

Interactive lesson



*picture cropped from
publicity photo [https://
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
File:Bob at Easel.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bob_at_Easel.jpg)*

Have you ever made a mistake? <Let them respond>

How did it affect you/your life? <Let them respond>

Do you know who this guy is? <Let them respond>

Do you know what Bob Ross said about mistakes during his painting show? <Let them respond>

The classic from quote Bob Ross is, “We don’t make mistakes, we have happy accidents.”

What does that mean to you? <Let them respond>

Did God create perfect people? <Let them respond>

Are people perfect nowadays? <Let them respond>

What happened that people are not perfect?

<Let them respond>

How do you think God views people’s imperfections?

<Let them respond>

Have you ever discovered that what you considered a character flaw was actually useful?

<Let them respond>

How often do you let God guide you in using your flaws? <Let them respond>

Remember, God loves us always and gives us ways to live more fully even when we have messed up.

Gospel lesson

We continue reading about Jesus's countryside ministry in the Gospel of Luke.



*picture screencaptured from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bsCyG2xBPs> (LUMO)*

Luke 14:1, 7-14

(NRSV)

¹ On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

⁷ When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable.

⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host;

⁹ and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place.

¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you.

¹¹ For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and

those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹²He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid.

¹³But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

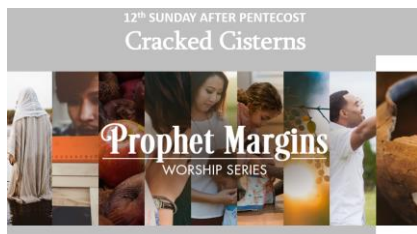
¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Gather Us In">

TFWS #2236>

Message: Cracked Cisterns



Foreground picture from

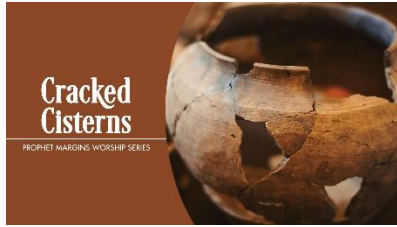
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/prophet-margins/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Gracious provider of abundant blessings,
as we take time now to further consider today's
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That when what you have given us leaks out, we share
Your blessings with the world. Amen.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/prophet-margins/twelfth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/twelfth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

In this final week of the “Prophet Margins” series, we consider ourselves as “Cracked Cisterns”:

“[Spiritually,] We leak. We can’t hold the grace of God, the water of life. We receive it, we fill up, week by week, but it leaks out.

And if we don’t return to be filled again, we’re going to go dry. We’re going to be running on empty. We need to return to the source.”

I struggle to remember names. I have told you many times what my husband Keven says about it: When it comes to names, my brain is like a sieve – and I just keep proving him right.

But names are important! They identify unique individuals; using someone’s name lets that person know that they matter to you. As a pastor, struggling with names is a big flaw. Everyone matters to Christ, and we are to show God’s love to them. Forgetting names makes that problematic, so I’m working on it.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/josiah-scroll/>

Ancient Israel was to keep God as the most important focus in their society. However, in both the psalm and in the reading from Jeremiah we hear about the people turning away from God. Instead of turning to the source of all life for help and blessings, they looked elsewhere. They did not listen to or obey God, who had brought the people out of Egypt into their own prosperous land.

They demanded a human king, rather than viewing God as their king. God gave them the desire of their stubborn hearts, letting the people focus allegiance on a human ruler who was supposed to be faithful to God. But predictably, the human kings became more and more full of themselves and chose to worship other things than God. And God let them experience the consequences of their choices.

Those choices felt good to them at the time they made them, but were ultimately destructive for the people. The kingdom which was supposed to show the glory of God to the world was broken. This is the kind of thing we see over and over again when egos are given priority over the needs of society, over the sharing of God's love.



picture screencaptured from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bsCyG2xBPs> (LUMO)

Jesus warned about this in the microcosm of the banquet. Going for the best seats on arrival played to egos initially, but likely would ultimately lead to embarrassment. Trusting in ourselves, we miss out on what we would gain; trusting in God, we are blessed beyond what we need.

It may not feel that way; the world is not always kind. The early Christians were persecuted for their beliefs and tempted to join the rest of society in sin. The letter to the Hebrews encouraged them to stay true to Jesus and His teaching, to show love and to serve God above all else.

When we do that, God takes our sin-cracked and broken lives and uses them for good. Remember the story of the cracked pot?



picture screencaptured from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejuranCUdyM>

A water-bearer carried two pots to the well each day, filled them, and brought them back to the house. One of the pots had a crack in it and dripped water alongside the path all the way back, so that when they got back to the house, it was only half-full.

The water-bearer saw that the cracked pot was sad about its crack, and told the pot to look at the plants alongside the path to and from the house. The cracked pot noticed that going to the well, its side had few plants growing, but on the way back there were many flowers flourishing on its side.

The water-bearer explained, “That is because I knew about your crack and planted seeds there, for you to drip water on. Because you are just the way you are, we have beautiful flowers on the Master’s table every day. We would not have that if you were not cracked.”

For me, not remembering names meant that I generally avoid gossiping, because I can not keep people straight by names (and I do not like nasty things being said about others). All the years of running emergency squad calls, I maintained confidentiality largely because I could not remember by name who I took in for what, so I do not talk about patients in ways they can be identified.

God used my flaw for good, for me to have more value. God used the sinful condition of the Israelites to show the world the grace and power of the Almighty.



picture from MMMS collection

In today’s world, many have forgotten or simply deny

what the church knows to be true: God IS, and God wants all of humanity to flourish in relationship with the source of all life. In pain, in loneliness, hurt by thousands of years of sin building up in the world, people spiritually hunger and thirst for the Word of God, possibly now more than ever.

Guess what? Even though we too may be cracked or broken from sin, we can reach out to connect with others and tell – or better yet, **show** – them the wonderful news that we learned through Jesus!

God brings hope even for the cracked cistern that is today's church. What you consider a flaw, God has a use for. So our homework for this week is to:

- † Swallow our egos and accept our flaws as part of us
- † Reach out to others in love as guided by the Spirit
- † Look for ways to value others' undesired scars: someone who was hurt is often more sensitive to others' needs; someone aging is often full of wisdom; someone young and rambunctious often has energy to do what others no longer do.
- † Help others rebuild their value through God – in doing so, you become a person of more value too.
- † And always, give thanks to God for our restoration.

In this way, the leaky cistern of our society can be replaced with the fountain of living water God is

waiting to provide.

<PRAYER OF CONFESSION (from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/>)>

Let us confess our sin against God and our neighbors.

God of Life, We confess that we have gone after worthless trinkets, often losing our own worth in our materialistic desires.

Instead of claiming our true identity as Children of God, we define ourselves by other titles.

We are more than our jobs, our families, our stuff, our lack of stuff.

We are more than our hair, our size, our skin, or even our age.

While these things inform who we are, they are not what ultimately defines us.

You define us.

You are the God of Life, the true Living Water.

Our own vessels can never quench the thirst we have for your Living Water.

We try to drink from our own cisterns, cracked as they are.

May we embrace what it means to partake of water that lives and moves, not limiting ourselves to lives of stagnancy like water in a jar.

God of Life, keep flowing around us, that we may float in your Living Water! Amen.

<PARDON (from UM BOW #488)>

Through God's grace we are forgiven,
by the mercy of our Creator,
through the love of the Christ,
and in the power of the Spirit.
Let us rejoice and be glad!
Glory to God! Amen.

Let us now affirm our faith with
THE NICENE CREED

UMH #880

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven,

was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day He rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in the one holy catholic* and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism **universal*
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

<Doxology>

<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>

Let us pray:

Renewing and refreshing God, fill our thirsty souls
with your living water!

As Jesus promised to the woman at the well, and as
Jeremiah reminded the prophets,
this water is ours if we keep our focus on you
and don't chase after other gods.

May the offering we make this day mark our commitment
to keeping our eyes and our hearts set on a closer
walk with you.

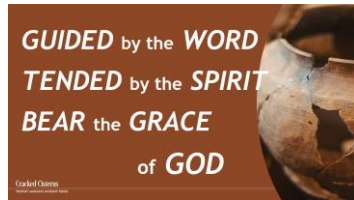
(above prayer from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>)

- Lord, please help {these members of the body of Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and comfort:
 - **Family of Kathryn Raymond** - died Aug 22
 - **Susan Hall** - leg complications, went to Syr hosp 8/25
 - -
 - -
 - -
 - -
 - -
- Thanks for
 - -
 - -
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
 - Family far off
 - Travelers
- Lord, please help the people of Ukraine who yet struggle with war in their homeland.
- Guide our Leaders - local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
 - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
 - bring world peace

All these things we pray as You taught us to pray,
<Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee" UMH #430>

<Benediction>**



background picture from
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Go forth, guided by the Word and tended by the Spirit, to bear the grace of God in the midst of this troubled world, that all may see a glimpse of the heavenly kingdom through you.

Amen.