

Matthew 9:14-17

Parable of the New Wine

Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? ¹⁵ And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

A question is asked of Jesus wanting to know why Jesus' disciples didn't fast like other disciples did. Jesus poses his answer using a natural example.

A bridechamber is the place where the marriage ceremonies take place. It doesn't make sense to fast or afflict yourself by humbly fasting when it should be a time of celebration since the bride and groom are together. You would not have a funeral during a wedding ceremony. So, since Jesus in his role as the groom is actually with his disciples (children of the bridechamber or those making preparation for the arrival of the groom and bride), it is not time for mourning or this type of preparation.

Jesus explains that the proper attitude is celebration but when the bridegroom is taken away, in his absence, his disciples can mourn then and make preparations for the return of the groom. This seems to point directly to end time prophesy to include the death, resurrection, and ascension and return of Christ along with the rapture. It is proper now for us to prepare for the future return of the groom which must include fasting.

Looking closer at this, we see three parables are used together to address the one question, which in essence was, why don't your disciples practice the religious ceremonies and traditions of the established church followers today?

Matthew Henry seems to indicate that Jesus' disciples were not the professional religious people of his time. While Pharisees were well educated, Jesus' disciples were common men and some of these religious practices would be more difficult for them.

David Guzik points out that "it wasn't right for Jesus disciples to imitate the Pharisees in their hypocritical shows.

Another source I read states, "you can't mix old religious rituals with new faith in Jesus."
(gotquestions.org)

¹⁶ No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.



In the natural, you don't sew a new patch onto an old garment. I don't sew, but apparently, my research indicates that if you sew a new patch that has not been pre-washed or shrunk, if you sew it on old garments, when it does shrink, it will make the tear you patched up worse. That would seem to make sense to me.

So what Jesus is saying in the natural, you will make things worse mixing the old with the new.

¹⁷ Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

The last of the three parables on this topic of religion states if you put new wine into old wine bottles that have already been stretched, when the new wine expands during fermentation, it will burst the old bottles. So instead, you must place new wine into new bottles, this way both the containers and the wine are saved. Under the other condition, you would lose both the old bottle and the wine.

Most of the commentaries I reviewed on this indicate Jesus is making a distinction between the old religious practices in the Old Testament based upon works versus the New Testament based upon faith. His disciples would not fall under the burden of the old or else the new work he was doing with them could not be contained and successful.

The parables make sense in the natural; there is a time for some things but not for all things; you can't fix the old with the new....go totally new; you can't expect an old container and traditions to be able to hold and maintain a new way of doing things.

Now the question for me is was Jesus saying we need to do away with the Old Testament (OT) or was he explaining to those questioning him, that he was doing a new thing that was going to be different from the previous style they were accustomed to. Here are some points to consider:

- We are no longer under the laws of the OT, but the OT principles still remain very relevant.
- The OT has fulfilled its purpose and is growing old and obsolete under the new covenant. Heb 8:8-10, 13; Heb 7:19
- God's nature and attitude toward sin has not changed from the OT to the NT.
- The OT is valuable still and points to the fulfillment of Christ's work. In my opinion it represents the first phase (Spring Feasts) while the New Testament ushers in the second phase and completion of God's plan. Matt 5:17
- The OT is still valuable. 2 Tim 3:16-17
- The OT principles are changed from the law to the Spirit of God and from tablets of stone to the heart of people. Jer 31:33, Heb 10:16, 19-22
- The NT (new covenant) is a better deal than the OT covenants. Heb 8:6-13
- OT shows us the plan of God, our inability in our own strength to keep the law and our ability to meet the NT through the work of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Personally, the OT for me has increased my faith in the promises and redeeming work of the NT. It is a shadow of things to come and since I see the partial fulfillment of the OT through Christ, I'm extremely confident He is faithful to complete it. Heb 10:1-12; 15-18; 20

These parables also support the issue Paul was experiencing with the Galatian churches where these "new" Gentile believers were being strongly influenced to add traditional Jewish beliefs and practices to the faith. To require Gentiles who would not have been familiar with Jewish religious customs to follow these requirements, would be very similar to requiring Jesus' disciples to follow the customs of the Pharisees. In other words, putting the new spirit and faith they received into the old containers of Jewish traditions....to them, this could not succeed.

See Galatians 2:20-21; 3:2-3; 19-27; 4:21-31; 5:4,13-14, 18 Note: listen to the podcast for Galatians chapters 3-5 on the website.

"If one tries to mend a shrunken piece of cloth with a new patch, the patch will eventually shrink and tear away from the shrunken cloth, because the shrunken cloth will have no give left in it. Similarly, the gases produced by fermenting wine will stretch old, stretched-out wineskins beyond their breaking point. New patches are for new cloth that can accommodate shrinking, and new wine is for new wineskins that can accommodate expansion. Jesus could not be fit exactly into preconceived patterns and expectations, and those who tried would find themselves suffering great spiritual harm."

(Ligonier.org)

Another viewpoint I found in Googling the topic (The Berean Test):

Luke 5:39, this passage doesn't show up in Matthew or Mark and seems to indicate that the wineskins are people. The person requires transformation before they stop saying "the old is good enough", willing to drink new wine. So, the wineskin is the transformed life, not the wine itself.

This begs the question: what is this "new wine"? Jesus' overarching message is to establish a new covenant, where there would be forgiveness of sins. This connects with wine in [Matthew 26:27-28](#), [1 Corinthians 11:25](#), and [Hebrews 13:20](#) and aligns with the Scriptures provided. The promised Holy Spirit comes with the package, reiterated at the beginning of Acts 1 and begins to enter the disciples of Jesus post-ascension in Acts 2.

Therefore, the new wine is the new covenant and the new wineskins are vessels willing to enter into this new covenant with Jesus, prepared to receive the Holy Spirit. God has already made new wine, the new covenant, about 2,000 years ago. He is making new wineskins, prepared hearts that enter into this new covenant and receive the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps we can ask the question, what does Jesus mean by new wine and new cloth?

- Is it the new covenant?
- Is it the Holy Spirit representing new life and a new and living way?
- What is the new wine skin? Is it us as believers and showing us that we cannot try and add the Holy Spirit without first having a new container/new life?



I'm still working prayerfully through this for the proper real-life application. I'm starting to feel comfortable in my Spirit that all of the above may be quite applicable. The idea of the new wine (Holy Spirit) being placed into a new life, fits into the Feast sequence (Leviticus 23) in the proper spiritual order. Also, New Testament scriptures like 2 Corinthians 5:17. Be brand new my friend, be brand new.