

Topic: New Wine, New Wineskins

Text: Luke 5:33-39

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Context: *The Beginning of Conflict—5:17–6:11*

I. The Question about Fasting (Lk. 5:33)

A. By Jesus' time the Pharisees had decreed that godly people fast twice a week (on the 2nd and 5th days of the week—Mondays and Thursdays).

B. Spirituality, they thought, consists of do's and don't's.

C. In all three Synoptics the issues related to Levi's banquet lead to further questions about religious practices.

D. In contrast to the two previous incidents (vv. 21, 30), this time the religious leaders challenge Jesus directly.

II. **Our Lord's Response (Lk. 5:34-35)**

Jesus made His point by an analogy. A wedding is a joyous occasion, and the guests do not fast at the time of celebration.

The period of Jesus' ministry is seen in terms of the Messianic banquet.

A. PARABOLIC ANSWERS (VV. 36–38)

Christ now turned from the fundamental relational answer to twin parabolic explanations.

1) Garments (v. 36)

- a) One does not patch an oldclothing with a piece from a new one, otherwise the old is spoilt and in any case the patch will not fit properly on the newclothing.
- b) Judaism, as good as it was, had become an old, worn-out garment. It could not be patched with a few things taken from Christ's Gospel.
- c) The gospel of the New Covenant is simply too dynamic for the Old Covenant structures.

2) Wineskins (vs. 37-38)

- a) In the ancient world wineskins were made out of animal skins.
- b) People would carry their wine around in these wineskins, but after a while the wineskins would stretch and would lose their elasticity.
- c) If you put brand new wine into those old skins, the wine, as it continued to ferment, would burst the skins, destroying both old and new.
- d) New wine has to go in new wineskins so there is room for the expansion of fermentation.

Lesson/Application

- 1) The lesson Jesus conveys is that the new and the old are not to be mixed.
- 2) We all have a choice when it comes to trying the new wine, the new and fresh ways of serving God.
- 3) We can be predictable religious types or we can be radical like Jesus Himself, refusing to conform to the solemn, joyless attitudes of the legalists.

Incredibly, some people are uninterested in any of this. How can this be?

B. A PROVERBIAL OBSERVATION (V. 39)

- 1) *old is better?* - Jesus is not recommending the old over the new.
- 2) He is simply drawing attention to the natural preference people have for the old.
- 3) The point emphasized is that people tend to want the old and reject the new, assuming (wrongly in this case) that the old is better.
- 4) The Pharisees were guardians of what used to be –they were traditionalists.
- 5) Many people who have not tasted the new are determined never to try it, because they imagine that what they have is “better” (literally, “good”).

Challenge

- 1) Preserving core values; allow changes in forms and structures that more effectively fulfill the Great Commission of “Making Disciples.”
- 2) Our focus should be on our heart’s devotion and love for God – forms & structures are means to this end.

Let it not be said of New Lifers: *“These people honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.”*

Questions for Discussion

- 1) How do traditions, structures and forms help or hinder church growth (both spiritually and numerically)?
- 2) What must our church do differently in order to reach out to the younger generations more effectively?
- 3) In what ways can the older more mature believers help the younger generation of believers in implementing effective changes to make disciples?