

# The New Can't Be Contained in the Old

Matthew 9:14–17

*"Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."* — Matthew 9:17 (ESV)

## Trying to Fit Jesus into Our Existing Lives

Most people don't mind adding a little religion to their lives.

They're willing to attend church occasionally, say a prayer when life becomes difficult, or even adopt some Christian values. But what they often want is for Jesus to fit neatly into the life they've already built.

The problem is that Jesus didn't come merely to improve our old life.

He came to make us new.

This is exactly what Jesus teaches in Matthew 9:14–17.

## The Question About Fasting

The passage begins with a question:

"Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?'" (Matthew 9:14)

John's disciples and the Pharisees were accustomed to religious fasting. In their minds, spiritual people fasted regularly. Yet Jesus' disciples weren't following the expected pattern.

They assumed something was wrong.

Jesus' answer reveals something far deeper than a discussion about fasting.

He's announcing that something entirely new has arrived.

## The Bridegroom Has Come

Jesus first compares Himself to a bridegroom:

"Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?"  
(Matthew 9:15)

A wedding was a time of joy, celebration, and feasting.

Jesus is saying:

**"The King has come. The promised Messiah is here. This is not a time for mourning but for rejoicing."**

There would come a day when the Bridegroom would be "taken away" — a clear reference to His coming death—and then His followers would fast.

But while Christ stood among them, everything had changed.

The kingdom of God had arrived in a way they didn't expect.

## The Patch on the Old Garment

Jesus then gives the first illustration:

"No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment..." (Matthew 9:16)

A new patch sewn onto an old garment would eventually shrink and tear away, making the damage even worse.

The lesson is clear:

**Jesus didn't come to patch up the old religious system.**

He didn't come merely to improve Pharisaism, add a few new rules, or make people slightly better versions of themselves.

The gospel isn't a patch.

It's something entirely new.

## New Wine Requires New Wineskins

Jesus then gives a second illustration:

"Neither is new wine put into old wineskins..." (Matthew 9:17)

In the ancient world, wine was often stored in animal skins. New wine would continue to ferment and expand. New wineskins had enough flexibility to stretch.

Old wineskins had become brittle.

If new wine were poured into old skins, they would burst.

The wine would be lost.

The skins would be ruined.

The point is simple:

**The new life Christ brings can't be contained within old systems, old hearts, or old ways of thinking.**

The gospel demands transformation.

## Jesus Didn't Come to Improve You

Many people approach Christianity this way:

- "I just need a little religion."
- "I need some moral improvement."
- "I need Jesus to help me accomplish my goals."

But Jesus never calls people to mere self-improvement.

He calls people to:

- Repentance.
- New birth.

- New life.
- Complete surrender.

Paul writes:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The Christian life isn't your old life with a few religious additions.

It's an entirely new life in Christ.

## **Modern Old Wineskins**

We can still try to force the new wine into old wineskins.

### **The Old Wineskin of Tradition**

"We've always done it this way." Traditions can become so important that they leave no room for what Scripture actually says.

### **The Old Wineskin of Self-Righteousness**

"I am a pretty good person." The gospel begins when we admit that we are sinners in need of grace.

### **The Old Wineskin of Cultural Christianity**

"I go to church, so I must be a Christian." Religious activity doesn't equal saving faith.

### **The Old Wineskin of Self-Sufficiency**

"I can handle life on my own." The Christian life begins with complete dependence upon Christ.

### **The Old Wineskin of Partial Surrender**

"I'll follow Jesus... as long as He doesn't ask me to change too much." Jesus never calls us to partial surrender. He calls all of us to Himself.

## **The Gospel Changes Everything**

The new wine of the gospel changes:

- Our identity.
- Our desires.
- Our priorities.
- Our relationships.
- Our purpose.
- Our eternity.

Christianity isn't behavior modification.

It's a transformation through union with Christ.

## **Questions for Reflection**

Ask yourself:

- Am I trying to fit Jesus into my plans?
- Have I elevated tradition above Scripture?
- Am I merely adding religion to my life?
- Have I truly surrendered myself to Christ?
- Is there an old wineskin that I refuse to let go of?

The issue isn't whether Jesus fits into your life.

The issue is whether your life has been surrendered to Him.

## Final Encouragement

The Bridegroom has come.

The King has arrived.

The gospel isn't a patch for your old life.

It's an invitation into a completely new one.

Do not try to contain the new wine in old wineskins.

Come to Christ.

Be made new.

## Twin Lakes Bible Church

Showing people who the Good Shepherd is, how to walk with Him, and how to finish well.

**Sunday School:** 9:00 AM

**Worship Service:** 10:00 AM

**Wednesday Bible Study:** 6:30 PM

**Small Groups:** 2nd & 4th Saturdays each month

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