

The Teacup

A couple was shopping in an antique store. They both liked antique pottery, especially teacups. Spotting an exceptional cup, they asked to examine it, as they had never before seen a cup quite so beautiful.

As the store's proprietor handed it to them, the teacup suddenly spoke:

"I have not always been a teacup," it said. "There was a time when I was just a lump of red clay. My master rolled, pounded and patted me, over and over again. I cried out, 'Don't do that! I don't like it! Leave me alone!' But he only smiled, and gently said, 'Not yet.'

"Then, WHAM! I was placed on a potter's wheel, and suddenly I was spinning 'round and 'round. 'Stop it!' I screamed. 'I'm getting dizzy! I'm going to be sick!' But my master only nodded and said quietly, 'Not yet.'

"He continued spinning me, and then poked and prodded and reshaped me. Then he put me in an oven. I had never felt such heat! I pounded at the door, yelling 'Help! Get me out of here!' I could see him through the glass, shaking his head from side to side, and I could read his lips as he said 'Not yet.'

"When I thought that I wouldn't be able to bear it for another minute, the oven door opened. He carefully took me out and placed me on a shelf, and I began to cool. Oh, that felt so good! But after I had cooled he picked me up and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible! I thought I would gag! 'Stop! Please, stop!' I cried. Again he shook his head and said, 'Not yet.'

"Then suddenly he put me in another oven. This one was not like the first – the temperature was twice as hot! I was certain I would suffocate. I begged and pleaded. I screamed. I cried. I was convinced that I would not survive. Then, suddenly, as I was just about to lose all hope, the door opened, and he took me out and again placed me on the shelf, where I cooled – and waited, wondering, 'What is he going to do to me next?'

"An hour later my master approached. He held up a mirror and said, 'Look at yourself.' I did, and I couldn't believe what I saw. 'Surely that's not me!' I gasped, for I had never before seen anything so beautiful.

“He answered quietly: ‘I know it hurt to be rolled, pounded and patted, but, had I left you alone, you’d have dried up. I know it made you dizzy to be spun on the wheel, but, had I stopped, you would have crumbled. I know that you found the oven hot and uncomfortable, but had I not put you in there you would have cracked. I know how disagreeable you found the fumes, but without paint you wouldn’t have had any color in your life. And I know that the conditions in the second oven were worse than those in the first, but without the second treatment you would have been frail and wouldn’t have survived long. Now you are a finished product. Now you are what I had in mind when I first began with you.’”

The moral: God knows exactly what He’s doing. He is the potter, and we are His clay. He will mold us and make us, exposing us to just enough pressures of just the right kind that we may grow into a flawless piece of work, to fulfill His good, pleasing and perfect will.

So: The next time life seems hard, and you are being rolled and pounded and pushed almost beyond endurance; when your world seems to be spinning out of control; when you feel like you are in a fiery furnace of trials; when life seems to “stink”; try this: Brew a cup of your favorite tea in your prettiest tea cup, sit down, think about this story, and have a little talk with the Potter.