

Recap: Jesus Stories/New Wineskins

Luke 5:33-6:5:

*They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking." Jesus answered, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? **But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.**" He told them this parable: "**No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'**" One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." Then Jesus said to them, "**The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.**"*

The simplest meaning of the parable is that what Jesus is coming does not fit into what the Pharisees currently possess. What Jesus brings is the New wine, the Spirit of God poured out in a new way into Creation. He is the new garment (Galatians 3:27), the Spirit of Jesus with which we are clothed when we are baptized into Jesus. The old pointed to the new, and the new has come. What is not so simple is **when and how** we ever can possess what God gives us through Jesus.

In Luke, the parable is in answer to the fasting question and right before Jesus seems to violate the Sabbath. In Matthew 9, the parable also is after the fasting question, but instead of a Sabbath discussion afterward, we are told about the sick woman and the dead girl. In Matthew, Jesus is shown confronting the unclean, and making them clean. In both gospel accounts, Jesus is asserting that **what he is, and what he is bringing**, does not fit the vessel or garment that the people currently possess.

The Pharisees want Sabbath, Cleanliness Rituals, Fasting, and all the other practices that are in place to bring them near to God. Jesus is explaining that those are all signs of what was to come (Messiah, rest, cleansing, feasting): and that **his very presence is the reality which they claim to seek**. To see this, we can go all the way back to Ezekiel 36:25-27:

*I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;** I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

This passage is right before the more famous "Valley of Dry Bones" passage of Ezekiel. This is all about restoration, the renewal of Israel. Look at the following connections:

"No longer will you be deprived of your children." (Jesus raises the dead girl)

"I will cleanse you from your impurities." (Sick woman touches Jesus and is made clean and whole again.)

He will bring feasting instead of famine and fasting.
He will bring them sabbath rest in their own sacred land.

This is more than the Pharisees could handle. It is too much. It is too new. Fulfillment of this magnitude exceeds their capacity to accept it. They shrink back from the new. They burst under the outpouring.

Unless they are changed—born again and made new. This was made possible through the crucifixion and resurrection. New creation bursting into existence. The old was made new again—and so much more. This is the reality into which we now live. We are changed. Paul says this in II Corinthians 4:5-7:

*For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine **in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.** But we have this treasure in **jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

A word about Clay Jars. They could not be made clean again for noble use once they had been defiled. They had to be crushed. Only stone jars could be made clean again. Until Jesus.

Back to the parable. What happens to the old garments and wineskins? Are they thrown out as garbage or somehow transformed into priceless possessions? **Yes.** We are the old. We will be made new.

This is more than we can handle. It is too much. It is too new. Fulfillment of this magnitude exceeds our capacity to accept it. We shrink back from the new. We would burst under the outpouring.

***"And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'"* (Luke 5)**

We can not change ourselves. God brings new life, cleansing, rest and feasting to those who receive it. But they couldn't receive it. Not yet.

Jesus showed us the way to accept it. He "emptied himself" and was filled. (Philippians 2:7)
We must be emptied to be filled. We must be naked to be clothed. We must die to be reborn.

What needs restoration in your life?

Maybe you need rest from the battles you have been fighting.

Maybe you need spiritual food. Maybe you have fed on all of the wrong things and need to fast to empty yourself.

Maybe you need to practice Sabbath in order to calm your soul from the hurriedness of your life.

Maybe you need to recognize that you are dying—poor, starving, and naked. Jesus offers New Life: cleansing, new wine, new clothes, rest, and feasting.

What can you do this week to make room for God to fill you with all you could ever ask or imagine?