

New Wine for New Bottles

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The Scribes and Pharisees questioned Jesus: *Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?* (Lk 5:33) When Jesus answered, he gave three parables to answer their question (Lk 5:34-39), one of which will be considered below. He did not specifically address fasting at this time, but I would like to share spiritual fasting, as it will make the parables more meaningful.

Fasting: Mt 6:16-18: *16 And when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, of a sad face. For they disfigure their faces so that they may appear to men to fast. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to fast, but to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly.* (Modern KJ) Anoint your mind with the oil of the spirit of truth, and wash your face (self) with the water of the word. (Eph 5:25-26) One place from where Jesus might have obtained this saying is **Isa 58:5-6:** *5. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? (fast of the Pharisee) wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? 6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Fasting is connected with mourning for a lost loved one, during which time there is a loss of appetite. The lost loved one for whom we are to mourn is the Son of God, and we are to abstain from man's spiritual food.*

Wine & Bottles: The principles taught in these parables are the same as the ones about fasting, the bride chamber and old cloth sewed on the new, but providing different shades of meaning by using different symbols. **Lk 5:37-38:** *37. And no man puts new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. 38. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.*

Bottles: First, the vessels are not glass bottles, as used by most vineyards today, but the skins of animals made to hold water or wine. I understand this method is still used eastern countries today, including Israel. Literally, leather from the skin of animals dries and cracks over time, so that this type vessel can only be used once, because, when new wine begins to ferment, the pressure generated would break an old wine skin.

Job 32:18-19: *18. For I am full of matter (literally = words), the spirit within⁽⁹⁹⁰⁾ me constrains me. 19. Behold, my belly⁽⁹⁹⁰⁾ is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.* The Hebrew word {beten⁽⁹⁹⁰⁾} for 'belly' is also used of the 'womb', and both are symbols for the mind. **Job 15:35:** *They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepares deceit.* Deceit is prepared in the mind. Jesus used 'belly' as a symbol: **Jn 7:38-39:** *38. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39. But this spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive:...* The belly represents the mind, and living water the spirit, which when we teach truth, it is holy spirit coming out of our mouths. Spiritually, the old wine skin versus the new are figures of an old and new mind-set, or, the "old man" and "new man." **Eph 4:22-24:** *22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation (manner of life) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

Bad Wine: Mic 2:11: *If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.* Here is a false prophet prophesying, not

from God, but from his own understanding. Notice too, that wine and strong drink are synonymous. Milk is for babies, but wine is for the mature. Wine and strong drink are figures of more advanced and deeper understanding, whether bad or good. **Isa 28:7:** *But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink... they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.* The result of false teachings is manifested in Babylon as a type: **Jer 51:7:** *Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.* All nations, or all denominations have drunk the wine of her fornication, (Rev 18:3). Because the rebellious will not listen, there will come a time when the deep things of God will be revealed, which will torment the wicked, described as ‘torment of fire.’ (Rev 14:8-10)

Good Wine: Many assume wine is a symbol for blood, this because of the verses that deal with the institution of the communion service. While it is true that *without shedding of blood is no remission*, wine is a symbol of deeper understanding of Christ’s teachings, where ‘milk’ is for babies. This can be seen in the parable above and the scriptures below. The communion cup represents the understanding of Jesus’ experience of the cross.

Pr 9:1-6: *1. Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out seven pillars: 2. She hath killed her beasts (earthly thoughts); she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. 3. She hath sent forth her maidens: she cries upon the highest places of the city, 4. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wants understanding, she saith to him, 5. Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. 6. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.* Wisdom is a personification of Christ (1 Cor 1:24) who has the mind of his Father (Phil 2:5), and we are invited to partake of his wine, which is the understanding the Father has given to him, and which he is giving to those listening.

Summary: **Jn 2:3-4:** *3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come...* Why did Jesus say *mine hour is not yet come*? Jesus was speaking a riddle regarding how it is the understanding of the cross that gives a person the wine of gladness, but it was not time. Near the end, Jesus said to his disciples: *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now,* (Jn 16:12). Even in the Apostle Paul’s day, the people were struggling with the understanding of the cross, the Messiah and the law: **1 Cor 3:1-3:** *1. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat (or, solid food): for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? Luke is the only one who recorded the Savior’s words which explain one big part of the problem: **Lk 5:39:** *39. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desires new: for he saith, the old is better.* The Jews did not desire the understanding of what the Messiah was all about. How could a man be God? God can’t die? If Jesus was God, why did he allow us to kill him? Is it any different today? (Cf Ex 34:24)*

Effect of new wine: **2 Cor 5:17:** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* We become renewed in the spiritual realm when we put new wine in new vessels. How do we do this? **Jn 15:7:** *7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you....* The Greek translated ‘words’ is *rhema*, which stands for the ‘spoken word.’ **Jn 6:63:** *It is the spirit giving life; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* (Bible Interlinear) If we are to receive the wine (deep things) of God, it must be the spirit of God that interprets the Bible, or else it is but a man’s understanding. We need new wine and new bottles!

Ps 104:15: *And wine (deep things of God) makes glad the heart of man, and oil (spirit of God) makes his face to shine,*

and bread (Nourishment from heaven) *strengthens man's heart.* Amen.