

CONSUME**Message for July 7, 2019****North East United Methodist Church****Rev. Dr. Drew M. Christian**Francis Thompson's poem – *The Hound of Heaven*

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days; I fled Him, down the arches of the years; I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways. Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears I hid from Him, and under running laughter, Up vistaed hopes, I sped; And shot precipitated Down Titanic glooms of chasmed fears, From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

God pursues...chases...ever since the garden...will we let ourselves be caught... But it goes beyond being caught...once we are caught...God wants to CONSUME... The definition of CONSUME is to absorb or to destroy...God not only CHASES us...not only wants to CATCH us...but His goal is to CONSUME us...consume all that is you and I and replace it with all that is God, all that is divine...

I want you to sing a song with me...Spirit of the Living God...

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me...***Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me...******MELT me, MOLD me...*****STOP!**

Do you mean it? Do you seriously understand the words you are singing? Do you want God to melt you...to mold you...are you ready for God to take you from the imperfect creature you are, melt the impurities from your person, and mold you into the image of His Son, Jesus? Do you understand the process? Are you willing to be molded? Are you willing to give Him control?

One day a couple were shopping and they saw a beautiful teacup. They said, "May we see that? We've never seen one quite so beautiful."

As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the teacup spoke. "You don't understand," it said. "I haven't always been a teacup."

"There was a time when I was brown and I was clay. My master took me and rolled me and patted me over and over and I yelled out, 'let me alone', but he only smiled, 'Not yet.'"

"Then I was placed on a spinning wheel," the teacup said, "and suddenly I was spun around and around and around. Stop it! I'm getting dizzy! I screamed. But the master only nodded and said, 'Not yet.'"

“Then he put me in the oven. I never felt such heat. I wondered why he wanted to burn me, and I yelled and knocked at the door. I could see him through the opening and I could read his lips as he shook his head, 'Not yet.'”

“Finally the door opened, he put me on the shelf, and I began to cool. 'There, that's better,' I said. And he brushed and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible. I thought I would gag. 'Stop it, stop it!' I cried. He only nodded, 'Not yet.'”

“Then suddenly he put me back into the oven, not like the first one. This was twice as hot and I knew I would suffocate. I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. All the time I could see him through the opening nodding his head saying, 'Not yet.'”

“Then I knew there wasn't any hope. I would never make it. I was ready to give up. But the door opened and he took me out and placed me on the shelf. One hour later he handed me a mirror and said, 'Look at yourself.' And I did.”

“I said, 'That's not me; that couldn't be me. It's beautiful. I'm beautiful.'”

“I want you to remember, then,' he said, 'I know it hurts to be rolled and patted, but if I had left you alone, you'd have dried up.’”

“I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I knew it hurt and was hot and disagreeable in the oven, but if I hadn't put you there, you would have cracked.”

“I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted you all over, but if I hadn't done that, you never would have hardened; you would not have had any color in your life.”

“And if I hadn't put you back in that second oven, you wouldn't survive for very long because the hardness would not have held. Now you are a finished product. You are what I had in mind when I first began with you.”

Jeremiah 18:1-6 - *“... The Lord gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, "Go down to the shop where clay pots and jars are made. I will speak to you while you are there." So I did as he told me and found the potter working at his wheel. But the jar he was making did not turn out as he had hoped, so the potter squashed the jar into a lump of clay and started again. 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.”*

Isaiah 28: 17 - God says, *“I will take the measuring line of justice and the plumb line of righteousness to check the foundation wall you have built. Your refuge looks strong, but since it is made of lies, a hailstorm will knock it down. Since it is made of deception, the enemy will come like a flood to sweep it away.”*

One last passage, very special to me, when I was going through a tough time, was challenged to change and evaluate where I was - grief- depression – anger – wanting to quit ministry...

Isaiah 1:22, 24-26 - *“Once like pure silver, you have become like worthless slag. Once so pure, you are now like watered-down wine. Therefore, the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, says, “I will pour out my fury on you, my enemies! I will turn against you. I will melt you down and skim off your slag. I will remove all your impurities. Afterward I will give you good judges and wise counselors like the ones you used to have. Then Jerusalem will again be called the Home of Justice and the Faithful City.”*

The pot will not work in its present shape, so the potter molds it back into a lump of clay and begins to work afresh with it. Just as a dirty dish will not work until cleaned...just like an out-of-plumb wall will not hold up the building until it is taken down and rebuilt...just like metal is of no value until it is melted down and refined of its impurities...The pot...us...each of us...will not be what we are meant to be until returned to lump of clay and molded a fresh.

It’s our choice. Unfortunately, many times we choose not to allow God to mold us – we are stubborn – I hear it all the time, *“This is who I am...this is what you get...I cannot change – I got it together.”* – no, this is not who you are – God says you are so much more – sometimes we choose not to allow God to mold us because deep down we know it is going to hurt. Many times, not only does it feel like we are being broken and molded in the hands of God, but it feels like a wire brush scraping across our being and wiping away the grime and dirt, the imperfections collected there. God asks us to spit out the dirt in our lives...holds us and cleanses us of the filth, immorality, dishonesty, prejudice, bitterness and greed. many times we do not enjoy the cleansing...it is more pleasant to ignore our faults, weaknesses, our sin...and many times, God forgive us...we opt for the dirt.

God wants to put us on His potter’s wheel – it’s going to hurt, some of the lessons will be difficult to learn, but the finished product – wow! We will discover our purpose, we will discover what God had in mind when He created us, we will become more and more like His Son, Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - *“And all of us have had that veil [our imperfections/the world/sin] removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.”*

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God is reaching out to give to you...to mold you...you are His treasure...let Him...don’t fight Him anymore - allow God to not only CATCH you, but to CONSUME you...

Spirit of the Living God...Fall Afresh On Me...

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me...

*Melt Me, Mold Me, **FILL** Me...*

STOP!

Fill me. Are you ready for God to fill you? Are you allowing Him room? Are you getting in the way of the “living water” being poured into your life? Are you crying out to be filled? Or Are you trying to fill your life with things of this world? Are you ready for God to fill you with “the bread of heaven”?

John 6: 32-35 - *“Jesus said, ‘I assure you, Moses didn't give them bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘give us that bread every day of our lives.’ Jesus replied, ‘I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever be hungry again. Those who believe in me will never thirst.’”*

Do we, cry out, like those walking with Jesus - "Give us that bread every day of our lives." Are we asking God daily to be filled, to be fed with bread from heaven? Are we feeding on God's word and the love of Jesus each day? Are we going to Him? What do we feed on? Are we feeding on others...on things...on the world...?

Melt Me, Mold Me, Fill Me...Fill Me

John 4: 7-14 - *“A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water. Jesus said, ‘Would you give me a drink of water?’ (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.) The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, ‘How come you, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?’ (Jews in those days wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans.) Jesus answered, ‘If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking me for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water.’ The woman said, ‘Sir, you don't even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this ‘living water’? Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it, he and his sons and livestock, and passed it down to us?’ Jesus said, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life.’”*

Jesus ready to fill us, to make us whole, but many of us are not willing to make room...

The Savior arrives at the door to find the inn already full

If want to be filled must share openly deepest needs, regrets – that He might cleanse us and make room for His food and His drink – What do you need to share with God? What do you need to allow Him to remove to make room for His nourishment?

Look to no one else – let nothing stand in the way – God is reaching out to give to you...to fill you...He is the “*living water*”...let Him remove that which stands in the way of your being filled with His Spirit, His love, His compassion, His thoughts...don’t fight Him anymore - allow God to not only CATCH you, but to CONSUME you...

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me...

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me...

Melt Me, Mold Me, Fill Me, USE Me...

STOP!

Do you mean it?

There is a story of a servant who would carry water each day from distant stream to his master’s house – two large pots – hung from opposite ends of pole – one perfect condition – other cracked – arrived only half full – undamaged pot proud – cracked pot ashamed – not able to accomplish what created to do – did best it could – after two years cracked pot apologized – servant said notice the beautiful flowers – gorgeous wildflowers – back at house – did you notice flowers only on your side of the path – always known about your flaw – took advantage of it – planted flower seeds on your side of the path – every day you watered them – I picked them for my masters table – if you weren’t the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house.

You and I each have our own unique flaws – might say we are bunch of crackpots – but if we allow him to, the Lord will use our flaws to grace his table – God knows shortcomings – uses them to his advantage – God uses imperfect people to accomplish His perfect will

God wants to use you...Three ways God wants to use you...

To build up the church - **1 Peter 4:10-11**

“God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you. Are you called to be a speaker? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Are you called to help others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then God will be given glory in everything through Jesus Christ. All glory and power belong to him forever and ever. Amen.”

How many have you pulled alongside and helped in their ministry? How many have you invited, brought to church...How many? How have you allowed God to use you to make the church more inviting, more outreaching, a more powerful witness to the community of North East?

To build up others - **Matthew 25:31-40**

“But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. Then the King will say to those on the right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my

Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' And the King will tell them, 'I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"

Who have you encouraged this past year? Pulled alongside and prayed with? Ministered to? Loved on?

And our highest calling – which all the others point toward - To help others come to Christ -
John 4: 34-38

“Then Jesus explained: ‘My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. You know the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! You know the saying, ‘One plants and another harvests.’ And it’s true. I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.’”

Who have you told about Christ? Seen brought to eternal life? Are you afraid to witness to your neighbors? Why? What’s holding you back?

Look to no one else – let nothing stand in the way – God is reaching out to give to you...to use you...to accomplish His perfect will...let Him use you to build up the church, to build up others, and to point others to the Savior, Jesus Christ...allow God to remove that which stands in the way of your being used for His glory...for gathering the harvest... don’t fight Him anymore - allow God to not only CATCH you, but to CONSUME you...

Remember...God loves you just the way you are, but He refuses to leave you that way...He wants you to be JUST LIKE JESUS!

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