



Am I Putting New Wine in an Old Wineskin?

Mark 2:22: (NASB) *No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.*



One of the great Christian challenges of our day is living a God-honoring life in a world that basically thinks we are nuts. What role should our differences with the world around us play in how we do or do not fit in with all that goes on each day of our lives? What specific principles do we have that govern our thoughts, words and deeds to keep us godly and yet approachable? Jesus' Parable of New Wine into Old Wineskins answers this. This parable is part of a specific answer that Jesus gave to a specific question. His answer also included two other very simple parables. As we will see, these three short examples

combined teach some important lessons relating not only to prophetic events, but to our personal behaviors and choices as well.

The context of these parables is important. Jesus is talking directly to the disciples of John the Baptist at a very important time. Jesus will teach them how the age is changing, and why they need to change with it.

Old Testament prophets carried messages of obedience and righteousness to Israel. John the Baptist was the last of these prophets, and his work was foretold in the books of Isaiah and Malachi. He was a cousin and friend of Jesus with exceptional character, devotion and passion.

We will reference [Matthew 9:14-17](#), [Mark 2:18-22](#) and [Luke 5:33-39](#), as each account brings specific details to light.

Let's begin with the question that was asked by the disciples of John:

[Matthew 9:14:](#) (NASB) *Then the disciples of John came to him, asking... [Luke 5:33:](#) ...The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but yours eat and drink. [Matthew 9:14:](#) ...your disciples do not fast?*

Fasting was a regular part of Jewish culture. The Pharisees fasted on Mondays and Thursdays and there were also national days of fasting. John's disciples were faithful to the austere lifestyle of John the Baptist.

(Source: Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible) ...they had understood that John was the forerunner of the Messiah; and if such was the case, they could not account for the fact that there was such a difference between them and the disciples of Jesus... Besides, it is probable that this question was put to him when John was in prison; and his disciples, involved in deep grief on account of it, observed days of fasting. Fasting was the natural expression of sorrow, and they wondered that the followers of Jesus did not join with them in lamenting the captivity of...the forerunner and baptizer of their Lord.

John's followers were not fasting because it was an appointed day to fast; they were likely fasting because John was in prison, and therefore, they were in a state of mourning. Let's keep this context in mind.





Jesus answered this very valid question in a prophetic and unusual way:

Mark 2:19: (NASB) *And Jesus said to them, While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, (Matthew says mourn) can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.*

If the bridegroom is around, it is a time for feasting, not fasting. We will soon see why Jesus used the picture of a bridegroom.

Jesus is answering the question regarding both the disciples of the Pharisees who fasted regularly, and John's followers, who would have presently been in a mournful state.

Luke 5:35: (NASB) *But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.*

Jesus was saying the combination of fasting and prayer are not invalid, but they do have seasons of appropriateness. Living in the moment they lived was the only time in all of history that the Messiah would be among men as a man! Jesus saw the necessity for the three parables and their lessons to be unfolded because of the uniqueness of that time and moment. Notice all the events revolve around John the Baptist.



Here is the context and why Jesus spoke three parables.



First, Israel was in expectation of their Messiah:

Luke 3:15-16: (NASB) ¹⁵Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, ¹⁶John answered and said to them all, as for me, I baptize you with water; but one is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of his sandals; he will baptize you with the holy spirit and fire.

We are not told how many disciples followed John the Baptist. We could say whoever he baptized were his disciples. We are told that the Apostles Andrew and John both followed John the Baptist before they followed Jesus. We are told about Apollos ([Acts 18:24-25](#)) and a dozen followers living in Ephesus ([Acts 19:2-7](#)).



Second, Israel was informed that Jesus was the Messiah:

John 1:29-30: (NASB) ²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is he on behalf of whom I said, After me comes a man who has a higher rank than I, for he existed before me.

We are reading from the book of John. The Apostle John is writing about John the Baptist.

This was the day after the Pharisees questioned John the Baptist about why he was baptizing and who he thought he was. The next day he says, *Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!* He was pointing Israel to their Messiah.



Third, Israel was instructed to follow their Messiah:

John 1:35-37,40-42: (NASB) ³⁵Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, *Behold, the lamb of God!* ³⁷The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ⁴⁰One of the two who heard John speak and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, *We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ).* ⁴²He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, *You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is translated Peter).*

Two of John's own disciples saw Jesus and decided to follow him! John had told them his ministry was to point to Jesus. Then Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, to tell him they had found the Messiah. Jesus immediately renamed Simon to "Peter." John was describing Jesus' authority and introducing him as the Messiah. This will be important when we get into the significance of these parables.



- First, Israel was expecting a Messiah according to the prophecies.
- Second, John tells Israel that Jesus is the Messiah.
- Third, Israel was instructed to follow their Messiah.

Changing, stretching and progressing pertains to the three parables Jesus spoke.



For many of us, our conscience will be uncomfortable. The more we ignore that nagging feeling, the easier and easier it gets, and the gravitational pull of staying where we are is too strong.

There is so much to learn when we stop and consider all of what Jesus did and stood for. His presence changed history!

Now that we have a clear sense of the context,
what was the message of these three parables of Jesus?

We suggest that these three parables were spoken to illustrate three different ways that lives need to change when given the opportunity to follow Jesus.



As we will see, this is a great example of how easy it is to be drawn to a worthwhile change but not be committed to it.

Jesus spoke about being joyful, as he was the bridegroom. He then gives them the garment and patch example:

Luke 5:36, Mark 2:21, Matthew 9:16: (NASB) *And he was also telling them a parable: No one tears a piece of unshrunk cloth from a new garment and sews a patch on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. ...and a worse tear results.*

Jesus is giving a plain and simple example. He starts by saying: "No one does this." It is like saying: "Don't do this at home; you know this is going to fail!" This short and succinct parable has three key factors:





- There is an **old, worn, but obviously comfortable garment** that is torn badly enough to need a patch.
- There is a **new, unused and unwashed garment** that could supply the patch for the tattered old garment.
- The dilemma is, if we use a **new patch on an old garment**, it will be ruined because the new patch will shrink and tear the old garment even more. And, of course, the new garment is ruined because we just cut a hole in it. Obviously, no one would do this.

We will suggest that the **old garment** represents the Law and its necessary sacrifices. John the Baptist was helping the people to **REPENT** for their sins. We suggest the **new garment** represents the actual **REDEMPTION** for sins that Jesus brought with the sacrifice of his life.



What is the difference between **REPENTANCE** and **REDEMPTION**?
Why would it require this metaphorical change of clothes?

Repentance is something that Israel had to continually do throughout the Old Testament. Prophets would say: "Repent, you are doing wrong, you have to come back to God." Repentance means to acknowledge wrongdoing, to feel genuinely sorry for this wrongdoing, and then to change direction.

THE OLD GARMENT	THE NEW GARMENT
	
REPRESENTS THE LAW AND ITS NECESSARY SACRIFICES. REPENTANCE	REPRESENTS THE ACTUAL REDEMPTION FOR SINS.
REDEMPTION WAS PICTURED IN THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. BUT WAS NOT PERMANENT.	THE REDEMPTION JESUS BROUGHT WITH THE SACRIFICE OF HIS LIFE WAS PERMANENT.

This was something brand new and needed a new approach. Repentance, while it was good and involved the sacrifices of the Old Testament, it had no permanency like the redemption Jesus provided for sin.

John and his followers knew that his work was to decrease when Jesus began preaching.

When Jesus and his disciples were baptizing in the same area as John, it stimulated questions with John's disciples:

John 3:26-30: (NASB) ²⁶And they came to John and said to him, Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, he is baptizing and all are coming to him. ²⁷John answered and said, A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, I am not the Christ, but, I have been sent ahead of him.

John's disciples were saying that people were flocking to Jesus rather than John. John's response is beautiful: *I am not the Christ, but I have been sent ahead of him* - "I am doing my work and he is doing his work." The rest of what he says is a landmark explanation of the difference between Jesus and John.

²⁹He who has the bride is the bridegroom (Jesus); but the friend of the bridegroom (John the Baptist), who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. ³⁰He (Jesus) must increase, but I (John the Baptist) must decrease.

John fulfilled his mission, and he did it well. His work was done and Jesus' work was beginning. John's disciples must have been confused. But look at this special example John gave. Of all the possible illustrations he could have used, he used the bridegroom. Remember we started with the disciples of John asking Jesus why he and his disciples were not fasting. He answered why he and his disciples were not fasting. But it was not time to fast while the bridegroom (Jesus) was present. Jesus used John's own illustration of a bridegroom to identify with John's followers and have them connect to what their next steps should be. This was profound.





I think John and Jesus talked in between meetings at times. They understood each other and they each used the same kind of language because they were both a part of the same work, just different phases of that work.

The message of repentance was a good and needed message! However, it was a message that was running its course as Jesus (the bridegroom) was now there, drawing people to him.

Jesus' parable was showing John's followers a prophetic change of age. They were wearing the old garment of the Law. It had served its purpose and was now tattered. John's followers were looking to PATCH it instead of seeing the NEW GARMENT of redemption and the new age of grace that Jesus brought.

They were trying to "patch the soft, old garment" by looking at Jesus and saying, "Identify with us. Be in mourning with us." "No," says Jesus, "YOU should be celebrating with US! Things have now changed!" But change is uncomfortable. Think of a new dress shirt - it is stiff, scratchy and itchy, especially if you have to wear a tie. But the point Jesus was making was that we need to grow into that which is new, and because it is not comfortable does not mean it is not good, right or appropriate.

This was a natural reaction to anything new. They were comfortable where they were. Jesus' lesson was that something new and better would replace what they had.



What about me?

Am I outwardly holding on to my old ways? Having seen Jesus, do I take an appreciation of his redemption and try and patch up the look that I am comfortable with?

We might appreciate the teachings of Jesus but still live the way we want. It is being a fan of Jesus instead of a follower. We say things like, "This is just the way I am." "Don't judge me." "I'm not going to give up what I like to do, and that doesn't make me a bad person." "I can do whatever I want Saturday night and still go to church on Sunday." This is not being transformed.



My sister, Merrily, went to a specific church for a long time. She was comfortable in that church. It was a wonderful community environment, but it was not teaching or holding fast to doctrinal, biblical truths. Little by little she was bothered by this, but she was so comfortable with the people there. I asked her if she knew what she had to do. She said yes, she knew. It took a little while but she got the courage to sit down with the pastor and explained she could not do that anymore. She stopped wearing the old garment, she did not try to patch it up, and she put on the new. She took a large step and this is the transformation we are talking about here.





Just as John's disciples needed to learn to transition, we need to be reminded as well:

2 Timothy 2:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. ²¹Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared for every good work.



What about me?

Do I look like a vessel of honor or dishonor to God and to those around me? How do I come across to others? This tells me which garment I'm wearing.

We cannot be associated with earthly things like the Law was. We are cleansed from dishonor as we make the change to spiritual things. We cannot say, "I love Jesus," but then cheat on our spouse. Our garments, our clothes, are on the outside. How we look on the outside plus our inward heart is what drives us forward. This is why Jesus is speaking this parable to John's disciples. He is telling them they have to step out of where they were and into something new and perhaps difficult.

This transition means that we are to be clothed (not patched) with Jesus and HIS righteousness:

Galatians 3:24-28: (NASB) ²⁴Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.



**You who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man.
There is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.
We have left what was old behind. We have put on this new garment.**

If I am just wearing a symbol or a piece of the redemption in Jesus that I have access to, I am not at all prepared for the life and experiences of a true Christian disciple. Just wearing a token "I love Jesus" button is not enough. If we do not change our garment, we will not be prepared.



Romans 13:14: (NASB) *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*



No provision for the flesh - we cannot make even a little provision for the flesh when nobody is looking. Wearing Jesus only as a patch of righteousness brings distress. It also does not look good, as others will see ill-advised patchwork that simply does not match our lives.

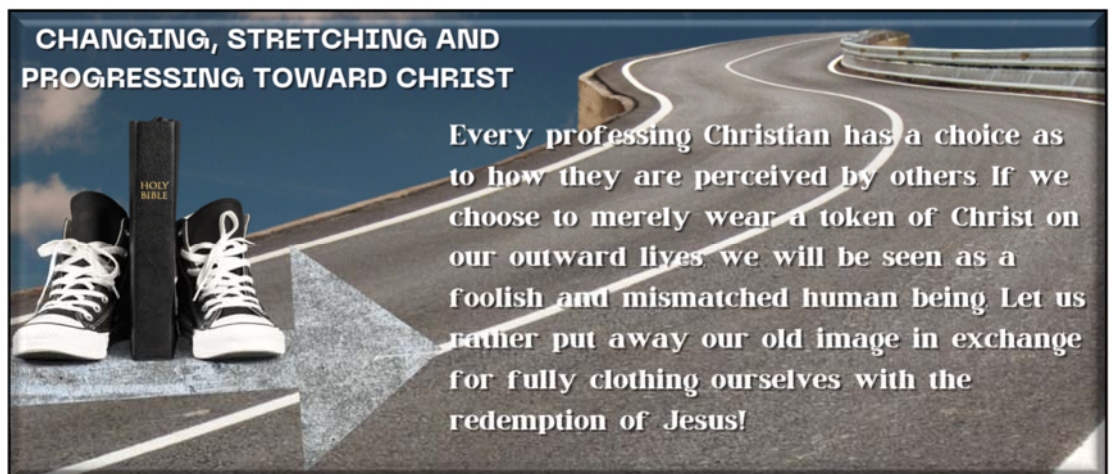


It is an obvious mismatch. It might be some small witness like the waitress forgot to add something to your bill at a restaurant and you purposely do not tell her so you can pay less than what you actually owe. Here is one that is hard not to get caught up in - if we profess to be praying for God's righteous government in His kingdom to come but get upset by earthly politics and those who hold opposing views, we are patching an old garment. Jesus was telling very faithful men that they needed to move on from where they were. We, as faithful Christians, need to get the same message.

True Christians must hold nothing back to being mirrors of Christ from the outside in, rather than having themselves be what people see.

Ephesians 6:10-13: (NASB) ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

The idea of putting on armor is about changing our garment. We look different; we dress differently. If we are fully armed with the armor of God, we act like a soldier of Christ. Jesus is telling the disciples of John to move on and transition from the Law to grace and redemption.





It comes down to making a choice. Are we going to be foolish and try to patch something old with something brand new and ruin both? Or are we going to decide to put the old thing away and wear that which is new in Christ?

How we look to others is directly dependent upon what we choose to wear. Throw away the old and put on Christ!

Being a Christian means we need to look like one!
What is the main lesson when it comes to new wine in old wineskins?

The second parable is about careless and wasteful behavior. Back in Jesus' time, the folly of putting new wine into an old wineskin was well known. No one would do such a thing as it was destined for failure. By Jesus using this easy-to-understand example, he was teaching John's followers to be clearly aware of what was happening around them. We must be aware of where we are and what is going on.

We do not use wineskins today - our wine comes in bottles or even boxes. A wineskin is an ancient type of bottle made of leathered animal skin, usually from goats or sheep, used to store or transport wine. During the fermentation of grape juice, carbon dioxide gas is given off at about 40 times the volume of the juice. New wine put into dry, stiff wineskins would burst as the gas expands.

Matthew 9:17: (NASB) *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.*



- There is **new wine**. This wine needed the right time and environment to ferment to its full potential.
- There are **old wineskins** that have already been stretched but were still good for old wine.
- There are **new wineskins**, prepared for the very purpose of giving new wine the right time and environment to develop.

We will suggest what these represent:

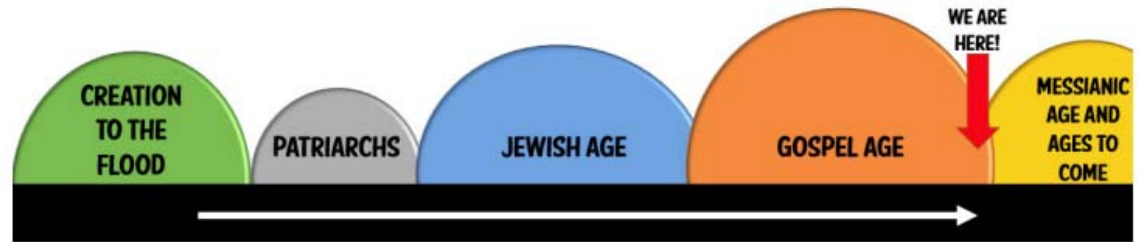
new wine - the new message of the gospel - the "good news" for all.

wineskins - human lives.

old wineskins - human lives lived under the Law at the time of Jesus' first advent - the Jewish nation. The gospel message could not be developed within that context.

new wineskins - the *new creation* (followers of Christ) that Jesus would begin to develop as a result of his ministry and faithfulness.





The Jewish Age transitioned to the Gospel Age. It was all brand new. It was so much bigger and more valuable that it needed a **new wineskin** - the followers of Christ. Old lives are transformed by redemption in Jesus.

While in prison, John the Baptist experienced anxiety. He did not expect that his life would take such a turn with the Messiah present:

Matthew 11:2-6: (NASB) ²Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, Are you the expected one, or shall we look for someone else? ⁴Jesus answered and said to them, Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. ⁶And blessed is he who does not take offense at me.

Like much of Israel, John would have had the expectation that Messiah came to take over the whole world at that time with kingly power.

Verse 5 - Jesus is quoting from **Isaiah 35:5** and **61:1**. He fulfilled the prophecies, proving his messiahship. In other words, Jesus is saying, "Yes, John, I AM *the expected one*, and here is all the evidence! By preparing the people for me, you, John, did exactly what God required of you and are blessed." What a reassurance!

John's disciples were being shown that their work was done, and now the work of Jesus was beginning. The will of God was unfolding according to plan.

Once again, there is a prophetic significance to this second parable. John was the last prophet of the age of Jewish favor. He handed God's plan over to Jesus who began the age of the gospel. Jesus took that plan and began to develop his true followers. The Bible calls these by many terms, including the *bride of Christ*, the *body of Christ* and the *little flock*. These "called-out" ones would not only "put on" Christ like a new garment in the first parable, but they would also be transformed by their redemption from the inside out. That is why the second parable was about the necessity for new wineskins. This new message of the gospel needed a new kind of individual to hold its expansiveness.

The lives of the followers of Christ need to stretch with the responsibility of the gospel.



What about me?

Am I appreciating the glory of the gospel message through the eyes and habits of my old self, or have I been transformed into a true disciple of Christ?



Outwardly our garment can look new and we look like a true disciple. But inside where no one but God can see, are we jealous? Bitter? Manipulative? Angry all the time? We cannot store our new wine in that old, stiff, ugly wineskin.

Many Christians appreciate the gospel message through the eyes of their old self but are not transformed by it. This creates a contradiction. The "wine" bursts out because we are not expanding with it. We become damaged in that God cannot use us to our full potential, and our ability to carry the gospel message is wasted.

The new joy of the gospel cannot be carried by an old way of thinking:

1 Corinthians 2:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴But a natural man does not accept the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. ¹⁶For who has known the mind of the Lord, that He will instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

*A natural man does not accept the things of the spirit of God - note the contrast. We have the mind of Christ. We are blessed to be a new wineskin, stretching with the gospel. Having *the mind of Christ* is taking Jesus' focus, sacrifice, godliness, scriptural admonitions and adherence to God's plan, and walking on this path each and every day. This is living as the new wineskin, not the old.*



What about me?

Am I living a renewed life, or have I just recycled my old one to try and fit into the gospel message?

Sometimes recycling is not good! This is the dilemma the disciples of John experienced. They wanted to recycle things to keep them the way they were. Jesus gently taught them: "I know that is what you think, but you need to see bigger. You need to come rejoice with me and follow me because there is a new age starting."

2 Corinthians 5:16-18: (NASB) ¹⁶Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer. ¹⁷Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

This text is about becoming *a new creature* in Christ- a new wineskin. Wear the **new garment** and be the **new wineskin!**



What about me?

Do I walk in Jesus' sacrificial footsteps?

Do I seek holiness? Am I truly transformed?

What does my life actually prove?

Romans 12:1-2: (NASB) ¹Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

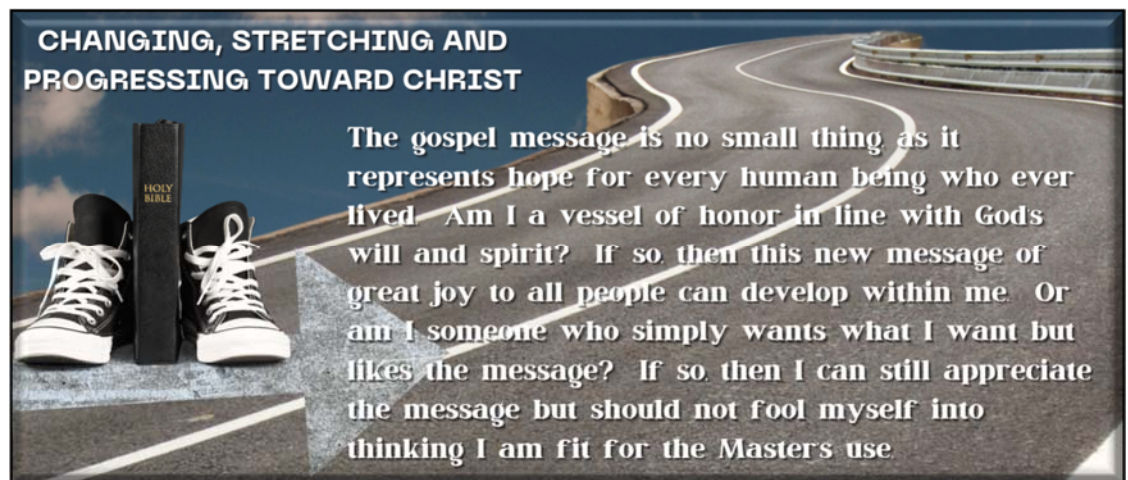


A sacrificial life is having a new wineskin - seeking holiness. And when someone sees us, not only do we look different on the outside but we sound different from the inside.

On the outside we should be wearing that new garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness. We should be wearing Christ wherever we go.

We sound different from the inside because our hearts have been transformed - because we have been redeemed. Jesus is teaching John's disciples that they are missing that part. They need to step up higher.

We, also, need to leave the old wineskin ways of thinking and expectations behind because they will burst under the pressure of the gospel of Christ. It is a beautiful transition that requires work.



What about me?

Have I been transformed? Do I have the stretch within me to expand with what the gospel message requires of me? Or am I just pretending and wearing the "I LOVE JESUS" button?



We need to be thoroughly engaged. Become the new wineskin, the new creation, so that we can handle the gospel of Christ with respect, honor, dignity and spirituality.

The whole idea of being one who is capable of properly handling the gospel message is a serious responsibility.

Jesus seems to be teaching John's disciples that they are faced with a choice. How does their choice affect us?

While Jesus' conversation with these disciples of John had clear importance to them, its value to us is no less, all these centuries later. The third and last parable in this lesson is about old wine and new wine and the reluctance to give up what we like for something better. This is the age-old lesson of choosing to grow rather than staying comfortable and stagnant.



We are faced with choices like this in every part of our lives because often that “something better” is not tangible and is in the form of nondescript future blessings. We are promised treasure somewhere in heaven as compared to what we can touch and see here and now, where we are comfortable.

It is a tough decision to let go of that which is familiar. While these parables were significant for the disciples of John the Baptist, they also have powerful lessons for us as followers of Jesus.

The third parable is just one sentence:

Luke 5:39: (NASB) *And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, The old is good enough.*

There is an expression, “Better the devil you know than the devil you don’t,” meaning when forced to decide, it is better to choose that which is familiar, even if it is undesirable, rather than choose the unknown. Satan would love to keep us in this stagnant state where we do not keep growing towards God.

We can add to that statement, “Worse is the holding onto the goodness that we know, and ignoring the greatness of God through Christ.” John’s disciples were stuck on the goodness of the Law - and it was good in its time - but they needed to go further.



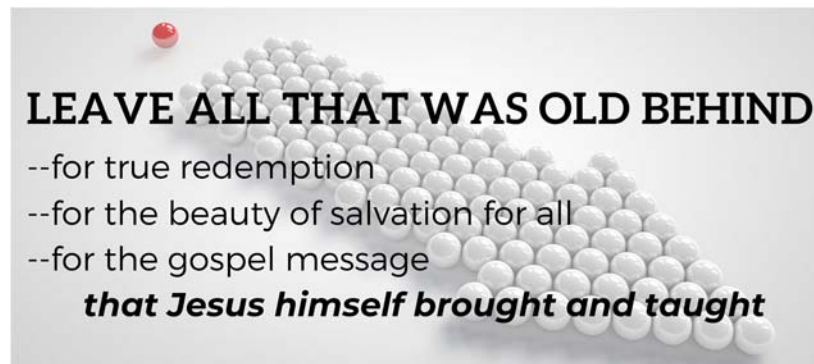
- There is **old wine** and our habitual connection to it.
- There is **new wine** and the opportunity and hesitation it presents.

We will suggest what these represent:

old wine - the old ways of reaching up to God through the Law and its rituals.

new wine - the new message of the gospel - the “good news” for all.

In order to appreciate what is new, Jesus was teaching we must be able to let go of the old.



Remember, Jesus said, *Come, follow me* (Luke 18:22). This is a *new and living way* (Hebrews 10:20).



The reformer Martin Luther saw in the Bible the truth of “justification by faith.” This is an example of putting away the old way of thinking and replacing it with truth.



	<p>Episodes 1155 and 1156: Is it Faith or Works that Gets Us to Heaven?</p>
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Understanding the roles of faith and works in our Christian walk

EXAMPLE

A practical example of trying to straddle over both the old and new is with the modern Paganism that is all around us. Episodes 1235 and 1236 highlighted why Paganism (such as witchcraft) does not mix with Christianity, and why trying to practice both pollutes the name of Jesus. We do not want to be deceived with the many ways it sneaks into our lives, especially through social media.

	<p>Episodes 1235 and 1236: Can Christianity and Paganism Work Together? (Parts I and II)</p>
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Comparing the core values of Paganism with biblical Christian principles



Landis, a CQ listener:

"No amount of true Christianity can fit into a worldly lifestyle."

That is something we all need to consider as we review our earthly responsibilities, preferences and desires.

We will see that old wineskins burst when trying to fit our Christian ideals into a worldly lifestyle. Or like putting a new patch on an old garment. They are contradictory, and we have to move on from the old and onto the new.

Let's continue with the one-line parable about liking old wine to the point of not trying the new.

After Jesus told John's disciples to report back to him in prison that Jesus was indeed the one they were waiting for, Jesus then responds to the crowd who was listening in. Jesus honors John as being mighty in the eyes of God.

But Jesus also teaches the difference between the old wine of Judaism and the new wine of Christianity:

Matthew 11:7-11: (NASB) ⁷As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces! ⁹But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet.

Jesus asks, *What did you go out to see?* You did not go out to see an average person, or someone who is great and elegant, dressed in fine clothes. You went out to see a dynamic individual who is a prophet of the living God!

¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.

This is the one about whom it is written - whenever someone is written about positively in the Bible, we know they have tremendous importance and honor. Jesus tells the crowd that John fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies they had heard read in the synagogue. He was there to clear the way for Jesus.



For more about John the Baptist:



Uncovering "greatness principles" in the life of John the Baptist

Here is Jesus' conclusion about John and his work:

¹¹Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

We said before that John the Baptist was prophesied about in Isaiah and Malachi. Here Jesus quotes from Malachi 3:1 - *Behold I send my message ahead of you* - John's role was very important, and this handoff between the ages provides another proof that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. This was the ending of the age of the "old wine" and the beginning of the new age of "new wine."

The new message of the gospel - with its promise of a heavenly reward for true followers - now far exceeded the extraordinary work of John the Baptist. He will receive a high earthly reward in God's kingdom since he died before the sacrifice of Jesus. He therefore was not eligible to be part of the new wine, the opportunity to be part of *the kingdom of heaven*.

When Jesus tells us that everyone in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist, it gives us a sense of the value of the new wine of the gospel. Stop with the old; it is past. Rejoice with us in the new!

When looking at the preference for old wine over new, the prophetic significance is dramatic. Israel was used to Old Testament prophets like John and their message of correction. Jesus is telling the people that John was the last of these prophets, as the old wine was now obsolete. He is teaching that the new wine of the gospel brings much more than correction - it brings glory! It brings a heavenly call, grace for our sins, God's spirit to guide us, and so much more: salvation to every man, woman and child.



What about me?

Do I gravitate towards the things in my life that bring me comfort? Am I attached to habitual ways of thinking and doing, or am I willing to fully embrace that which is new and holy at the expense of that which is familiar and human?

Looking at our relationships is a good place to start our evaluation. Do I maintain friendships, or romantic or business relationships that encourage more temptations and bad habits than blessings? Am I trying to untangle myself from worldly distractions?

Jesus is talking to John's disciples, but what about us? We do not have the Law to lean on that we have known and followed carefully all of our lives, but we all have comfortable positions we want to hold on to. *What about me?* Am I in position for this transition?



Our “new wine” experiences include being part of a new and holy priesthood:

1 Peter 2:5-10: (NASB) ⁵You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For this is contained in Scripture: Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed.

We need to become this *living stone*. We need to put away our old lives and become this new living stone which is part of a spiritual house we are being built into. This is a new house built on spirituality, not the works of the Law. Walk away from the old life, the works of the flesh. Walk towards the works of Christ through us.



This “new wine” experience is based on something that “old wine” thinking flatly rejects:

⁷This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone, ⁸and, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

Jesus becomes this *stone of stumbling and a rock of offense*. He gives these parables to show the contradiction between the old (Law) and the new (gospel). Those that want to hold onto the old are not going to look at his message and the path he is laying out as valuable. To them it is an obstruction they trip over.

We cannot let that happen to ourselves either. The way of sacrifice is not an easy way, but the robe of Christ’s righteousness clothes us to help with our stumbles. Becoming a new wineskin enables us to stretch into what is required. Old wine vs. new wine means we leave our old lives behind and move forward into that which is promised - that which is new.



This “new wine” experience brings us to a whole new level of serving God, not previously available:

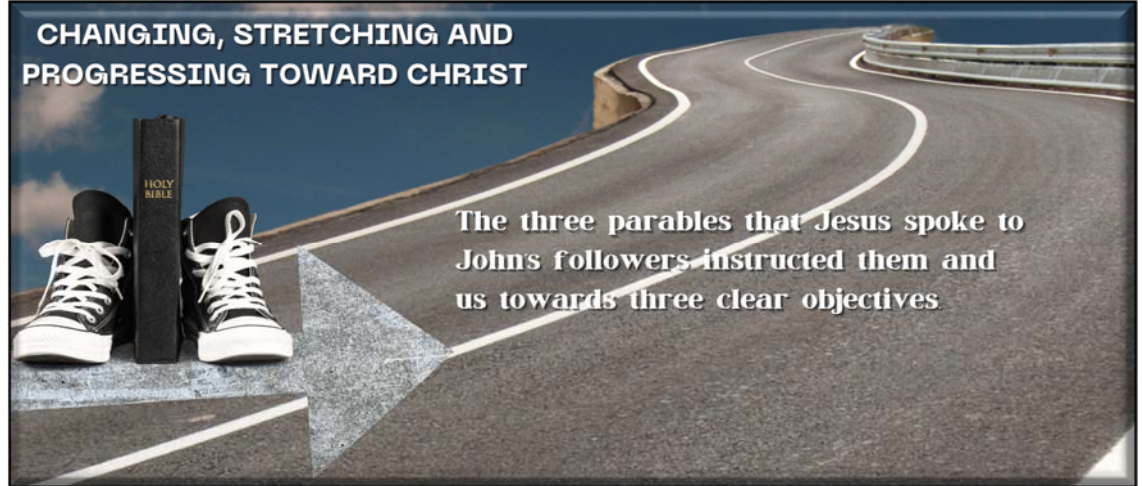
⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Most of us who now come to Christ do not come from the Jewish nation and have not been following the Law. We come from all different walks of life. That is why this verse says, *you once were not a people, but now you are...*, something new. Have I walked away from who and what we were thoroughly enough in order to be recognized as being part of this *chosen race, this royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession*? Am I walking in the newness of Christ and leaving whatever it was behind?

This “new wine” experience requires the abandonment of ALL our of “old wine” experiences:

Philippians 3:12-14: (NASB) ¹²Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle Paul himself had to leave the old wine of the Law and his misrepresentation of it. He abandoned it and ran towards Christ. *I press on toward the goal. This one thing I do!* This is the message Jesus gave the disciples of John the Baptist, and this is the message we need to carry in our own lives.



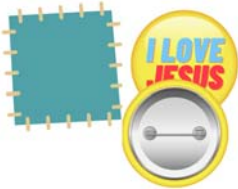
OBJECTIVE 1.

Do NOT try and patch your old comfortable life with a token reminder of redemption in Jesus.



Instead, clothe yourself with the new garment of Christ's righteousness.

No buttons, no patches. Fully clothe yourself with this unmistakable change that looks entirely different.



OBJECTIVE 2.

Do NOT attempt to accept the joy of the gospel message within the confines of your old life and guidelines.

Instead, strive for the newness of life that only God can give and provide the gospel message a thriving environment in which to develop.



We have to be the right environment for the gospel to develop. If the good news I am preaching does not include every man, woman and child who ever lived, it is not THE good news of the gospel. We are to stretch to absorb the greatness of the gospel as we become this new creation.

OBJECTIVE 3.

Do NOT hold on to those things that are familiar and comfortable because they are familiar and comfortable.

Instead, leave your past behind and reach forward to the gospel message as your primary source of joy and fulfillment.





Think about the simplicity of these three parables, and how Jesus uses them to show us not only where we are going, but why we are going there. For the disciples of John the Baptist, they needed to make the transition from serving Old Testament principles to the New Testament of Jesus.

There is a transition we need to make from serving our own old ways of self to the new ways of Christ. We need to apply these parables to our lives.

*So, am I putting new wine in an old wineskin?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie, and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on August 29, 2022

Ep. 1244: What Can We Learn From One of the
Wisest Men on Earth?

Bonus Material and Study Questions

Each gospel account of the three parables and their context:

Matthew 9:14-17: (NASB) ¹⁴Then the disciples of John came to him, asking, *Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?* ¹⁵And Jesus said to them, *The attendants of the bridegroom 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.* ¹⁶But 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. ¹⁷Nor 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.

Mark 2:18-22: (NASB) ¹⁸John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they came and said to him, *Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?* ¹⁹And Jesus said to them, *While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.* ²⁰But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. ²¹No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results. ²²No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.



Luke 5:33-39: (NASB) ³³And they said to him, The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but yours eat and drink. ³⁴And Jesus said to them, You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? ³⁵But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days. ³⁶And he was also telling them a parable: No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. ³⁷And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. ³⁸But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ³⁹And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, The old is good enough.

The next texts in the three gospel accounts after the three parables:

Matthew 9:18-20: (NASB) ¹⁸While he was saying these things to them, a synagogue official came and bowed down before him, and said, My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live. ¹⁹Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did his disciples. ²⁰And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak.

Mark 2:23-25: (NASB) ²³And it happened that he was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and his disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain. ²⁴The Pharisees were saying to him, Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? ²⁵And he said to them, Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry.

Luke 6:1-3: (NASB) ¹Now it happened that he was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and his disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain. ²But some of the Pharisees said, Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath? ³And Jesus answering them said, Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him.

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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1243: Am I Putting New Wine in an Old Wineskin?

<https://christianquestions.com/parables/1243-wineskins/>

See:  CQ Rewind
SHOW NOTES

1. What was the question asked of Jesus by the disciples of John? What might have prompted this question? What was Jesus' answer? (See Luke 5:33, Matthew 9:14, Mark 2:19)
2. How many parables did Jesus speak to John the Baptist's disciples? What were the three points of context behind these parables? (See Luke 3:15-16, John 1:29-30,35-37,40-42)
3. Describe the key parable factors and what they represent in the Parable of the Garment and the Patch? What is the difference between *repentance* and *redemption*? Explain the meaning of the parable for John's disciples, and then its application to us. (See Luke 5:36, Mark 2:21, Matthew 9:16)
4. Why did both John and Jesus use the illustration of a bridegroom? What was the difference between John's message and baptism and Jesus' message and baptism? (See John 3:28-30, Mark 2:19, Luke 5:35)
5. Describe the key parable factors and what they represent in the Parable of the Wineskins. Explain the meaning of the parable for John's disciples, and then its application for us. What is required to "have the mind of Christ"? (See Matthew 9:17, 1 Corinthians 2:14-16)
6. Describe the key parable factors and what they represent in the Parable of the Old Wine. Explain the meaning of the parable for John's disciples, and then its application for us. What might be "old wine" for us? For what reasons might it be hard to give up the "old wine" in our lives? (See Luke 5:39,18:22, Hebrews 10:20)
7. How can we be "living stones"? Who is the cornerstone? How could he become a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"? Why is it necessary to become a new wineskin? What protects us when we stumble over this new wine? What is the "one thing" Paul says he does? (See 1 Peter 2:5-10, Philippians 3:12-14)
8. What are the three objectives of these three parables as they apply to us?
9. Answer the light blue questions in the Rewind honestly to yourself. (2 Timothy 2:20-21, Galatians 3:24-28, Romans 13:14, 1 Corinthians 2:14-16,5:16-18, Romans 12:2, 1 Peter 2:5-10, Philippians 3:12-14)
 - Am I patching my comfortable garment with an "I love Jesus" button?
 - Do I look like a vessel of honor or dishonor to God and others?
 - How do I look at the gospel message? Have I been transformed into a true disciple of Christ?
 - Have I renewed my life or just recycled my old one to try to fit into the gospel message?
 - How do I walk in Jesus' sacrificial footsteps? How do I seek holiness? Am I truly transformed? Do I have the stretch within me to expand with what the gospel message requires of me?
 - Do I cling to the things that bring me comfort? Am I attached to my habits or am I willing to fully embrace that which is new and holy in my life?
 - What changes do I need to make in my life?