

Broken Vessels



An elderly woman had two large pots. Each hung on the ends of a pole, which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For two whole years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one-and-a-half pots of water.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house." The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years, I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Dear reader, I invite you to take a moment and try to see where you fit into this story spiritually. Do you see yourself in the perfect pot? Or in the cracked one?

If we are fully honest with ourselves, we recognize that all of us have our own unique flaws. We are all like cracked vessels. Yet, for God, in this world, nothing goes to waste. You may think like the cracked vessel, that you are inefficient or useless in certain areas of your life, but somehow these flaws can turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

The key is that we acknowledge our brokenness and allow God to work with it. And I can guarantee you that when we entrust our broken humanity to God's care and allow Him to work in our lives, He will not disappoint us. Look around and you will see all the lives that you have touched and watered. But it is the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together filled with grace, worthwhile and rewarding. You have just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them. After all, it is precisely what Christ does with us.

Have a blessed and grace-filled Lenten Season.

*Padre Ain Leetma, National Spiritual Committee
BC & Yukon Regional Council*