

Topical Study — Parable of the Old and New

Read Luke 5:33-39

Same account in Mark 2:18-22 & Matthew 9:14-17

Many times, Jesus spoke in parables to teach lessons. He would use everyday things to convey a spiritual message. In Luke 3, Mathew 9 & Mark 2 we find that Jesus was questioned about fasting. He answers in a seemingly unusual way by describing examples. What does new wine in old wineskins mean? Today we are going to uncover this biblical truth.

Luke 5:33-39

And they said unto him, why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

³⁴ And he said unto them, can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

³⁵ But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

³⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them: **“No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise, the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was *taken* out of the new does not match the old.** ³⁷ **And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined.** ³⁸ But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. ³⁹ **And no one, having drunk old *wine*, immediately desires new; for he says, ‘The old is better.’ ”**

Matthew 9:15-17

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”

¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. ¹⁶ No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. ¹⁷ Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins ^[c] break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”

Q: “No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one”. What is your understanding of this?

Q: What does new wine into old wineskins mean in practical sense of things or in today’s language?

Q: What are the examples of new wine and old wineskins?

Q: What makes someone to want to retain the new in the old?

Q: What is the danger of putting the new wine in the old wineskin?

Q: How do we apply this to ourselves as we progress in this new year or season?

Q: **“And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, ‘The old is better.’” (v39).**

What is the right interpretation of this?

Reference: Isaiah 43:18-19

Old & New Garments

Jesus’ point is clear. You cannot fit His new life into the old forms. This explains why Jesus did not begin a reform movement within Judaism, working with the rabbinical schools and such. Jesus says, “I have not come to patch up your old practices. I come with a whole new set of clothes.”

Jesus reminds us that what is old and stagnant often cannot be renewed or reformed. God will often look for new vessels to contain His new work, or vessels that have emptied themselves of the old so they can carry His new work. This reminds us that the religious establishment of any age is not necessarily pleasing to Jesus. Sometimes it is in direct opposition to His work, or at least resisting His work.

“And he gave them this illustration: “No one rips up a new garment to make patches for an old, worn-out one. If you tear up the new to make a patch for the old, it will not match the old garment.” (v36 TPT)

Patching up an old garment with a piece of a new garment not only disfigures the new garment, but also causes the old garment to become more ragged than ever, for the new piece has still to shrink and will then pull the old threadbare garment to pieces. Just as fatal will it be to adapt the principles of Jesus to the old systems.

Wine & Wineskins

Here is the same contrast of old and new that we saw in the parable of the patched garment. His point is the same: you cannot join the new to the old or you will ruin both the new wine and the old skin. **When God is about to birth His new which in this case illustrated by new wine, you cannot put that into old structures represented by old wineskin. It just would not work.**

*Having put Jesus' teaching in perspective, however, we must pause to grapple personally with the power of his words: "And who pours new wine into an old wineskin? If someone did, the old wineskin would burst, and the new wine would be lost. **New wine must always be poured into new wineskins.**" (vv37-38 TPT).*

What are the structures of our own age and culture that cannot coexist with the new wine of the Spirit? What have we tried to sew Christianity onto that will cause a greater tear and undermine the faith itself? In Jesus' day, it was the legalistic spirit of the Pharisees. What is it in your own life? What is it in your work, your community, your school, your environment?

"New wine must be poured into new wineskins," not accommodated to those comfortable things in our lives with which it is basically incompatible. The message for disciples is to be uncompromising about our faith and the work of the Spirit in our lives. If our honoured customs and habits, and the structures of our society must adjust to that, then so be it.

Old & New Wine

"And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'" (v39)

Jesus is addressing the familiar, the general acceptable norm. Everyone in the natural that have drunk of "old wine" would really prefer it to "new wine" because the old is matured, cured, and aged, ready for the beautiful taste. That is where many sits. However, **God is inviting us to His "new wine". It is not familiar, not always comfortable, and challenges your comfortable norms.**

Will you like others say: "the old is better"? or will you confidently embrace "God's new"?