffened their necks. But this is, again, it's hard to imagine.

And please notice this. They preferred to walk according to their own plans and their own way. And can you imagine? You're the clay. Wait, you say to the Potter as the clay - you're dirt - and you say to the Potter, I want to do it my way.

Oh, excuse me. You're clay in the hands of the Potter. And you're rejecting the Potter. You don't want to do what the Potter wants to do. You don't want the Potter to make you and shape you and fashion you according to His will. You want to do it your own way, according to your own will.

And again, this is why the disconnect is so dangerous and so subtle. Because I don't think there's a one of us here, myself included, perhaps myself especially, if honest with ourselves, would not say that there are so many times in our Christian lives where we make this very decision to reject God's way and choose our own way.

Well, it gets much worse, as you might imagine.

“Therefore [Verse 13] thus says the Lord: “Ask now among the Gentiles, Who has heard such things? The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing. Will a man leave the snow water of Lebanon, [Look at the imagery here, fresh water] [Why would you leave and not want that] which comes from the rock of the field? Will the cold flowing waters be forsaken for strange waters?”

Bear with me because in the original, this carries with it the idea of you're rejecting fresh water for sewage water.

Oh, come on, that's - Are you kind of stretching it or pushing it?

No! In fact, that might be, if anything, an understatement in terms of the comparison and the contrast. You rejecting Me is akin to incomparable to choosing sewage water over fresh water.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

Snow water of Lebanon, my birthplace, by the way, the most delicious water in the world. I don't know because I was very young. But I mean, just a picture of that. Here's this fresh water, and you're choosing sewage water?

Verse 15. You okay? All right.

“Because My people have forgotten Me, they have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways, from the ancient paths, to walk in pathways and not on a highway, to make their land desolate and a perpetual hissing [*Hang on to that*]. Everyone who passes by it will be astonished and shake his head.”

Now, this perpetual hissing: What is that? It's also along the lines of whistling. So get the picture here. Use your God-given imagination. People are going to be so flabbergasted and astonished when they pass by your desolate land that I have made desolate because you rejected Me; they're going to be so stunned.

It's kind of got this picture, as we would understand it. Instead of a hissing, more like a whistling like whew! (Whistling) That's what he's talking about. When people pass by, they are just going to be so blown away. (Whistling)

Wow! That's how astonished they're going to be. And they're going to shake their head in disbelief really.

“I will scatter them [*Verse 17*] as with an east wind before the enemy. I will show them the back and not the face in the day of their calamity.”

Now this is a cultural dynamic and even modern day, you know the Aaronic Blessing, *Numbers 6*? **“The Lord bless you and keep you and make His face to shine upon you.”**

Well, this is the opposite, the antithesis of that.

Instead of God making His face to shine upon them, He's turning His back on them. And that is like the ultimate dis in the Middle East to this day to turn your back on somebody instead of turning your face towards them and shining your face on them.

Again, this is hard to read, right, let alone imagine? But here's the thing: God really had no choice, right?

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

I mean, He's given them endless chance after endless chance, and they still continue to harden their hearts and reject Him. Here God is being gracious and merciful, pleading with them through the Prophet Jeremiah.

Verse 18, "Then they said, [You have to bear with me on this one] 'Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah. For the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet.

Come and let us attack him with the tongue, [Hang on] and let us not give heed to any of his words.'"

Oh, a couple of thoughts. First: Textbook, you don't like the message? You take it out on the messenger. You don't like the message, so you attack the messenger. I'm just the messenger.

Well, then you don't like the message, and they did not like the message, so you're going to attack. This is so textbook.

Oh, how are they going to attack the messenger? Because they reject the - Pardon me, I got that - again, long week. Bear with me.

They're going to attack the messenger because they don't like the message? How are they going to attack him?

Oh, the best possible way to inflict the most possible damage: The tongue. That's how we're going to do it. It's the best way. We can destroy him with our tongues.

Is that not what we learned and are learning from James in our study through that book, which, by the way, Lord willing, this Sunday we're going to finish James, and the following Sunday, can't wait, going to start 1 Peter.

I know I say that about every book. Cannot wait!

But the tongue is so deadly, and it's so poisonous. So they're going to poison people against Jeremiah. They're going to attack him with their tongue. They're going to make false accusations about him. They're going to constantly criticize him. They're going to discredit him. They're going to make YouTube videos about him, attacking him.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

Oh, here's the thing: The tongue - it's poisonous. You poison people against someone by what you say about them. And now that person that you've poisoned about them will never be able to look at them the same way again.

That's how deadly that poisonous tongue is. You can kill people with the tongue. You assassinate their character. You murder them in your heart. And you slander them with your tongue. And that's how we're going to attack him, with the tongue.

We're not going to attack him physically, although when we get to Chapter 20, we're going to see some of that. He's going to get incarcerated. But spoiler alert, by the way, Chapter 20.

But we're not going to attack him physically. We're going to attack him with the tongue because that's way more effective. It will accomplish that which we want to accomplish because notice, **“Let us not give heed to any of his words.”** We're going to so attack him with our tongues and discredit him and slander him and falsely accuse him and discredit him, that nobody will listen to him.

Because see - and Satan knows this, which is why he does this. And we're going to actually - I think in the Prophecy Update, be talking a little bit about this. But Satan knows that in our human, sin, Adamic nature, you're guilty until proven innocent.

Example - You'll forgive me for this example. If I say to you about somebody else, “I wonder if he still beats his wife.”

And then next week comes, and you're in church, and who should sit next to you but the wife beater. He beats his wife.

You just destroyed him. You've falsely accused him, you've borne false witness against him, and you've done with your tongue exactly what Satan got you to do with your tongue.

You're doing his bidding when you slander and criticize and complain.

I'm sorry. You'll forgive me again, and again, bear with me, please. I'm just going to share my heart with you.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

When it comes to criticizing and complaining and slandering and gossiping, do you know it rises to the level of being included in Scripture on the same list as things like sexual immorality, murder? We're talking physical murder.

And gossiping; it's like, almost - Wait, wait, wait, wait - That's on a different list, isn't it?

No, it is included in the same list with things like murder and sexual immorality and wickedness and gossiping! It almost doesn't seem like it should be there.

It is.

Why?

Because it rises to the same level as that in the eyes of God. That's how serious it is.

And by the way, who was the first recipient of such a thing? And why is it in the Proverbs, we're told that there are six things the Lord hates, and the seventh is an abomination.

You know what the seventh on that list is?

The sowing of discord among the brethren. The talk, talk, talk, the whisper campaign.

See, Satan knows that the gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church of Jesus Christ. He knows that. So he cannot do it from without, so how's he going to do it?

From within, from within. That's another thing we're going to be talking about. **“A house divided, Jesus said, cannot stand.”** And so all you got to do now is start sowing the seeds of division, and it's just a matter of time. And once it starts, it is like a cancer that spreads, and it's terminal.

That's why in the epistles, replete really throughout Scripture, this is taken so seriously because of the damage that can be done if it's not stopped before it does that damage.

They're going to attack him with the tongue.

Ooh, I'm not going to keep going on this. I know we talked in depth about this in our study through James, but just one last thought before we move on. I think we need to be oh, so careful with what we say.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

And make no mistake about it, if somebody is talking stink about someone else behind their back to you, I promise you, I promise you they're talking stink about you to someone else behind your back. I promise you that. You can take that to the bank.

Well, actually, don't take that to the bank. The whole banking system is... anyway, changing....

So let's move on now with that, *verse 19*. **“Give heed to me, O Lord.”**

This is Jeremiah now, after he learns of this. Oh, they're now going to come against me, and they're now going to attack me, and they're going to attack me with the tongue, and they're going to launch a campaign of gossiping and slandering and falsely accusing.

“Give heed to me, O Lord, [*Listen to me, Lord*] and listen to the voice of those who contend with me! Shall evil be repaid for good? For they have dug a pit for my life. Remember that I stood before You to speak good for them, to turn away Your wrath from them.”

And this is how they repay me? I mean, Lord, you know how many times; in fact, I pleaded with You and I prayed to You, and You said, stop praying - on more than one occasion - stop praying for them. I'm not going to listen to your prayers. Just stop praying for them. Their minds already made up, their neck is already stiff, and their heart is already hardened, their fate is already sealed. Stop praying.

And here's Jeremiah - by the way, he loves them so much. If he didn't love them so much, it wouldn't hurt so much.

I want you to think that through. This was so hurtful. And I'm going to have to emphasize this because what comes after this will be misunderstood, grossly misunderstood if you don't understand the heart of Jeremiah here.

This is so hurtful. You know, there are times, and I think you're going to know what I'm saying when I say this, but there are times when you can get so hurt so deeply you wish you didn't care so much so it didn't hurt so much. When you love someone so much they will hurt you proportionate to your love for them.

Hey, if you don't care, no problem.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

But no, he cared, and he loves them so much. And he was interceding for them, praying for them. Please, God, don't pay them as their sins deserve. Turn your wrath away from them, be merciful to them.

I know they deserve it, but please, God, please be merciful. And I pleaded with You for them because of my love for them. I wanted good for them, and how do they repay the good that I wanted for them and pleaded with You for them?

They repay it with evil. They want to kill me. They want to attack me now. They've already launched the campaign.

Do you hear his heart? I sure hope so because of what comes next, starting in verse 21. This is Jeremiah now. He's still praying and asking God, and he asks for this, *verse 21*.

“Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword. Let their wives become widows and bereaved of their children.

[I'm sure he didn't pray this with gritted teeth like I am right now]

Let their men be put to death, their young men be slain by the sword in battle. Let a cry be heard from their houses, when You bring a troop suddenly upon them, for they have dug a pit to take me and hidden snares for my feet. Yet, Lord, You know all their counsel which is against me, to slay me. *[To kill me; You're the one who told me about it]*

Provide no atonement for their iniquity, nor blot out their sin from Your sight. But let them be overthrown before You. Deal thus with them in the time of Your anger.”

Okay, what happened to Jeremiah here? Where's the other Jeremiah? Because this doesn't sound like him.

Well, not so fast. Lest one think that Jeremiah has gone off the proverbial rails here, we would do well to consider that this is consistent with what are known as the imprecatory psalms, which we've talked about and studied in our study through the Book of Psalms, which are really prayers that leave the vengeance in God's hands.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

In other words, you're praying consistent with what God has already declared. See, He's already declared this judgment upon them, and now Jeremiah - it's almost like Jeremiah is now relenting and going, okay, Lord, You're right.

I tried, I cried, I did everything I could. I don't want to see this happen, but now I see what You see. And I think now I know what You've known all along, and You've been trying to show me, which is why You told me to stop praying for them.

The Lord is going to shape them. It's just going to have to be the hard way. So instead of fashioning the clay as the Potter on the wheel, He's going to have to use the furnace of affliction in the Babylonian captivity to do it.

Did you get that?

Oh, He's still going to have His way, but it's going to have to be the hard way. He wants to avoid the hard way. There's the easy way and the hard way.

Come on, you bear witness with this, right? I mean, what is it about us that we only learn the hard way?

And God and Jeremiah, just heartfelt, has been wanting them to choose the easy way because you're going to get fashioned either way. But you're going to have to go into this captivity, this Babylonian captivity, and God will fashion you. But He's going to have to use that method instead. And you brought it upon yourselves.

And Jeremiah is actually in agreement now with God and conceding to God, Okay, now I understand, Lord, why. So You're going to judge them.

It's a little chilling, isn't it? It's pretty graphic, right? It's going to get more graphic, *Chapter 19:1*.

“Thus says the Lord: “Go and get a potter’s earthen flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, and [Verse 2] go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, [Ben Hinnom] which is by the entry of the Potsherd Gate, and proclaim there the words that I will tell you, and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle.”

I mean, we would say it in our day this way: It's going to make your ears ring. Catastrophic: This catastrophe that I'm going to bring on this place.

Now, I don't want to take too much time on it; time doesn't permit. I know we've talked about it, this valley. For those of you that have been to Israel with us, it was actually the Valley of Hell, really.

It's where they would sacrifice their babies to the God Molech, which was an iron statue with arms stretched out. And there was a fire in the belly, which is, by the way, where we get that expression.

And they would sacrifice their child, burn them alive in this Valley, Hinnom, and when you're on the outskirts of Jerusalem, you're looking down into this valley, and then it was subsequently become a rubbish, a dump site where they would dump all their broken pottery, which we're going to see in a moment, and they would burn it.

They would burn all of their rubbish, and the fires and the smoke that would come out of that valley would burn day and night. And this is going to come into play here in a moment because of what they did in this valley in their worship of other gods.

Verse 4, “Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, [This is foreign] because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents. [Those are the babies]

They have also built the high places of Baal, [The Canaanite God associated with Molech] to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind.

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Tophet [Which is in the original defined as fire] or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

And [Verse 7] I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives.

Their corpses [Talk about graphic] I will give as meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. [And here it is again, verse 8] I will make this city desolate and a hissing. Everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues.

And [Verse 9] I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair.”

(Sighing deeply) This would literally happen when the Babylonians came, exactly as it had happened prior when the Assyrians came. I'm not going to go on with that one. I think it speaks for itself. This is what happens. This is how it ends. This is what rejecting God looks like and ends like.

Now He's still talking to Jeremiah when He says, *verse 10*, **“Then you shall break the flask [That clay vessel that you got - we got this visual prophecy] And you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Even so I will break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter’s vessel, which cannot be made whole again, and they shall bury them in Tophet till there is no place to bury.”**

Think about this: You've got this clay pot. It breaks. You're not going to glue it back together. It's done. It's no good anymore. It's just thrown into the rubbish.

The visual: You're this clay pot that's now broken, unusable. And this whole time, I was pleading with you to let Me fashion you, shape you, mold you, make you My work of art. We're His workmanship.

In the original language of the Greek New Testament, that word for workmanship is “poema,” where we get our English word for “poem.” We're His work of art. **“And faithful is He who began the work to complete it.”**

But they rejected it. They fought Him, they resisted Him, they rejected Him. And so now, what am I going to do? I'm going to have to do it this way. This clay vessel that I'm going to

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

break and throw into the valley: That's you. It's a visual prophecy of what's going to happen to you.

Verse 12, "Thus I will do to this place," says the Lord, "and to its inhabitants, and make this city like Tophet.

And [Verse 13] the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be defiled like the place of Tophet, because of all the houses on whose roofs they have burned incense to all the host of heaven and poured out drink offerings to other gods."

Then Jeremiah [Verse 14] came from Tophet, where the Lord had sent him to prophesy. And he stood in the court of the Lord's house and said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will bring on this city and on all her towns all the doom that I have pronounced against it, because [Listen] they have stiffened their necks that they might not hear My words.' "

That's why. Chapter ends sort of how it began as it relates to the clay's unwillingness in the Potter's hands to be shaped, yielded, molded, fashioned into a usable and beautiful vessel for his good, His glory.

Before we bring it to a close, I want to share with you about this well-known hymn of old. When I was about ten years old, my mom made me take piano lessons, and she made me learn, she actually paid me in quarters from the cash register in our cafe, which I would then, in turn, quickly use to play pinball and Foosball. But she paid me in quarters to learn to play hymn Number 272, pictured here, by the way in our hymnal.

The hymn is ♪ 'Have Thine Own Way ♪.

Now, some 50 years later, I have that same hymn book, and this hymn has become one of my favorite hymns of all time, I mean, my favorite hymn of all time.

♪ 'Have Thine Own Way, Lord ♪.

I hope you'll kindly indulge me. I want to read the words of this cherished hymn of old. But first, I want to share with you the story behind it. You know, a lot of these hymns have some

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

pretty powerful stories behind them, how they came about. And such is the case with this one. It was Jeremiah 18 that actually set the scene for this hymn.

It was written by Adelaide A. Pollard in 1902, after she was inspired by a simple prayer of an elderly woman at a prayer meeting who prayed, "It really doesn't matter what you do with us, Lord, just have Your way with our lives."

♪ 'Have Thine Own Way, Lord ♪ was composed during a time when Ms. Pollard was trying to raise funds to take a mission trip to Africa. Her unsuccessful attempt to do this left her experiencing a distress of soul. This crisis of the soul and the simple prayer of an elderly lady provided a setting for personal reflection on the will of God for her life.

After the prayer meeting, she returned home and wrote the hymn as we sing it today, ♪ 'Have Thine Own Way, Lord ♪, which I want to share with you.

I won't sing it. That would totally ruin it. But I do want to read the words to this classic, timeless hymn.

♪ Have Thine own way, Lord! ♪

♪ Have Thine own way! ♪

♪ Thou are the Potter; I am the clay. ♪

♪ Mold me and make me after Thy will, ♪

♪ While I am waiting, yielded and still. ♪

♪ Have Thine own way, Lord! ♪

♪ Have Thine own way! ♪

♪ Search me and try me, Master, today! ♪

♪ Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now, ♪

♪ As in Thy presence, humbly I bow. ♪

♪ Have Thine own way, Lord! ♪

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

♪ Have Thine own way! ♪

♪ Wounded and weary, help me, I pray! ♪

♪ Power, all power, surely is Thine! ♪

♪ Touch me and heal me, Savior divine. ♪

♪ Have Thine own way, Lord! ♪

♪ Have Thine own way! ♪

♪ Hold o'er my being absolute sway! ♪

♪ Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see ♪

♪ Christ only, always, living in me! ♪

Oh, Thy will be done, Lord! Have Thine own way, Lord.

Forgive me, Lord, for fighting You, resisting You. I want to cooperate. I mean, after all, I'm just the clay; You're the Potter.

Lord, I know that You want to make me and shape me and conform me into the image of Jesus because that's Your purpose, *Romans 8:29*, by the way, right? Which comes after *verse 28*. I know that is deeply profound. But **“God's going to work together all things for the good to those that love Him and are called according to His purpose.”**

And then *verse 29* tells us what His purpose is. His purpose is to conform us, as the Potter does the clay, to make us His workmanship into the image of Jesus. He's making us more like Jesus.

That's why He takes us, as the clay, and He starts that process, and it's very painful. Let's cooperate with Him.

Let's make it easy. Because there's the easy way and the hard way. Why fight Him? I mean, that's absurd anyway, right, the clay complaining to the Potter?

I don't like this; I don't like what You're doing here. I'm certainly not fond of being put on this wheel and being spun around a thousand miles an hour. And my head's spinning.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

What are you doing, Lord? Everything's just spinning out of control.

No, I'm confirming you and making you more like Jesus.

And then He's got you on the wheel, and then as the Potter with the clay on the wheel, He'll take now His hands, His ever-loving hands, and it seems hard, even cruel, because we're spinning around.

And then He takes, and He just jams His hand, but He's shaping, He's making a beautiful shape.

Oh, and this after He's taken that same loving hand of His, and He just, I mean, jams it, and He gets all the gook out of it.

What are You doing, God?

Oh, I'm making you a usable vessel for My glory. And I'm not done yet. I know you don't like it, but I got to get this out of you, and then I've got to do this to you.

And so He's shaping us as the Potter with the clay on the wheel. And He's making this beautiful, beautiful vessel for His glory. It's His work; we're His workmanship.

And now it's shaped, and He's got it exactly the way He wants it.

Now, this presupposes, like we just started out in Chapter 18, that it doesn't just kind of crumble; then He's got to start all over because the clay isn't cooperating with the Potter.

So He's got the shape now, beautiful, oh, it's perfect!

Why?

Because He's perfect.

And then the wheel starts to slow, and then it stops.

And we're like, Oh, thank You, God.

We're not done yet. Because into the kiln you go, appropriately named, you know?

Are you having high school flashbacks? We did this in - You know, we had - they had a kiln.

Can't you call it something else?

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

You're killing me, God.

I know; I have to. I have to refine you in the furnace of affliction.

So the heat gets turned up. I've shaped you; I've made you. Now we're going to do the finishing work on you. So into the furnace of affliction we go, and the heat gets turned up. And it's solidifying that beautiful vessel that He's making.

And then all of a sudden, the heat starts going down, and we're taken out, and now the finishing touches: The colors, the ornate etching and artistry on the exterior. And then when He's all done - come quickly, Lord Jesus - He takes and He puts His name on His work. We're His workmanship.

This is Numbers 6, again, the Aaronic Blessing. We really kind of stop at **“The Lord bless you and keep you and make His face to shine upon you, and lift up His countenance to you, and be gracious unto you, and give you a peace.”**

And then we forget what comes after that because see, that was to be pronounced on them every time they would assemble at the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting.

So in other words, if you went to church more than once a day, you heard that every single time, more than once a day. The Lord wanted His people to know that He wanted to bless them.

And by the way, please- this is so common- and it's a horrible mistake. Do not put the word “may” in there. It's not there. May the Lord bless you?

No, the Lord bless you. The jury is not out. The verdict is in. The Lord bless you.

It's not, Boy, I sure hope the Lord blesses you. May Lord bless you. May the Lord keep you. We don't know, kind of iffy.

No, the Lord keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and give you peace. Oh!
(Exhaling deeply)

But then He says, I'm going to put My name on them.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

Now in our culture, we totally miss this, the importance of this, the significance of this, because see, in that culture, to this day, you're associated by the name because the name is the nature.

So in my culture, in the Arab culture, it's more honorable to address me by the name Abu Elias, the father of Elias, my first-born son. It is more of an honor than it would be to address me as Pastor JD because see, you're associating me by the son's name. And so, too, with my son, the son of Joseph, Jesus, the Son of Joseph. The name is on them.

This is why, in that culture, the boys who carry on the family name are valued because of the name. And what God is saying is, I want to put My name on you.

In Revelation, He gives us a new name. I cannot wait to see what my new name is going to be. I've never liked my name, Farag. I've never liked that: Tadpole, Ribbit, Kermit. I've never liked that. I was teased about that growing up. I'm scarred from that; I just want you to know. Scarred for life. So I'm going to get a new name.

And is that not what we do when we get married? The wife takes the name. My wife has never forgiven me for this. You know, her maiden name was Lynn. Oh, so nice, Lynn. And then she marries me, and it's now Farag. It's like - (Chuckling)

But He's our bridegroom. We're the bride. He's going to give us His name, His nature. He's going to put His name of ownership on us.

Oh, have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!

Why don't you stand? Kaponon, come on up. Let's close in prayer and close in song.

Whew! Wow, right? Just wow! (Sighing deeply)

Again, I know there's a disconnect, but everything we just read in these two chapters, alive and well today. It's not Molech; it's abortion. And please, by the way, God is a forgiving God. God is a forgiving God. But it's alive and well today. Everything we read here is alive and well today, this unspeakable evil and wickedness, alive and well today.

Jeremiah 18-19
Let God Have His Way
J.D. Farag

Father in heaven, I thank You, God, for this visual because it's something that we can understand and see in our mind's eye. We are just the clay in Your hands as the Potter. Lord, we want to be yielded and still so that You can do with us according to Your will.

Lord, we want You to have Your way with us, and we want to surrender to You.

Lord, I pray that even though this was a very hard study tonight, hard to read, let alone heed. But Lord, You're a merciful God, and You desire nothing more than to bless Your people.

So Lord, I pray that we'll take this away from this time together in Your Word tonight and yield to You so that You can have Your way with us. Make us, shape us, fashion us, Lord, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.