

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2020
“INDETERMINATE CLAY”

By Kim Sheard

*Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand. ~Isaiah 64:8 (NRSV)*

I am sure many sermons can—and have—been preached on this single verse. It is a powerful image: we humans as unformed lumps of soft clay, with God kneading, pinching, and smoothing, molding us into His unique works of art, each with a purpose only He knows. Yet this brings a question to my mind. But first, a story.

Our biggest gardening success this year was our tomatoes. I had no idea what I was doing when I picked out two plants that would produce full-sized tomatoes and one cherry tomato plant. It wasn't until later that I understood what had been on their labels. The full-sized tomatoes were “determinate,” which means they would grow to a particular size, grow and ripen their tomatoes pretty much all at once, then be finished for the season. They did OK. Just OK.

The cherry tomato plant, which I eventually called our tomato “tree,” was an “indeterminate” plant. It grew and grew, from just a couple of inches high when purchased, to quite a bit taller than me. And, over the span of 3 months, gradually, it produced dozens and dozens of yummy cherry tomatoes. It was my pride and joy, constantly sprouting, growing, then ripening “babies,” and was never really “finished” until the temperature dropped below freezing.

OK, back to my question about the potter and the clay. Does God ever put His creations into the kiln and fire them? Does He ever completely “finish” us?

I don't think so. I think we remain raw and unfinished for Him to remold often, shifting us through a number of different, but beautiful forms. We are indeterminate, never completely finished until we are called to heaven. Wonderful and endlessly fascinating like that cherry tomato tree. Thanks be to the potter!

Thought for Today: God constantly remolds and improves us.

Prayer: Father, thank you for your artistic hand in my life. Help me to succeed in what you are molding me to be. Amen.