

Fresh Wineskins

14 - Metamorphosis: The Way of Transformation
Church on the Park | Sunday, 5 DEC 2021 | Glen Gerhauser

Text: “As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector’s booth; and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he got up and followed Him.

Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?” But when Jesus heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

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

And Jesus said to them, “The attendants of the bridegroom (Literally, the sons of the bridal chamber, υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος) cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results. Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.” (Matt. 9:9-17, NASB).

Theme: Today, the Father is making us into fresh wineskins for his new wine. And like Matthew, the tax collector, he’s calling you to be a part of his new thing.

Intro: What are God’s new, fresh wineskins? And how can you be a part of the new thing the Father is doing on this earth? There’s a reason why I wanted to read these verses in Matthew 9:9-17 together. Only by reading the context, we understand what Jesus means by the fresh wineskins and new wine. First, observe how the people are questioning Jesus. Both the Pharisees and John the Baptist’s disciples are disturbed by what Jesus is doing. And their questions are more the questions; they are criticisms. They are fighting against this new thing, a new thing that threatens their rigid and even zealous, religious ways. “Why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners? Shouldn’t you be holy? You’re setting a bad example. And why aren’t your disciples fasting? You should be doing what every other godly person is doing?” Yet, the Father was doing something fresh and new. Sadly, the religious ones could not see or understand it. Even Jesus’ own disciples had a hard time understanding who Jesus really was and what he was doing. With this in mind, we will look at what the Father and his Son, Jesus, is all about.

1) The Father is forming fresh wineskins for his new wine (Matt. 9:14-17).

- The Father has been actively doing this since Jesus (Isa. 43:19).
 - It's his new way, and it transcends what we find comfortable.
- What is a wineskin, and what is new wine?
 - In Biblical times, they made wineskins from goat skins and sometimes sheep skins. They usually used the whole goatskin to make the container where they stored the grapes' fresh juice.
 - New wine (what we call juice) is wine that has not been fermented yet (or is in the early stage of fermentation).
 - In the wineskin, the process of fermentation (metamorphosis) would happen. As the yeast eats the juice's sugar, it produces gas, putting pressure on the walls of the wineskin.
 - If the wineskin were old and rigid, it would tear and break—not able to handle the process of metamorphosis from juice to alcoholic wine.
 - If the wineskin is new and fresh, it is flexible. It will stretch and expand through the process of change.
 - Fermentation was one of the great discoveries of the ancient world and not because alcohol can get you drunk. It was good because, in ancient times, there was no refrigeration. It meant the juice could last forever and not spoil.
 - In other words, it was a way of preserving the grape harvest.
- Jesus brought new wine to the people. Many people were not used to this unique wine. Jesus shared good news—it was sweet and reflected God's goodness, love, grace and mercy. This Good News is the new wine.
 - However, the Pharisees and religious people were used to the old wine and had become like old wineskins.
 - They could not receive what Jesus was saying and doing.
 - They were resisting the Holy Spirit's power.
 - They were stuck in their old ways—ways that were not Biblical, though they had the appearance of what was good.
 - Things like keeping away from sinners, sacrifices, and fasting weren't what the Father wanted.
 - What???
 - This should cause us to pause and think.
 - "I thought God delighted in holiness, sacrifices and fasting."
 - No, not necessarily.
- The Father was creating new wineskins and still is creating new wineskins.
 - The new wineskins were the people that Jesus saved by his grace. They've been saved by grace and continue to live in his grace.
 - Only these alone could contain the new wine.
 - They are Jesus' vessels ([2 Cor. 4:7-12](#)).
 - Ultimately, Jesus is both the new wine and the new wineskin.
 - To reject Jesus, his Words, and his Spirit means to reject his new wine and the new wineskins.
- Who are we as a church?
 - We are a new wineskin church.

- We are all sinners saved by grace and need to remember Jesus' grace daily.
- We do not reflect the old denominational, legalistic, micro-managing and controlling ways.

2) The molecular structure of the Father's fresh wineskins is his kind and loyal love (Matt. 9:9-13).

- Jesus said, "Go and learn what this means."
 - When he said this, he was changing the old wineskin mindsets.
 - What was he referring to?
 - Hosea 6:6
 - So Let's read Hosea 6:6 and find out what it says.
 - "For I delight in loyalty [hesed - kind and loyal love] rather than sacrifice, And the knowledge [da'at] of God rather than burnt offerings."
 - כִּי חֶסֶד חִפְצָתִי וְלֹא זֶבַח וַיְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים מַעֲלֹת:
 - In other words, God enjoys love, grace, mercy, kindness and love. This is what he delights in. The Lord also longs for intimacy with his people, not the outward form of religious rituals. He wants us to truly know him.
- Jesus makes his fresh wineskin by calling sinners and transforming them.
 - Because they are recipients of Jesus' love, mercy, kindness and forgiveness, they can show it to others.
 - Jesus' disciples are the new wineskin and they are marked by Hesed love.
 - Simply put, his new wineskins are the communities (the churches) created by Jesus' transforming work.
- Hesed and Da'at—love and intimacy—make us flexible, stretchable and expandable like a fresh wineskin.
 - Love and intimacy enable you to experience the dynamic transformation that the Holy Spirit and the Word does in your life.
 - A church that is a new wineskin church expands and stretches as the Holy Spirit works to transform sinners into saints.
 - We need lots of love and grace to welcome sinners.
 - But here's the thing—when you know Jesus' constant forgiveness, love and grace in your life—you will be able to extend it to others.
 - Now here's the thing: it's easy to love sinners who are sinning against other people, but it will stretch you to love sinners who sin against you.
- The Pharisees forgot one significant and central thing about the Torah they taught.
 - The Torah's foundation is grace and love.
 - Read it with the fresh eyes of the Holy Spirit's enlightenment, and you will see this foundation very clearly.
- How do we stay fresh like a new wineskin?
 - And why do we need to ask this question?

- Because after a while, any wineskin gets old and inflexible, just like the Pharisees.

3) We stay fresh by being children of the bridal chamber (Matt. 9:15).

- ‘Children/Sons of the bridal chamber’ is the literal translation of the original Greek in Matthew 9:15.
 - It’s an unusual phrase, and that’s why translators don’t translate it literally.
 - ‘Children/Sons of the bridal chamber’ is an idiom that means friends of the Bridegroom and bride.
 - They are the closest friend of the bride and groom, and their job is to prepare the wedding and the wedding feast.
 - The application: they are connected with the Bridegroom, and their call is to connect others to the Bridegroom.
 - In other words, to introduce sinners to Jesus and help nurture them in Christ.
- All of this is possible by being children of the bridal chamber.
 - In other words, we are faithful to the secret chamber of prayer and pursuing intimacy (the *da’at* in Hosea 6:6) with Jesus.
- As a church, we’ve always been about being a new wineskin.
 - Some have been upset when they come with old, Pharisaical thinking. However, we will stay the course of letting the Father preserve us so that we can be fresh wineskins.
- God is calling his churches worldwide to be purified from religious and dead ways and be his fresh wineskins.
 - We must continually look to Jesus to learn his ways.
 - But we also must let Jesus personally teach us and transform us.
 - We cannot try to imitate Jesus in our own wisdom or strength.
 - Otherwise, we fall into the same trap as the Pharisees who tried to apply the Scripture with their own wisdom and strength.
- Some words of wisdom: criticism and judgment do not produce fresh wineskins.
 - Only spending time with Jesus makes us new.
 - Churches will never be perfect, but we all need to be committed to being on the way of Christ.
- So let’s get back to the secret chamber of the Lord to stay fresh.

Conclusion: Through all the turmoil in the world, Jesus is still building his church. He’s also renewing his church, making us into fresh wineskins for his new wine. So let’s stay new and fresh by loving his secret place.

ENDNOTES

WINESKINS Containers made of animal hide for keeping wine. The term is prominent in Jesus' maxim that new wine cannot be put in old wineskins but must be put in new wineskins because the new wine, when it ferments and expands, will break the old wineskins and spill out. New wine must be put into new wineskins, so that both can be preserved. This image indicates that Jesus' new teachings and new kind of spiritual life could not be put into old Judaism. They required a new container—namely, the living church. (Tyndale Bible Dictionary)

The second analogy (v 17) is parallel and makes the same point. οἶνον νέον, "new wine," is grape juice in an early stage of fermentation (perhaps the illustration was prompted by the Feast of New Wine; cf. Brooke). This would require that the skin bags that hold it be more pliable than old skins (cf. Job 32:19). If ἀσκοῦς παλαιούς, "old skins," are used, three things are sure to happen: (a) the skins will tear, (b) the wine will pour out, and (c) the skins will be ruined (ἀπόλλυνται, lit. "destroyed"). Everything will be lost, both the wine and the skins. On the other hand, new wine is to be put into ἀσκοῦς καινούς, "new skins," and when that happens, Matthew now uniquely points out, ἀμφότεροι συντηροῦνται, "both are preserved." It is not unwarranted allegorizing to draw out the following symbolism, which is inherent in the passage. The new wine is the newness of the gospel (cf. John 2:1–11), personified in Jesus; the old wine skins are the established patterns of conduct regarded as exemplifying the righteousness of the Torah. The former is too dynamic to be contained by the traditional framework of obedience. The proposal to combine the two may well have been a temptation to Matthew's Jewish-Christian readers. But the new reality of the gospel requires instead "new skins," i.e., new patterns of conduct based on the ethical teaching of Jesus as the true exposition of the meaning and intent of the Torah. Here Matthew's special interests and viewpoint (and conservatism too, compared to Mark) become obvious: "both are preserved," that is, the new wine of the reality of the kingdom and the new skins (not the old skins!) of faithful obedience to the law, but as expounded by Jesus. For Matthew, gospel and law (not Christianity and Judaism; contra Fenton, A. Kee) are held together in the Church, but the standard of interpretation of and obedience to the latter is always solely the authoritative teaching of Jesus.

Hagner, D. A. (1993). *Matthew 1–13* (Vol. 33A, p. 244). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

A wineskin is an ancient container made of animal skin, usually from goats or sheep, used to store or transport wine. (Wikipedia)