

# Have Thine Own Way, Lord

Lately, I've found myself leafing through my grandmother's hymnals, revisiting many of the old familiar tunes I grew up singing. So many simple and beautiful songs filled with rich truths. One hymn, relatively small, with its four short verses and simple refrain, has been on my mind a lot recently and seemed a fitting point for reflection as we enter the Easter holiday.

The hymn, Have Thine Own Way, Lord, dates back to 1907 and refers to the image of God as the potter, while we are the clay, shaped in his hands, as seen in scripture, notably in Jeremiah. "But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand."- Jeremiah 64:8 The first verse:

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me after Thy will;  
While I am waiting, yielded and still

The theme continues through the verses, that repeated refrain of "Have thine own way Lord! Have Thine own way," until we reach the last verse, in which the author delivers his final plea.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!  
Fill with Thy Spirit 'till all shall see  
Christ only, always, living in me.

What a beautiful image! That we would surrender unto God so fully his "absolute sway" in our lives. That we would be so full of the Spirit that when others look at us, all they see is Christ. ("I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." -Gal 2:20)

I invite you to join me in longing for that type of surrender. Scripture reminds us that our lives are not our own ( "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps."-Jer 10:23, "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." Proverbs 16:9), that we are joined to Christ, that we belong to the Lord, who in whom "all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him... he is before all things, and in him all things hold together." -Colossians 1:16-17

For me, those truths can be so hard to remember in day to day life. We are captivated by decisions and choices, worries about the future, children, spouses, and all we deal with, that we can easily forget our heavenly mindset, that we are merely clay. When others

look at us, do they truly see Christ in us? Or do they see what we want them to see, our careers, families, successes, accomplishments and so on? Do we truly see ourselves as clay, or would we, more often, see ourselves as the potter in our lives? I know for myself, how easy it can be to forget that I am not in charge here. That I am ultimately not the one shaping my life (or the lives of my children, my family, my husband). And yet, how much peace awaits us when we relinquish that idol, that desire for control of our lives! The clay, no matter how hard it may desire or struggle, cannot shape itself, nor can it shape any of the other pieces of clay around it.

This Easter season, I invite you to join me in inviting God to “mold [us] and make [us] after Thy will,” and to “hold o’er [our] being absolute sway.” That we can truly sing, as another old hymn says, “I surrender all,” knowing we surrender all our expectations, ideals, accomplishments, desires, plans and our physical lives unto Christ and his will for our lives.

And take heart! For we know that we are not in the hands of an inexperienced artist, but a master potter, who will in the end mold and shape us into a beautiful, new, perfect creation. He never promises that the shaping will be easy, quick or painless, but we can have assurance that we are in the safe, capable, sure hands of our heavenly father, the master potter, who will not abandon us, but through the sacrifice of his Son, render us a new, perfect vessel one day.

“I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ,” Philippians 1: 6

-Laura Keffer