

**Isaiah 64:8** New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<sup>8</sup> Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

God, the potter, has made us to live our faith. He has shaped us, like a potter shapes a piece of clay, to be the followers of Jesus we were meant to be.

“We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing *power is from God* and not from us” St. Paul, (2 Corinthians 4:7 NIV).

“Jars of clay” or common clay pots — are not very glamorous. Not very notable.

We are not able to argue with the Potter about what kind of pot we are or want to be.

- But pots we are.
- God’s pots.
- Shaped by his hand.
- Made according to his will.

God does not mean for us to remain empty. Empty is our natural state.

We work hard to put something of meaning in our lives. But for all our work and will, we end up being a pot.

What is in us? What fills the pot that we are? God fills us with his spiritual gifts of faith, hope, love, kindness, forgiveness, joy. He fills the pots of the world with his light.

Hear this parable:

God, the potter, made this rather remarkable woman named Elouise. What made Elouise different was that she glowed with the joy of her faith. While others talked about religion, Elouise lived her faith. While others complained about other people and the weather, Elouise anticipated tomorrow and looked toward a bright future. While others planned programs and fussed about the operation of the congregation, Elouise went about teaching and comforting and supporting others.

And the strangest thing happened.

- The more Elouise served, the more she seemed to glow.
- The more she did for others, the more a strange kind of light seemed to come from her.



- And it got brighter and brighter with each passing day.

Soon Elouise's glow was so bright that it hurt people's eyes to be around her. Her light was so different from what people were used to. Most people made their own kind of portable light that shone on themselves so that others could see and admire them. But Elouise's light didn't shine on her at all.

***It shone from her*** and lit those around her. And it was so bright that it showed every blemish and fault, every age spot and scar, every imperfection they had. Over time, Elouise became very unpopular. She was unpopular with those who loved the darkness of their own light.

That did not bother Elouise. She would say: "Oh, it doesn't matter," "For every person who hides from the light, another person finds the way. Perhaps some people are tired of trying to make their own light or they are tired of trying to stand in the twilight of their own goodness. Perhaps they have found the darkness too deep and too frightening. Here they find the way—not mine—it is not my light—but God's."

The story of Elouise is a parable. We do not actually glow when we do the work that God would have us do.

We would not manage our lives well, if we did glow with the good news.

- It would not be long before we would begin to compare ourselves with each other. We would be self-critical.
- "I'm not as bright as I could be," we would say to ourselves,
- "But at least I am brighter than that other guy there who calls himself a Christian." And soon we would be in a brightness contest, trying to be the brightest and best so that others would admire us.

That's not the way the story goes. Elouise glowed with her goodness. She did not make the light. God did, the Potter shaped the light. She could not. Neither can we.

God has made (shaped) us to be carriers of his gifts.

God seeks to fill us with treasure. An unearthly treasure. A spiritual treasure.

Paul says: "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Corinthians 4:7 NIV).

Indeed, we are common clay pots. Our value is within the unearthly (spiritual) treasure within us. Christ, the light of the world shines through us.

A glowing, miraculous, wondrous, treasure—a treasure that we have the privilege



of offering to all those around us, especially to those who are still empty, broken and lost in the darkness of the world.

The treasure is Jesus Christ. He is the gift that God offers. And amazingly he dwells within us (the common clay pot, molded by God). Paul reminds us: “Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life” (Philippians 2:15b-16 NIV).

We are shaped by the hand of God, created by him and redeemed by Jesus Christ for the purpose of offering God’s treasure—forgiveness and life. This is an amazing gift that you receive from God.

The story is told about the mother who took her young son to visit a great cathedral. The lad looked around in amazement. “Mother, who are those people in the windows all around us?” “They are God’s saints,” she replied. “I get it,” he said. “Saints are people who the light shines through.”

We are God’s saints, redeemed by Jesus Christ, shaped by the hand of God, filled with the Spirit so that the light of God’s grace can shine through us and light all those who remain in darkness. We are God’s stars lighting up the sky. Go! Shine! Amen.

**Sirach 33:13 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

<sup>13</sup> Like clay in the hand of the potter,  
to be molded as he pleases,  
so all are in the hand of their Maker,  
to be given whatever he decides

