

OLD AND NEW WINESKINS

Luke 5:33–39

³³ Then they said to Him, “Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?”

³⁴ And He said to them, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵ But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days.”

³⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them: “No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was *taken* out of the new does not match the old. ³⁷ And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. ³⁹ And no one, having drunk old *wine*, immediately desires new; for he says, ‘The old is better.’”

MAIN POINT

We cannot offer to God a righteousness in ourselves. We must wholeheartedly embrace Christ for a righteousness and joy found only in Him. Jesus, the new, is far better.

I. The Problem — *The Pharisees Confront (v. 33)*

- A. The Pharisees accused Jesus’ disciples of not conforming to external religious practices within Judaism.
 - 1. John the Baptist’s disciples fasted and prayed.
 - 2. The Pharisee’s disciples fast and prayed.
 - 3. Jesus and his disciples not only did not fast and pray as much as John and the pharisees, but they would enjoy banquets with sinners no less (cf. Luke 5:27–32).
- B. The pharisees would fast often, many times going into public to display their alleged piety (cf. Matt. 5:16–18).
- C. Fasting had two purposes.
 - 1. Fasting was a sign of mourning (e.g., the book of Esther).
 - 2. Fasting was a sign of external piety and a religious observance (e.g., the Day of Atonement; Lev. 23:26–32)
- D. The disciples of Jesus instead acted with great joy and celebration.

II. The Parables — *Jesus Responds (vv. 34–39)*

- A. Jesus responds with three parables.
 - 1. Parables can be more than simply a story with a hidden meaning.
 - 2. Parables can also be metaphors, illustrations, etc.
- B. The First Parable: The Bridegroom (vv. 34–35)

1. When the bridegroom is at the wedding feast, everyone celebrates.
 2. When the bridegroom is taken away, everyone fasts.
 - a) Jesus clearly refers to himself as the bridegroom (although the Old Testament does not ever refer to the Messiah with such a metaphor). The Pharisees did not see Jesus for who he is: the Messiah.
 - b) Jesus hints at his passion when he talks about the bridegroom being “taken away”—the word he uses implies a violent snatching (even killing).
 3. The point: *The presence of Jesus as the bridegroom should always be a joyous celebration (cf. Rev. 19:1–10).*
- C. The Second Parable: Old and New Garment (v. 36)
1. When someone has an old garment which needs to be patched, they do not take a perfect fine and whole new garment, cut a patch out of it, and use it to then patch the old garment.
 - a) It destroys the new garment.
 - b) The new patch will not match the old garment.
 - c) When the old patched garment gets washed, the patch will shrink and the seams will come apart, destroying the old garment.
 2. The point: *The old garment is the Pharisaical Judaism which, while intended to draw people to the conclusion that they need a righteousness not their own, instead caused the pharisees and Jews to believe that they possessed a righteousness within themselves. The new garment is Jesus and the gospel which he brings to all men.*
- D. The Third Parable: Old and New Wineskins (vv. 37–39)
1. No one puts new wine in old wineskins. Wineskins were made out of the treated hides of goats and sheep. At the beginning of its life a wineskin was malleable and able to stretch under the pressure of the gasses of new wine fermenting.
 2. Over time, the wineskins would become brittle. Old wineskins were suitable only for old wine that had already fermented.
 3. New wine put into old wineskins would cause the brittle older wineskins to burst, destroying both the old wineskin and the new wine.
 4. The Point: *The old wineskin is the old trappings of the Judaism religious actions of the Pharisees. They believed their strict adherence to the law made them earn favor with God because of their own righteousness. Jesus, the new wine, said that the new joy he ushers in with the gospel would not work with the religious leaders’ perspective because in self-righteousness they refused to embrace him.*
- E. The Meaning: *In the presence of Jesus redeemed sinners are welcome and find joy and blessing. The old way of assuming that we can come to God with a righteousness from within us is foolish. The new—clinging to the righteousness of Christ found in the gospel—is far better and will result in great joy and hope for those who believe.*