

**ITS NOT ABOUT ME**  
**June 10, 2012 –Romans 9: 14-26**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

Developmentally, a child about age two learns to say “No” and their parents’ lives are never the same again. Everything is “No”. It is the terrible twos. A child begins to develop their ego and EVERYTHING becomes about them. It is ironic, isn’t it, that then the progression of spiritual development in life as an adult is to reverse that process, to sublimate ego, to move from everything being about you, to everything being about God. It is to remove our own ego from the throne of our own life and to move the presence of God to be enthroned upon the throne of our heart. **Its not about me –it is about You, Lord.** More than ten years ago I learned that little litany in my head –Its not about me –its about You, Lord—and what a help that has been. It keeps me focused on God; it keeps me NOT focused on myself. I believe that happiness and joy in life comes from shifting our focus from ourselves and shifting our focus upon God.

Its not about me. Its about experiencing God. Its about YOU, Lord...

About 100 church members stepped forward to commit themselves to attend our current small group experiences, our Experiencing God small groups. I have chosen not to be in one of the small groups because I have learned over the years not to participate in this kind of thing where the point is to get folks talking about their own experience with God. Unfortunately, in such settings where I have attended over the years, there is a nice conversation starting and suddenly some question arises and instead of opening the Bible or praying about it, and figuring it out for yourselves, everyone simultaneously looks at me, as if I am the Bible Answer Man, and if I answer the question then everyone nods in agreement, as if I am a divine oracle, and stops inquiring. My presence in these small groups actually can be counterproductive to real spiritual growth. Its not about me. Its about Experiencing God. Its about YOU, Lord. By the way, the corollary of “Its not about me” is “Get out of the way, Stu, and let God do it!” That having been said, I have been praying for folks and I have been following along in my Experiencing God booklet so in a way my own spiritual experience right now is paralleling the one church folks are having in their small groups.

Here back a few weeks ago when everyone was in Unit One it laid out the Jeremiah passage (Jeremiah 18: 1-6) of the story of the Potter and the Clay. As it says, *“Behold, like the clay in the Potter’s hand, so are you in My hand...”* saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 18: 6) It is the image of a potter shaping and re-shaping a lump of clay into a thing of utility and beauty. God is the POTTER. We are the clay. God is in charge. We are NOT in charge. Its not about me. Its about You, Lord. As it says at one point, *“And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.”* (Jeremiah 18: 4) Who reshapes our lives? Do we or does the hand of the Potter? Is it our plan for our lives or is it the Potter’s plan for our lives? If God decides that we are spoiled clay in the directions we have chosen for our own lives, is it not His right to reshape us as HE wills and in the way He chooses? The hardest things in life may well be the hand of the eternal Potter reshaping our lives into something useful for His Kingdom. We want to be a cup; the Potter wants us to be a vase. We want to be a vase; God needs a plate. The clay has an opinion but the hand of the Potter reshapes the clay.

The parallel New Testament version of the story from the Prophet Jeremiah comes from the book of Romans and the ninth chapter. There it says: *“Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me thus?””* (Romans 9: 20) How ridiculous is the image of the clay shaking its fist at its Potter and

asking –why have you done this? Why have you made me this way? As human beings we want to tell the Potter how to mold us; rather, it is the Potter who will tell us how we will be molded. Our prayers even so often are just a long litany of our long laundry list of what we want God to do. Spiritual discernment is not telling God what to do; spiritual discernment is listening for what God wants us to do and then to do it. So often in prayer the clay is informing the Potter what He should do. I want you to round off this edge but not that one, Lord. I don't want You to go into that part of my heart or life. Do this, Potter. Don't do that, Potter. You may not touch that part of my life; You may not remold me into the image of Your Son, Jesus Christ. You may not break me, nor reshape me in ways that might be painful or cause me to change too much. You may not give me hard circumstances to get my attention in order to move me to be consistent with the Sovereign plan You have for my life. See, says the clay, it really is about ME; its not about YOU, Lord. Its about what I want, says the clay; its not about what YOU want, O Potter.

No, beloved, its not about me. Its about experiencing God. Its about YOU, Lord. As our scripture says: *"It depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy."* (Romans 9: 16) The reshaping and the re-molding is never done because God does not love us but precisely because God DOES love us and IS merciful and gracious unto us. The remolding, even the breaking of the pot by the hand of the Potter, is not done in judgment, it is done in love, and it is done to reform us in a way where we are blessed and happy in life. As Romans says in our scripture: *"I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you..."* (Romans 9: 17) There are reasons why God reshapes us, even and especially during the hardest times of our lives, but those reasons are always about grace and mercy and love ---not about anger or judgment or penalty.

So when we were part of God's great work of the Light the Fire Campaign it was tempting, wasn't it, to claim that the victory came from our own hand and not from the hand of the Potter? But its not about me; its about You, Lord. And things are going well here at The Church of the Covenant and the clay might start feeling its oats and forget whose hand and whose power and whose love has done everything. Its not about me; its about YOU, Lord. Something goes well, something goes a little too perfectly and the clay is always ready to claim responsibility. Stupid clay, you forget your Potter too quickly. Its not about me; it really is about YOU, Lord.

Or conversely, when something goes really bad in our life, when some church idea crashes and burns, when nothing seems to work right, when everyone seems to be ticked about everything, when our lives seem to be falling apart, when all our plans fall short, when things happen that we would never want to happen, then we shake our fist at the Almighty Potter –why is this happening? Why is this painful remolding happening? Stupid clay, you forget it is just the Almighty Potter, the One who loves You and knows You better than you know yourself, the One who is gracious and merciful always, the One who wants to reshape you into a person of singular spiritual beauty and strength, it is just the hand of the Potter reshaping you by mercy and grace more and more into the image of His Son Jesus, more and more into the person His Sovereign plan calls you to be. Clay, you forget the love and mercy of your Potter too quickly. Its not about me; it really is about YOU, Lord.

Whether everything is perfect and the sun is shining and the storm clouds are far away it is not about me; it is about YOU, Lord. Whether everything seems to be falling apart and the sun is nowhere to be found and a great storm has descended to rain on your parade, it is still not about me; it is about YOU, Lord.

Ever been out to the Westerwald Pottery here in Washington County? There is a young man who used to be in the youth group of a former church of mine who I believe is one of their head potters. It is fascinating to watch the skilled potter at work. He says you have to “see the clay”; the Potter sees something in the clay, some object, and each piece of clay is unique, some become pots and others mugs and others a jug. The skilled Potter knows and can see in the clay what it is to be even before it actually becomes that. Then the skilled hand of the Potter carefully and delicately and patiently reforms and reshapes the clay into something of profound beauty. Too fast and the clay falls; too slow and the clay dries out and becomes unworkable. The skilled hand of the Potter knows how to do it just right; the clay has very little to do with it at all. And sometimes an idea just isn’t working and the Potter takes the lump of clay and slaps it back on the potter’s wheel and kneads it by the strength of his hands. I am sure the clay would say “ouch’ if it could speak. But what had appeared to look like a flawed and imperfect pot now becomes a vase, perfect, the proportion perfect, the line and the symmetry perfect and beautiful and lovely.

The touch of the Master’s hand in our lives will do that. The touch of the Savior’s Holy Spirit will do that. Experiencing God in our lives will do that.

O clay, can we trust our Potter to reshape us and remake us into a person of singular inner beauty and strength? Can we trust the hand of love and mercy to be at work in our lives molding us into the best person we were meant to be?

Its not about me. Its not about you. Its about the touch of the Master’s hand. It really is about YOU, Lord. Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*