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Gospel cannot be mixed with anything!

Luke 5:33-39, *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.’”*

Galileo was a Christian, Italian astronomer and physicist who challenged the traditional thinking of his day and made some important discoveries. He is most famous for his invention of

the telescope. In **1609**, using his telescope and the Bible, he began to make spectacular discoveries about the heavenly bodies – the sun and the stars, our galaxy, and even about our own earth. Among his discoveries was the idea that the earth was not the centre of the universe, nor was it even the centre of our solar system. All the universe did not revolve around the earth, as was popularly taught in those days.

He even showed his discoveries to Pope Paul V, but the church turned on him and attacked him. They told him that the earth was the centre of God’s creation, and if anything, else was the centre, it would be like the earth was worshipping it, which would be idol worship. The church even threw Scripture at him. Their favourite was Acts 1:13, and especially so because of the word play on Galileo.

Acts 1:13, *“Why are you men of Galilee standing here and looking up into the sky?”*

How’s that for a verse ripped out of context?

Nevertheless, in **1632**, Galileo was called before the leaders of the Inquisition to answer charges that his writings contradicted church teachings and tradition. He was 70 years old at the time, and was at the very least threatened with torture, if not actually tortured.

The outcome was that Galileo was forced to recant his beliefs and state that his observations about the earth moving around the sun were errors and heresies. However, even after he recanted, he was placed under house arrest and treated badly by church officials until he became blind and feeble.

He died on a cold, winter's day in **1642** with his son and two pupils present. Of course, as we all know, Galileo was right, and the church was wrong – terribly wrong – because it was resistant to change. It resisted anything new.

Jesus ran into a very similar problem when He began His ministry almost 2000 years ago. At the very outset of what he was trying to do, he received criticism for trying to do things differently, for trying to change things. Time after time, the Jewish leaders and religious people of that day questioned Jesus, and even condemned Him, for trying to do something new.

We see one of these incidents in Luke 5:33-39 and Jesus responds to their questioning with a parable. Let me explain to you some of the cultural difficulties that Jesus was trying to overcome.

Today in the Middle East, just like in the time of Christ, there are communities which have lived in remarkable isolation from the rest of the world. Frequently, in these communities, the

highest ideal, the highest value, the greatest goal, is changelessness. The highest compliment for a gentleman in one of these communities is to call him a **Hafiz al-taqalid**, a preserver of the customs. This is what Jesus was up against when he came on the scene, and this is what he addresses in Luke 5:33-39.

The gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of God, as Paul calls it, the gospel of grace, the message of forgiveness through the work of Jesus Christ, the gospel which we know and love and believe is unique.

Gospel is incompatible with all other religious belief. It stands alone. The idea that the Christian gospel can mix with or blend with any other religious system in any way is absolutely wrong.

You cannot mix the gospel with

- Roman Catholic
- Orthodox sacramentalism,
- Liberalism,
- Mormonism,
- Jehovah's Witness,
- Christian Science,
- Judaism.

The gospel is absolutely exclusive. It mingles with no other religion. It mixes with no other religion. It accommodates no other religion.

Now we know

There is one God,

There is one authoritative book, the Bible.

There is one Redeemer of souls, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is one gospel, the gospel of grace and faith.

That singularity of the Christian gospel means that any intrusion that mixes or alters the singularity of the gospel renders it void, nullifies it. It stands alone.

Being a Christian is to the exclusion of all other religious systems, or you are not a Christian because all other religious systems are systems of works, to one degree or another, of ritual, ceremony, or human works earning favour with God.

This passage does for us is demonstrate that the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of salvation is incompatible with Judaism, and we would assume that Judaism is its nearest kin.

Jesus didn't come to alter Judaism. He didn't come to blend with Judaism. He came to bring the gospel which replaced it.

Here Jesus will show us the bankruptcy, the emptiness, and the incompatibility of even Judaism with the gospel.

The hostility continued to escalate.

If you go back into the prior passage in chapter 5, Jesus called a man named Levi/ Matthew starting in verse 27.

He called a man named Levi to Himself.

He forgave his sins.

He saved him.

He made him a disciple.

Matthew Levi put on a feast, a celebration, a banquet, a festival, a party at his house because he was so excited about his salvation, he was so excited that he had been called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ he called all his friends together.

He was at the lowest level of society as a tax collector. He was more hated than anybody else in Jewish society because he worked for the Roman government and was an extortioner and a crook who was robbing his own people to pay a foreign Gentile oppressor and to get rich at the expense of his people. Tax collectors were the scum.

The only people they could associate with were thugs, enforcers, prostitutes, and other sorts of criminals. Matthew was happy about his conversion, elated about his conversion,

about being forgiven, being called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. He called a party.

V 29 says there was a great crowd of tax gatherers and other people.

V 30, *"The Pharisees and the scribes began grumbling at the disciples of Jesus saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with the tax gatherers and sinners,'"*

Here we find another indication of the terrible breach between Jesus and the religious leaders.

The religious leaders were self-righteous.

The religious leaders had external parade of their supposed righteousness.

They disassociate themselves from all people that they deemed unclean. They didn't soil themselves by going into a Gentile house or hanging around with tax gatherers, prostitutes, and other thugs, and criminals.

Jesus associated with those people all the time. In fact, He basically gained the title, "the friend of sinners and tax collectors," "the friend of drunkards," because those were the kind of people He went to.

When the question was asked, Jesus answered them.

V 31-32, *Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³²I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

There is a huge gulf between the religion of Judaism.

The Judaism concerned with staying away from sinners, and
The gospel of Jesus, concerned with being with sinners.

The religion of Judaism concerned with self-righteousness,
the gospel of Jesus concerned with heart righteousness.

The religion of Judaism concerned about what men think,
The gospel of Jesus concerned about what God thinks.

The religion of Judaism concerned only with the outside,
The gospel concerned with the inside.

1. A Question

V 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?"*

This is actually the third conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees in this chapter.

- The first conflict with them came over His healing of the paralyzed man earlier in the chapter.
- The second conflict comes at the house of Matthew, or outside when the disciples come out and are questioned by the Pharisees.
- Here is the third conflict and the stakes are raised every time.

Now we have an even more intense confrontation as Jesus speaks directly to them about the bankruptcy, the emptiness, and the incompatibility of Judaism with the gospel.

Prayers:

They had a routine, a daily routine of ritual prayers that were prayed at certain hours during the day.

But there were certain hours of the day when they stopped everything, went into a public place, and routinely went through their prayer list. They did that in a fashion to demonstrate their supposed spirituality before men. These were required, routine, ritual prayers which were either read or recited from memorization. They were in that sense heartless.

Fasting:

It was part of the pharisaic system to fast every Monday and Thursday of every week.

Luke 18:12, *I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'*

The Pharisee went into the temple to pray, and he was saying that I fast twice a week. He was telling God how righteous he was because he fasts twice a week.

Monday was fast day, and Thursday was fast day. It may well have been that Matthew's party was on Monday, or Thursday.

Don't You understand the tradition?

Which they, of course, had deemed to be the true religion of God.

Luke poses the question from the Pharisees and the scribes.

"All the disciples of John fast and pray; and our disciples also do the same, but Yours eat and drink."

Matthew 9:14, *Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"*

Mark 2:18, **The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, "Why do the**

disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

That is very typical of what we call synoptic gospel accounts. Luke emphasizes the Pharisees posing the question. Matthew emphasizes the disciples of John posing the question. Mark says they both posed the question.

Very simply, the disciples of John were associated with the Pharisees and the scribes. They were hanging out together. They were committed to the same patterns of prayers and fasting.

They came together and they asked the question together. The question was coming from people who scribes and Pharisees and people who were disciples of John, both groups.

Both groups obviously observed these fasts and prayers. They have a pattern, they have a routine, and they keep this and "Your disciples ignore it,"

The disciples of John you probably think of the good guys. What are the good guys doing with these bad guys, these legalists?

John the Baptist came in the region around the Jordan, and he was preaching repentance. He was saying, "Messiah's coming, the kingdom's coming.

You better be ready when the King comes to set up His kingdom and you better repent. If you don't then the wrath of God is going to come upon you.

Literally thousands of people were going out there. They were listening to John preaching repentance and getting ready for Messiah. He had many thousands of disciples.

There was a day not all those people would have been there that day when Jesus showed up. That was the day that John points to Jesus and says, "*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*"

John wanted his disciples to then move their allegiance to Jesus.

John 3:28-30, *You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'*²⁹*He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.*³⁰*He must increase, but I must decrease.*

Jesus was baptized by John and the Father said, "*This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,*" and the Spirit descended upon Him, and it was clearly recognizable to John that this in fact was the Messiah. So, John wanted to transition his people to the one who had to increase, Jesus Christ.

But not all his followers were there that day and not all his followers were convinced Jesus was the Messiah. Not all the disciples of John followed Jesus.

They wanted to be acceptable when the Messiah came and set up His kingdom so they could get in the kingdom. So, they joined with religious involvement scribes and the Pharisees.

So, they hang around with the scribes and the Pharisees.

Let us do the fasts that they ascribe to.

Let us do the alms giving that they ascribe to.

Let us pray the prayers that they ascribe to.

Let us really be serious because when the Messiah comes, we want Him to know that our repentance was real.

So, they don't make the transition to Jesus, but all of a sudden, they start hanging around the people they perceive in their religious system are at the highest level.

Interestingly John the Baptist is in prison. So, he is not around to help his disciples. He's not around to be preaching everywhere saying, "Here's Christ, Follow Him."

So, these disciples of John, wanting to be very, very faithful to their dedication that they made at their baptism with John wind up associating with these religionists. They blend into the religion of the day, and they do what would be the highest level of religious devotion.

Long after this, go all the way to the 19th chapter of Acts you will run into disciples of John who never heard of Jesus.

There was no media. There was no radio, TV, print media. If you didn't hear about Jesus or meet Jesus, if you were off somewhere else, you didn't know. You didn't know.

There were these people associated with John who in a desire to be fastidious in their religion associated themselves with the Pharisees. So, they come as a group, kind of a mingled group and they ask the question. The disciples of John here they fast and offer their prayers. The disciples of the Pharisees, they do the same. But Yours eat and drink, you are having a party here and this is, maybe, Monday, or Thursday.

Do you know how many fasts in the Bible are commanded by God?

One.

There is only one commanded fast in the entire Old Testament, just one.

It is Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement. That is the only fast commanded by God.

Leviticus 16:29, &31,

²⁹ "This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you.

³¹ It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever.

What was the Day of Atonement?

It was a day when you took a hard look at your sin.

When you did a deep inspection of your soul, when sacrifices for the whole nation were made, when the whole nation stopped its normal course of action and everybody did a heart search of their own sin, and that was God's required fast.

You don't eat, you mourn, you grieve over your sin.

There weren't any other required fasts.

There were occasions in the Old Testament when the Jews did fast over grief in the book of Esther, chapter 4.

In Isaiah 58

1 Kings 21

Joel 1:13-14.

There are fasts in the Old Testament associated, always associated with grief, and mourning and the wrenching of the heart over some serious issue. That is a proper fast. They are not required, they are just done voluntarily when someone is so overwrought, so sad, so heart sick, so concerned to pray that they have no appetite.

There is a need to just pray. If a person loses a loved one, a spouse, and there's an overwhelming grief, that is the time to mourn, that is the time to weep, the fast.

If you have a prayer burden, you are praying for the salvation of someone and it literally dominates you to the degree that you have no appetite, that's the true and pure fast that is born of the heart, born of the heart. There's no merit in fasting.

You are not going to get points with God if you don't eat, just because you don't want to eat so you can get points with God. It's when you have no appetite. It's gone because of the sadness and the turmoil of your heart.

There are occasions in the Old Testament when such fasts exist, when there is a grappling with something severe that takes away all desire to eat.

- There were one-day fasts.
- There were three-day fasts.
- There were seven-day fasts.
- In Daniel 10:2-3 there is a three-week fast.
- There are several times in the Old Testament when you have a forty-day fast. Such as Exodus 34, Deuteronomy 9, and 1 Kings 19.
- Our Lord Jesus fasted for forty days in the tremendous conflict over His soul with Satan.

But there's only one required.

But what had happened in Judaism was they decided that fasting looked spiritual, so they invented routine fasts that had nothing to do with their hearts because their hearts were rotten.

Their hearts were stone, in the language of Ezekiel. On the outside they were white, on the inside they were full of dead men's bones, Jesus said. They were hypocrites, they were despicable to God. They fasted only to be seen by men.

They determined that every Monday and Thursday they would fast. Then every day they went through the ritual prayer. They had three major religious expressions of the Judaism of the time of Jesus, and it still exists today among those that are Orthodox.

- Prayer,
- Alms and
- Fasting,

Those were the three religious expressions, and they did them publicly and they did them as ostentatiously as they could possibly be done in order to parade their supposed godliness before men.

Matthew 6:1, *“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

Matthew 6:5, *“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

Matthew 6:17, *“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

Jesus, when He preached the Sermon on the Mount, really lit a bomb in that message because He spoke to these religious leaders.

So, there are the three things: prayer, alms, fasting. They had routine alms-giving, routine prayers, routine fasting, and they did it as ostentatiously as possible so people would see them. Paul said they made an open display in the flesh.

Galatians 6:12, *As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*

But again, there was only one commanded fast. Any other fasting that you did was from the heart because of grief, mourning because of sadness and concern, very different.

The Pharisees and their followers were engaged in really nothing more than hypocrisy. The disciples of John the Baptist probably thought that this is the highest standard of religion so we will also join in.

Jesus and His disciples at a party with the wretched people that none of these folks would ever associate with, just absolutely the antithesis of their religion.

2. Jesus is the Life of the Party

V 34, *And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?"*

Attendants are the best friends who plan the wedding and Jesus says, "Look, you don't fast at a wedding, do you? A wedding is a celebration and when the bridegroom is there, you celebrate."

Weddings often lasted seven days. Fasting is out of place. Suppose a father could say, "I am so upset that my daughter is marrying this guy that there will be no cake, there will be no refreshments, there will be no punch and there will be no food. We will be fasting."

That could happen but that's bizarre.

There were ancient rabbinical rules, by the way, forbidding people to fast at a wedding. Rejoice with those who rejoice. There's a time to weep and a time to laugh.

Fasting has its appropriate time, a time of broken, grieved hearts. But Jesus said, The bridegroom's here.

Who is that?

Himself.

These Pharisees, scribes, disciples of John, they were completely out of touch with what was happening.

The Old Testament never refers to Messiah as a bridegroom. That is a New Testament term and here it's introduced.

Later, Paul builds on that in his epistles and the book of Revelation builds on that. Christ the bridegroom takes His bride into the great bridal city, the New Jerusalem.

So, this is the first introduction of the Messiah as the bridegroom. But the analogy is very clear.

It would be completely ridiculous for Jesus' disciples to fast and mourn when the Messiah was there, the long-awaited Messiah.

It is particularly disturbing that John's disciples had not transferred their faith to Christ to whom John appointed them.

Jesus, by the way, did agree that His disciples didn't fast.

He didn't, however, agree that they didn't pray.

They didn't pray the daily routine prayers of the scribes and Pharisees and disciples of John and others, but they certainly prayed.

So, you don't find in any of the gospel accounts any statement that they didn't pray because prayer is just a way of life for God's people. But they didn't fast because they couldn't fast while the bridegroom was with them.

V 35, *But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."*

The days will come. There is going to be a time in the future. Future time the wedding joy is going to end.

Why?

Because the bridegroom is taken from them.

In the middle of the big celebration the bridegroom is going to be snatched.

What does that refer to?

The death of Christ!

They are celebrating now, let them celebrate. That's appropriate.

They are going to fast later on when the bridegroom is snatched out of the celebration.

A terrible interruption before the real marriage can take place. Right in the middle of the celebration He's snatched out and executed on a cross and the disciples lose Him.

Then Jesus says they will fast.

Luke 24 just briefly.

Luke 24:28-31, *Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for*

it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

Could that mean that they were fasting?

He had to take the bread, He had to break it, He had to give it to them, very reasonable.

They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of bread. It seems to be significant.

Luke 24:36-43, *Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” ³⁷But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” ⁴⁰When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹But while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” ⁴²So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³And He took it and ate in their presence.*

The fast is over.

For us in that sense the fast is over.

Christ came out of the grave.

He ascended into heaven.

He sent the Holy Spirit.

We now can say with the apostle Paul, "Rejoice always and again I say rejoice." We live in a state of constant joy. There are times in this temporal life when a fast is appropriate for sadness and our sorrow. But the bridegroom is always with us. He's taken up residence in our hearts.

The early church did fast on occasion, Acts 13, Acts 14. But that was because of earthly concerns.

The bridegroom is always with us. We live in constant celebration, but there was that time when the sadness was crushing. Three years they had been with Jesus and now He's gone.

Judaism at its most devout level, at its highest point, is completely out of sync with the gospel, totally.

It doesn't recognize the Messiah.

It doesn't recognize the bridegroom is here.

It doesn't understand this is the time of immense joy. Christianity is unique.

The gospel is unique. It is incompatible with any other religion, including Judaism.

3. Jesus brings new garments

V 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.

Jesus gives them really three illustrations to reflect a fuller understanding of the point that the gospel is exclusive.

Most of the time, when we read this, think of an old pair of jeans we have which have holes, and to fix them, we get out a piece of scrap cloth somewhere, and we sew it on. As we all know, if we sew a new piece of cloth onto an old piece of clothing, after a while, the patch will tear away because it shrinks in the wash while the old piece of clothing does not.

We think, “Yes, that makes sense. If you are going to patch an old garment, make sure the patch is preshrunk, so that it will be a good fit for the old piece of clothing.”

Now, while this is what Jesus is teaching here, this is not all that Jesus is teaching.

Most of the time, Jesus' parables are humorous and this one definitely is.

Do you see what is so funny about it?

Jesus is not just talking about patching an old garment with an old piece of cloth.

He says, no one puts a piece from a new garment, from a new piece of clothing, onto an old one.

He says, the new piece will make it tear, it won't match, but even more obvious, **why would you want to cut up the new piece of clothing in order to patch the old?**

Just throw out the old and wear the new!

If you have got an old pair of jeans at home that has holes. You are not going to go down to M&S and buy a new pair of jeans, then cut them up so that I can patch the old pair. That's ludicrous.

You will just throw the old and wear the new!

Jesus is saying to the Pharisees, the way you all are serving God. It was okay when it was new. It was a good pair of jeans.

God gave it to you in the Old Testament law. It's old now. It's full of holes.

I am not here to try to patch it up, to make it last another few months. No, I am here to bring you something completely new. I am here to hand out new clothes. So don't go cutting them up to patch up your old clothes. Just wear the new.

Handing out clothes, by the way, is something that bridegrooms did at their wedding parties.

Remember when Samson married the Philistine woman in the book of Judges? He gave garments to all his wedding guests. Of course, he killed a bunch of men to get the garments, but that was kind of the way Samson did things.

Jesus is better than Samson.

Revelation 3:18, *I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*

God will give new, white, spotless robes for us to wear.

Isaiah 61:10, which may the verse Jesus had in mind here, that we will be clothed in righteousness.

Up to this point, the Jews has been trying to live according to the law. But it could never give them righteousness. All it could do was cover over their sin.

Now Jesus is saying, “you are still wearing your old clothes. They are stained and soiled and full of holes. The Old Testament law could never make them new. But I have come to give you brand new clothes of righteousness. Don’t try to cut them up to patch the old clothes – just wear the new!”

How about you?

Do you have a patchwork religion?

The robes of righteousness do not come by adding Christ to the Old Testament law. We do not become righteous by obeying the law and believing in Jesus Christ. Jesus came to hand out fresh, new clothes, free of charge to all who believe in Him alone for it. There is no cost.

4. Jesus brings new wineskins

V 37-38, *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. ³⁸But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.*

In the Bible, wine is a symbol of joy, festivity, and celebration. Jesus is saying that if we want the joy and festivity which He brings to last, we must put it in a new container. The new wine must have a new wineskin.

Everybody knew how to make wine, and nobody in their right mind would put new wine in old wineskins.

Wineskins were made from goatskins. The goats were slaughtered, and the hides were cleaned and cured. Then the hide was sewn up and the holes where the legs had been tied up, and the spout of the wineskin was where the neck would be.

Newly pressed wine, which is basically grape juice, was poured into the wineskin through the neck, and when it was full, the neck was tied up to make the skin airtight.

Over time, the juice would ferment in order to make wine. The fermentation process would produce gas. This gas would cause the goatskins to expand. But once the skin was used as a wineskin, it had been stretched to its limit. After the wine was poured out of it, it would not shrink back to normal. It would stay fully stretched out.

So, if somebody came along and poured new wine into the old wineskin, when the new wine started to ferment and produce

gasses, the skin would start to stretch some more, but would reach it's limit and would burst so that both the wine and the wineskins would be ruined.

Jesus is saying, "Nobody pours new wine into old wineskins. This would ruin the wine."

Jesus is bringing some new wine, and it needs a wineskin. But the old wineskin of the Old Testament has been stretched to its limit. So, I need a new wineskin to hold it. The old just won't do the job.

In this second picture, Jesus continues to show that He is bringing something totally new and that it doesn't mix with the old.

The new wine and the new clothes are a picture of the new Gospel message that eternal life is by faith alone in Christ alone, and the new way of doing ministry through celebration and joy, rather than duty.

What are the wineskins in this second picture?

The wineskins hold the wine. The old wineskin held the duty and the obligations, the necessity to obey, and so I believe the old wineskin is the law. It is what held the old way of doing things together.

In the Bible that the law has fulfilled its purpose, and it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It has been stretched to its limits. It cannot hold any more wine. It especially cannot hold the new wine of the Gospel or the new wine of a joyful ministry. There was very little room for joy and celebration in the law. There were too many things to keep track of, too many sins to avoid, too many obligations and responsibilities. There is very little joy in the law.

What is the new wineskin?

It is grace.

Grace is flexible, stretches, and hold together all sorts of circumstances and people. It covers all and surrounds all. It encompasses all.

No matter how much wine you pour into grace, it can still hold more. Grace is what allows God to give us eternal life simply for believing in Jesus Christ for it. No matter how bad of sinner you are, grace can take you in.

Grace allows us to be joyful in our ministry. Pharisees made it that way, "Here are the 613 things you must do to fit in with us, and if you miss any of them, well too bad, you are out."

But grace gives us the freedom to be different.

5. Jesus brings new wine

V 39, *And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'* ”

This verse is confusing to some because it is true that the old wine tastes better. Wine gets better with age. Jesus is not disagreeing with this. The old wine vs. new wine doesn't mean aged wine vs. fresh wine.

He is talking about a kind of wine people have been drinking for years, and a new, different kind of wine.

I am not a wine connoisseur, but I am told that people develop a certain taste for a certain kind of wine.

Some people prefer red, others prefer white.

Some people prefer a particular brand.

Generally, when they are presented with a new kind of wine that they are not used to, they don't like it initially.

This is what Jesus is saying here about His teachings on grace. He is simply asserting that what He is teaching will not immediately be accepted. It will not immediately be liked.

The old and familiar status quo seems better because it is not threatening. The new way of doing things demands that we

change. People don't like change. People who are used to functioning under the law don't immediately like grace. It's uncomfortable. It seems too loose.

For some people, when they first taste grace, it seems to have no flavour, or it is a flavour they are not used to. Grace is an acquired taste.

At the first taste of grace, most people prefer the old law. Grace takes some getting used to. But if we give it time, we always end up enjoying it more than the law.

Learning to live in grace can take years, but when it finally clicks with us, it releases us from the fear of rejection and the endless lists of responsibilities, it keeps us from comparing ourselves with one another, it brings joy and peace into our lives.

The benefits of grace far outweigh the familiarity of burden of the law. The law is a harsh master, but after a while, we get used to it and it feels comfortable. But grace, though scary at first, is liberating and freeing.

Jesus looked at those Pharisees and said, "You've been drinking that old wine of Judaism so long, you have absolutely no interest in the gospel."

It's really true.

People who have been in religions for a long time are very comfortable. They cultivate their taste for that tradition. They cultivate their taste for that experience.

Judaism had become mellowed and settled by centuries of experience and mounting, increasing tradition until it was so much a part of the fabric of their life, they couldn't even see themselves in any other way.

They were Pharisees and scribes to the death. They were self-satisfied. They had grown comfortable with their heresy, like old men who have been drinking a certain wine all their life and were not at all interested in a new one no matter what it may have promised by way of delight and pleasure.

What Jesus was saying is that those who have cultivated deeply the love of their traditional religion have no interest in the gospel.

Haven't you found that to be so?

So hard to reach those people.

The Judaism of Jesus' time was very satisfying old wine and they wanted nothing to do with the new. And eventually they saw to it that He was executed. How sad.

But that's where sinners are today as well. There's no mixing. For those who aren't willing to come out of their false religions to the gospel, there is no hope!

So, what do we do?

Do we tell them that's OK and put the gospel in as a patch?

Do we tell them that's OK and dump some of the gospel in their old wineskin?

No.

Beloved, we must preach that the gospel stands alone.