

The Tea Cup Story

(Author Unknown)

One day, while out exploring with a friend, you happened to stumble into a quiet little shop and began looking at the varied items found there.

Spotting an exceptional cup, you ask *"May we see that? We've never seen a cup quite so beautiful."*

As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the teacup spoke, "You don't understand. I have not always been a teacup. There was a time when I was just a lump of red clay. My master took me and rolled me pounded and patted me over and over and I yelled out, 'Don't do that. I don't like it! Let me alone.' But he only smiled, and gently said; 'Not yet!'" "Then. WHAM! I was placed on a spinning wheel and suddenly I was spun around and around and around. 'Stop it! I'm getting so dizzy! I'm going to be sick,' I screamed. But the master only nodded and said, quietly; 'Not yet.'

"He spun me and poked and prodded and bent me out of shape to suit himself and then... Then he put me in the oven. I never felt such heat. I yelled and knocked and pounded at the door. Help! Get me out of here! I could see him through the opening and I could read his lips as he shook his head from side to side, 'Not yet!'"

"When I thought I couldn't bear it another minute, the door opened. He carefully took me out and put me on the shelf, and I began to cool. Oh, that felt so good! Ah, this is much better, I thought. But, after I cooled he picked me up and he brushed and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible. I thought I would gag. 'Oh, please; Stop it, Stop it!' I cried. He only shook his head and said. 'Not yet!'"

"Then suddenly he put me back in to the oven. Only it was not like the first one. This was twice as hot and I just knew I would suffocate. I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. I was convinced I would never make it. I was ready to give up. Just then the door opened and he took me out and again placed me on the shelf, where I cooled and waited --- and waited, wondering "What's he going to do to me next? An hour later he handed me a mirror and said 'Look at yourself.'" "And I did. I said, 'That's not me; that couldn't be me. It's beautiful. I'm beautiful!'"

Quietly he spoke: 'I want you to remember, then,' he said, 'I know it hurt to be rolled and pounded and patted, but had I just left you alone, you'd have dried up. I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I know it hurt and it was hot and disagreeable in the oven, but if I hadn't put

you there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted you all over, but if I hadn't done that, you never would have hardened. You would not have had any color in your life. If I hadn't put you back in that second oven, you wouldn't have survived for long because the hardness would not have held. Now you are a finished product. Now you are what I had in mind when I first began with you."

Sisters, you are like that teacup. God is the Potter of your life. He knows what He's doing for each of us. He will mold us and make us, and expose us to just enough pressures of just the right kinds that we may be made into a flawless piece of work to fulfill His good, pleasing and perfect will.

For now, we must get to know our Potter. He is good, always... and always faithful. He knows what He's doing.

So when life seems hard, and you are being pounded and patted 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", remember -

In wisdom, He knows just what to bring into our lives to shape the beauty, color, and flavor He aims for us to have. He never takes His eyes off of you or forgets what you are going through. He never gets tired of His project or decides to quit. He promises to finish what He started in you.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11