

The New Wineskin

by Keith Malcomson

The parable of the wineskin is a call to repentance and a call to prepare for a new outpouring of the Holy Ghost, where people are filled with the Holy Ghost and empowered to live for Christ.

Scripture: Luke 5:27

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Repentance"

Description

Keith Malcomson preaches on the importance of being a new wineskin for God's new wine, drawing parallels from the parable in Luke 5:36-39. He emphasizes the need for repentance, forsaking all, and being moldable vessels for the Holy Spirit's influence. Through the examples of Levi's conversion and the history of the Levites, he illustrates how God calls and sanctifies a people for His purpose, preparing them to carry His presence and minister unto Him.

Transcript

"And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better." (Lk.5:36-39)

This parable was put forth to all by Christ just after Levi had been converted. We also know that Levi was called Matthew, the author of the first Gospel. The setting of this parable was in Matthew's home. In Luke chapter 5 we are told of the mighty miracles of Christ in healing the sick then we are told, "And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him." Lk.5:27-28

Levi was a true convert. It seems from his name that he was of the tribe of Levi. His namesake forefather was an angry and cruel man. Through his wicked deeds he became a shame to his father Jacob, yet out of this line was raised up a tribe which were called, sanctified, and set apart to the task of serving God.

The Tribe of Levi, or the Levites, were the smallest tribe of Israel. Once the Lord had called and sanctified them their task was to carry the tabernacle when they travelled, and to minister in it when they settled in one place.

One of the great tasks of the Levites was to carry the Ark of the Covenant. This Ark was a symbol of the incarnate Christ, God manifest in flesh. Only four Levites were to carry the Ark at any one time.

If you study the history of this tribe you will find that every new Revival in Israel's history was marked by calling these Levites out and separating them from all decay and every influence of sin.

They were sanctified again that God's house could be restored, or to carry forth the Ark one more time in obedience to God. Levites were given as a gift unto Aaron the High Priest (a type of Christ) and were totally dedicated unto God, to minister unto Him. They had no inheritance in the land but God Himself.

So this was Matthew's natural lineage but when Christ first laid eyes upon him we see him sitting as his work of tax collecting; the most hated profession in all of Israel. Tax collectors were no better than drunkards and harlots to the religious mind.

When Christ spoke to him and said "Follow me" we are told that "...he left all, rose up, and followed him." This was a true convert, he left all and followed Christ.

Previously in this chapter we see Simon, James and John following the same call unto salvation. They were gathered unto Christ in order to follow Him. They were called away from their physical nets and Christ was then going to forge them into a spiritual net to catch men.

Straight after Matthew's conversion we read that "Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them." (Lk 5:29) Elsewhere we are told that sinners also gathered in with other tax collectors to his home.

He is so glad in salvation and so taken up with Christ that he gathers in the only friends he has that they may also hear the call of God and experience the power of salvation.

Also gathered in the house were scribes and Pharisees who murmured against Christ saying "Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" Christ responded "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Again they asked "Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?" Again Christ answered "Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."

It is in response to these questions by these men in this home of Matthew that Christ then puts forth the parable of the wine and the bottles, or the parable of the wineskin.

What is Christ doing? He is preparing a new wineskin for new wine. By calling Matthew and the other disciples he has caught himself some rough wild goats which He must now skin and prepare for to hold the wine that will satisfy the thirst of many. They were to be God's vessel and instrument of Revival.

This new wine is a type of the Holy Spirit. Wine speaks of influence. When an individual is filled with wine they come under the influence of it. It affects their sight, their hearing, their walk, their speech, their actions, in fact everything.

So also when a man is filled with the Holy Ghost he comes under His influence which affects every area of life. Christ was calling out a group of men and disciples who would become the new wineskin for a new

outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved."

God has always called such a people to repentance in order to prepare them for His purpose. The rugged message of repentance and of forsaking all has been the means of finding every new wineskin. Such people who simply and desperately need Christ are easily moulded and shaped for the new wine.

In the culture of the Middle East it was usually a goat with its thick course skin which was chosen for a wineskin. After being skinned it was softened with oil to make it subtle for moulding and usage. It was then filled with new wine which moulded, shaped and enlarged the vessel as it fermented. Note that the wine moulded the vessel.

An old wineskin could not be used as it had already been moulded into shape and could not be moulded afresh.

In Christ's day the Pharisees had for a long time been an old wineskin. This group once zealous for the Lord and His Word had now settled down into a legal form of religion. They had added to Scripture their own customs, interpretations and laws. They were righteous in their own eyes but felt no need of Christ or of repentance. They had cast the doctrine of repentance aside.

These Pharisees also pointed to John's disciples and their own practice of fasting, prayer and abstinence in contrast to Christ's new disciples. These were vital things but John had pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God and as the baptizer in the Holy Ghost and Fire. John's revival was one of heart repentance to prepare individuals for fellowship with Christ Jesus. There was a grave danger that these other important things would take the place of the person of Christ.

It is worth noting here that by the time every wineskin grows old it has left the heart of the message of its founder. It rejects the message originally preached that gave it birth.

Take good note that Christ bypassed the Palace and Temple in seeking a new wineskin. He called fishermen, tax collectors and zealots; not priests and princes. He called them from the Galilean back woods not from the city of Jerusalem.

He did not try to twist the pharisaic system into a new wineskin. It would have rent and the revival would have been lost. All of John's disciples would need to come the way of John's message, to Christ as the Lamb of God. They must press on beyond the elementary points of repentance and faith and go on to perfection. Christ Himself must be the goal.

When people are religiously set on a track it will be hard to teach them anything or to show them a better way.

However we do know that there were those who belonged to these old wineskins who joined themselves to Christ as a new wineskin. Some of Christ's first disciples were those who followed John's direction and joined themselves unto Christ.

Apollos a Jew and convert of John the Baptist was an eloquent and powerful preacher who was mighty in the scriptures. This man was of such a humble teachable spirit that Aquila and Priscilla were able to teach

him the way of God more perfectly and so he became a great preacher to the Church.

Saul the Pharisee of Pharisees met with Christ in soul rending repentance and so became a new wineskin for the Holy Ghost to fill. The revival at Ephesus began with twelve disciples of John who hearkened to the teaching of Paul and became a wineskin ready for the new-wine revival.

Most of what we see in the Church today is an old wineskin. The charismatic, user-friendly, gimmick seeking, church growth, prosperity preaching, fun loving, inner healing, counselling confusion has been set aside by Christ as unusable for revival.

Christ is now seeking out four sanctified Levites who will carry the Ark of His presence back among His people upon their shoulders. He is tired of the Philistine carts that have filled the Church. He is seeking a mouldable wineskin that will yield to the working of the Holy Ghost.

Today most of what is called Charismatic and that is thought to be on the cutting edge of God's purpose because of its size, has been utterly rejected without remedy. They could never contain the new wine of the Holy Ghost.

If He came to them in revival power wanting to rebuke sin, they would stand closemouthed in fear of condemning someone. If He wanted to speak in such a way as to fill an altar with kneeling, broken, repentant, weeping saints, they would stand aghast desiring to sing a happy song.

If He wanted to simply proclaim Christ and to cure every ill by simple faith in Christ, as He did on the day of Pentecost, today's inner healing guru's would want to place these new converts on inner healing weekends, years of counselling, and on courses for the breaking of curses.

Most of today's Church is embarrassed and ashamed the Cross of Christ; they mock the message of the precious Blood; they laugh at those who love holiness; they down play the authority of God's Word; they buy and sell the Holy Ghost in their ministry meetings.

We have many called by the name and character of Balaam, Judas, Simeon, Alexander, Korah, Cain and Jezebel in our pulpits protected by the old worn out misinterpreted text, "touch not my anointed." God cannot and will not use such a vessel.

He will go forth once more amongst the harlots and drunkards with the message of repentance to call fourth and sanctify a new vessel to receive of a fresh outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Through them the Gospel will be preached with power in demonstration to the ingathering of one last harvest of souls in this generation.

Church History

Just read the great and long history of revivals which have come to the Church. Luther in a secluded state of soul-agony was held fast in the old wineskin of Catholicism. When he opened his mouth he was told to keep quiet and to go back to his cell. But he couldn't. His eyes had been opened to God's Word and it burnt as a fire in his bones. As he began to preach justification by faith alone a new wineskin was formed and Europe was changed. The old wineskin of Rome could not stop him though they tried.

"This new wineskin spread to Scotland and in forty days of anointed preaching by Knox the nation was changed."

This new wineskin spread to Scotland and in forty days of anointed preaching by Knox the nation was changed. Sadly these wineskins of Lutheranism and Presbyterianism with time hardened and the wine soured.

Out of the ashes John Wesley while listening to readings of Luther's writings experienced a warmed heart through a real experience of the New Birth. He opened his mouth and preached with power only to be cast out of his father's church. Not deterred he stood upon his father's grave stone outside and preached the gospel by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Again new converts gathered and a new wineskin was formed which carried a Holy Ghost revival across the earth. Once this revival had spent its force and had hardened down in denominational carnality God stirred the embers once more. Out of them came a one eyed black preacher called William Seymour.

With His head tucked in a shoebox pulpit and his tongue on fire another wineskin was gathered into an old barn at Azusa and were moulded under the impulse of the Holy Ghost.

This new wineskin carried the gospel to the end of the earth with a speed unknown since the early Church.

It is now very sad to say that this revival has spent its force and has either crystallized sacred convictions into laws and dogmas or has cast aside godly convictions and now revels in its liberty of carnality. Either way it has become an old wineskin. The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement has become old.

Yet, allow me to prophesy for a brief moment and let us renew our hope in Christ for surely out of the ashes and embers of this Pentecostal Revival will come a kindling amongst some small groups of remnant believers and God will again in this last hour have another wineskin for the coming Heaven Sent Revival.

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