

Sermon Parable of New Wine in Old Wine Skins

Matthew 9:14-17

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 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 (the bride) it is not time for mourning or this type of preparation.

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.

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.

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 new wine.

“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 expand and 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)

The parables make sense in the natural; you can't mix the old with the new....you have to be brand new; you can't expect an old container and traditions to be able to hold and maintain a new way of doing things.

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.

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:

- 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
- 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 fulfillment of the OT through Christ.

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.

What is this new wine?

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

It could indicate that the wineskins are people. The person requires transformation before they drink new wine. So, the wineskin is the transformed life, not the wine itself.

The could be the new covenant and the new wineskins are vessels willing to enter into this new covenant with Jesus, prepared to receive the Holy Spirit. He is making new wineskins, prepared hearts that enter into this new covenant and receive the Holy Spirit.

- 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.

But as we look at this scripture in light of the Jesus Revolution Movie, what does it mean for a church like CBC?

- What is the new wine? New lives that we invite into this fellowship. Perhaps a new way to promote the Kingdom and reach others.
- What is the new wine skin? It could be a new CBC. A new place that can accommodate the new wine that enters this place and expands and we grow with it.

What does this parable mean for you and me?

- We have to let go of the past, the old us. Become new creatures in Christ, and let Him begin to prepare us to receive the new thing He desires and wants to do in this place.
- How? Follow the steps.

Galatians 2:20