

THOSE MAGNIFICENT LEAKY POTS

by Robert Fitt

A woman in Africa was forced to walk a long distance for water every day, and she chose to carry the water in two large clay pots. The pot that she balanced on her head was perfectly sound and so it was always full when she returned home; but the other pot leaked water and by the time she reached home the cracked pot was barely half full. When the woman was asked why she continued to use a pot that was so obviously flawed, she explained that when she had noticed that the pot was leaking she saw it as an opportunity to scatter flower seeds along the path she traveled. Her life was better then, because she could enjoy the beautiful flowers that were watered by the leaky pot all along the way.

Like the leaky pot in the story, God uses every one of his children to do his work. Each of us is unique. A few of us have no obvious flaws and are objects of admiration; but most of us have chips, or scrapes, or leak a little here and there, others are obviously cracked or broken in one way or another—some a little and some a lot. But Jesus Christ—in his wisdom—uses the leaky pots along with the perfect ones, each one used to its best advantage according to each moment's need. The prettiest pots he uses as serving dishes and sets them on the table where the guests admire them; while the more durable ones are used as pitchers, bake-ware and mixing bowls without which the banquet could not be adequately prepared. The leaky ones he uses in the garden to keep the flowers beautiful; and the shattered ones he uses to strew along the path, helping others in the only way they can, as their humble ways and loving natures make the world a bit more livable because they are here. But Jesus uses us all—every one of us blesses others in small ways and great—even though mere mortals may not see how some of us could be of any use at all.

Those who can write, or sing or manage a corporation or a household with ease will be used, it is true, but so will those whose pots are cracked or broken and whose only contribution may be a bright smile or a friendly face or halting efforts to do whatever little they can. It is both astounding and wonderful that God loves all of us that much.

Perhaps some very flawed individuals are sent for us to stub-our-toes on—to test our compassion—or to cause us to reach beyond ourselves, until we learn to treat others with empathy and respect; for how we treat others—whether flawed or faultless—may yet be the very thing that decides whether we will be exalted or not. (Matt 25:31-46)

Others of us were once both attractive and useful in our own way; but now our bodies are aged or crippled; and some of us, who have become fully dependent on others, may feel that we have been disposed of in a human trash-bin of sorts where the last friendly visitor is lost in the foggy mists of a dwindling memory; and—feeling neglected and useless—we give up on

ourselves and allow our inner gifts to become rusty and corroded from disuse and neglect. Those who are wise will never allow that to happen. For we must never forget that it is the little things that bring happiness to others. A hug, a smile, or simple words of love and appreciation can melt hearts and move mountains.

My wife, Jean, is broken now. She once performed beautifully in every phase of her life. She was a caring mother, a loving and dutiful wife, a skilled musician—and her brilliant mind helped her overcome every difficulty that she put her hand to; but now she is broken. Age has taken its toll; she can no longer walk, and with her memory largely gone, her cooking skills are a thing of the far past, and her lilting soprano voice and the lingering melodies of piano and organ have been stilled these many years; but please remember that these were only the things she could do; what she *has become through the doing* remains like a golden flame lighting my way in the night. Her smile, her love, her continuing gratitude, her caring, her faithful devotion to God, her faith and willingness to do whatever she can do has never been better. These beautiful manifestations of a godly spirit cause me to love her even more in her distress than I did when she was young and beautiful. Her shining example of endurance in the face of daunting odds helps me to become more faithful and obedient than I could ever have been without her.

In the end—In the Day of Judgment—we will all clearly see that it is not what we have done in our lives that will bless us; it is what we have become through the doing. Where much is given much is expected; but for those where little is given, I feel confident that their loving hearts, their sensitive feelings and their remarkable faith will be enough to merit the compassion of a loving God and win for them the greatest blessing that the atonement affords—eternal life.