

## The Sermon in 10 Sentences or Less

Becoming (Week 1) - Clay:



1. One of the most inexhaustible, rich metaphors of the spiritual life in the Old Testament, used eight times total and four by Isaiah the prophet specifically, is that we are clay and God is the potter.
2. To be clay in God's hands means we are always becoming: we are always leaving some part of ourselves behind, and a new part of us is always emerging, one surprising and unseen.
3. Becoming brings together our past, present, and future into one fluid continuum: we are a river, not a settling pond, we are bread baking in the oven, not a lump of raw dough nor the finished loaf, and we are a first draft in the process of being written, not a blank page nor the published hardback edition.
4. Isaiah 64.8 uses two images of God and merges them together: God is both our potter and our father, making Him a kind of Geppetto, kneading new life into us day by day by day.
5. And Isaiah 64.8 is clear that we are all clay, no exceptions: both to be human and to be Christian is to be raw material in God's hands.
6. Isaiah 45.9 tells us that one error we who are clay sometimes forgot our role in life, and imagine ourselves our own potter, the captain of our own ship, and the one who calls the shots in our own lives.
7. That same verse tells us that we who are clay sometimes "strive" against (contend with, fight against, or argue with) our divine potter.
8. As clay, we must trust the potter more than we trust ourselves or our own judgment, and as clay we lean into, not away from, what we see God doing in our lives.
9. And, of course, we can predict to a certain degree what God is making us into: someone who resembles Christ (see Galatians 4.9 and Ephesians 2.10).
10. In sum, we are the artwork, not the artist, in our own lives.

## **What is KirkWood Becoming?**

KirkWood leadership team - our Session - has been working all summer on the question: "What is KirkWood becoming?" Or, using the metaphor of Isaiah 64.8, if we as a congregation are clay, what's God, our potter, doing in us right now? What's developing? What's emerging? And how we can lean into, and not resist, it?

Here's a condensed and partial list of how the Session has answered that "becoming" question:

- We are becoming a "big tent" and a "sanctuary" church.
- We are becoming more holistic in our stewardship.
- We are becoming more intentional about building relationships and ministering.
- We are becoming a learning, equipping, and training kind of church.
- We are becoming a church that communicates better at all levels (and we know we still have work to do).
- We are becoming a church that's excited about its future.

What do you think KirkWood is "becoming?" What is God the potter up in our church, and how has He been shaping and molding us over the last few years?

We'd love to know. Email Pastor Chris with your reflections - [pastorchriskwpc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorchriskwpc@gmail.com).

## Be Clay In God's Hands This Week

- Focus in your personal prayer this week on that core idea of being clay in God's hands, an image of surrender, openness, and humility. If you were at the in-person worship service yesterday, use that lump of clay we gave you: roll it around in your hands as you pray, and engage your body in your prayer. You can also use the following prayer from yesterday's service throughout the week:

Adapted from Seasons of Your Heart (by Macrina Wiederkehr): Lord God, I am a lump of clay, and I yearn for You to mold me. This is an act of trust: I am on Your potter's wheel nervous but ready to be transformed. I expect to change shape, I expect to leave part of myself behind, I expect to be surprised by the process, and I even expect this rebirth to hurt from time to time. Help me not fight or strive against Your artistic intent for me. And I know the end result will be beautiful, and from start to finish I will never be without Your love. Hear me when I say with all the resolve I can muster: I surrender myself to You, for You are the potter and I am the clay, amen.

- Journal, reflect, or meditate a little this week on this question: what am I becoming? You can go further by pondering: What pieces of myself may be dropping away, and what newness is starting to emerge?; And, how can I cooperate with what God is doing and not resist it?

- The most extended use of the potter/clay metaphor is in Jeremiah 18.1-17, which is quite distinct from how Isaiah uses the same image...check it out: [Jeremiah 18.1-17 NRSVA - The Potter and the Clay](#)

- And here's a short devotional on that particular passage: [The Potter's Wheel | Our Daily Bread](#)

- Two great devotionals that get into some of the specifics of turning a clay into a beautiful vase or pot:

[Be the Clay in God's Hands. One day at church, my Pastor was... | by Dr. Patty Sadallah](#)

[In the Potter's Hands | Words of Hope](#)

- The potter/clay metaphor is the centerpiece of one of Henry Wordsworth Longfellow's most well-known poems: [The Song of the Potter by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#)