

# **New Wine**

## **Matthew 9:14-17**

### **Intro**

*Here are a few lyrics from the worship song, **New Wine...***

***In the crushing  
In the pressing  
You are making  
New wine  
In the soil, I  
Now surrender  
You are breaking new ground***

***So I yield to You and to Your careful hand  
When I trust You I don't need to understand***

***Make me Your vessel  
Make me an offering  
Make me whatever, You want me to be  
I came here with nothing  
But all You have given me  
Jesus, bring new wine out of me***

*Now, while I really like this song, I also find it to be very convicting...*

Because this song ***rightly places the emphasis on the Lord Jesus*** and on ***what He wants to do in our lives as believers...***

This song speaks of the **crushing** and **pressing** that takes place as the Lord Jesus *seeks to do a wonderful work in our lives...*

- The song speaks of the *surrender* that is to take place as the Lord Jesus seeks to fulfill His *perfect will* in our *imperfect lives...*

And I believe that this song ties in wonderfully with our message today *not only because the Lord Jesus speaks about new wine* in our passage...

- But also because surrendering to the Lord — yielding to His careful hand — trusting Him and not needing to understand — ***is what He has called us to...***

And these truths are the opposite of what I believe that the Lord Jesus is confronting in this passage — *the error of legalism...*

*Now, let's define our terms...*

***Legalism refers to a focus on strict adherence to rules and laws as the basis of righteousness or acceptance before God...***

- ***Legalism goes beyond diligent obedience by implying that one can earn or maintain God's favor primarily through external compliance...***

***Essentially, legalism is a man-made standard of external obedience by which people seek to be made right with God...***

Legalism is the opposite of **surrender** and **trust** because **surrender** and **trust** are **relational**...

- Surrender and trust communicate to God that we want to do what is **pleasing to Him**...

That we want **Him to enjoy the relationship that He has with us**...

**Surrender and trust** is an acknowledgment that we cannot control outcomes — we cannot master our circumstances...

- Through surrender and trust we are acknowledging that we cannot *be made right with God or remain right with God* through adherence to some system of works...

Through surrender and trust we are seeking to obey the Lord because we love Him and **acknowledge that His way is best for Him, for us and for others**...

**On the other hand, legalism is always self-centered**...

When I engage in legalistic behaviors I inevitably focus on **myself** because **I must do certain things in a certain way to maintain a certain standing with God**...

*And legalistic systems inevitably distort the gospel*...

Because the true gospel reveals what **Christ has done for me to make me righteous** — **apart from any works that I do**...

But legalism is about ***what I must do to make me righteous...***

And that is never going to work — because ***I can never do enough good*** to make up for ***all the wrong I have done and for all the wrong I continue to do...***

*With this in mind, let's read the passage that we will be studying this morning as we continue our verse by verse study of the Gospel of Matthew...*

### **Matthew 9:14-17 (NKJV)**

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

**15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.**

**16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.**

**17 Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."**

*Let's move into our first section...*

## 1) The Question (vs 14)

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

**The disciples of John** that come to question Jesus are followers of John the Baptist...

- Now, it is most likely that John the Baptist was already imprisoned at this time for speaking out against Herod Antipas' illicit marriage...

And before we get to the *actual question* that the disciples of John are asking, we must get to the *unasked question* — ***why are there still disciples of John the Baptist at this point?***...

- To help you understand why I am asking this question, we would be wise to consider what the Gospel of John has to say about ***John the Baptist***...

*Let's turn first of all to...*

### **John 1:6-8 (NKJV)**

**6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.**

**7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.**

**8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.**

So, we see that John the Baptist was **sent from God to bear witness of the Light** — and that **Light** was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself...

- *And I believe that in the person of John the Baptist we have a rough template of the kind of witness that we are to be...*

As disciples, we too have been sent by God into the world to make disciples of Jesus Christ...

- We are to direct people to follow the Lord Jesus just as we follow the Lord Jesus...

*Let's skip down in John 1 to vs 35-37...*

### **John 1:35-37 (NKJV)**

**35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.**

**36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"**

**37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.**

*This is exactly as it should be...*

John the Baptist was the opening act — the Lord Jesus was the headliner — the main attraction...

- And as the Lord Jesus' ministry got started there was going to be a transition period where the disciples of John understood that it was time to stop following John and start following Jesus...

*Now, please turn to...*

### **John 3:22-30 (NKJV)**

**22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.**

**23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized.**

**24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.**

**25 Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification.**

**26 And 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!"**

**27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.**

**28 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.**

- So, as we put all the pieces together we understand that John the Baptist had a public ministry that was to prepare people to receive the Messiah when He came on the stage...

*Again, it even seems reasonable to assume that there was going to be a period of overlap between the ministries of John and Jesus...*

That John's ministry was to *wind down* as Jesus' ministry *ramped up* — that John was to baptize people unto repentance and then send them to follow Jesus...

- [ex. John the Baptist as a sign-spinner pointing people to Jesus...]

*Unfortunately, with John the Baptist's ministry something happened that is all too common...*

People failed to move from following *John* to following *Jesus* — they failed to transfer their discipleship from John to Jesus...

- *This is similar to people being disciples of a **denomination** instead of being disciples of **Jesus**...*

*Or being a disciple of a **Christian leader** instead of being a disciple of **Jesus**...*

So, as we turn back to Matthew 9, the argument I am making is that by the time John the Baptist was arrested, every disciple of John should have **already** transferred his discipleship to the Lord Jesus...

***APPLICATION — If you are a disciple of anyone or anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ — please transfer your discipleship immediately...[expand]***

*Let's now address the question in vs 14...*

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

- We see here that both **the disciples of John** and the **Pharisees fast often...**

What is being referred to here was most likely the *twice a week* fasting that was the tradition of the Pharisees at that time...

- And it is important to understand that this twice a week fasting ***was not commanded in the law of Moses*** — it was simply something that had become a practice over time...

Now, it is very interesting to note that there is only ***one fast that is commanded*** under the Old Covenant — and that was the fasting on the ***Day of Atonement...***

#### **Leviticus 23:26-27 (NKJV)**

**26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:**

**27 “Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.”**

*Now, it is true that there is mention of other fasts in the Old Testament — both corporate fast and individual fasts...*

But these fasts are usually conducted during times of grief or some other difficulty where people are setting aside their normal meals so that they might seek the Lord more fully...

Unfortunately, there is also mention of hypocritical fasting in the Old Testament...

*To see this, let's take a few moments to consider...*

**Isaiah 58:1-7 (NKJV)**

**1 "Cry aloud, spare not;  
Lift up your voice like a trumpet;  
Tell My people their transgression,  
And the house of Jacob their sins.**

**2 Yet they seek Me daily,  
And delight to know My ways,  
As a nation that did righteousness,  
And did not forsake the ordinance of their God.  
They ask of Me the ordinances of justice;  
They take delight in approaching God.**

**3 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and You have not seen?  
Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?'  
"In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure,  
And exploit all your laborers.**

**4 Indeed you fast for strife and debate,  
And to strike with the fist of wickedness.  
You will not fast as you do this day,  
To make your voice heard on high.**

**5 Is it a fast that I have chosen,  
A day for a man to afflict his soul?  
Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush,  
And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?  
Would you call this a fast,  
And an acceptable day to the LORD?**

**6 "Is this not the fast that I have chosen:**

**To loose the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the heavy burdens,  
To let the oppressed go free,  
And that you break every yoke?**

**7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;  
When you see the naked, that you cover him,  
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?**

- [expand — fast from evil / fast from selfishness...]

*This fasting from evil reminds me of what Paul wrote in...*

### **Romans 13:13-14 (NKJV)**

**13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.**

**14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

As disciples we are to fast from revelry and drunkenness, from lewdness and lust, from strife and envy — we are to fast from the flesh...

*With this in mind, let's turn back to once again to Matthew 9 was we continue to consider the question of vs 14...*

**"Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"**

Here we see hallmark of legalism — ***"Since I do this and you must do it, too"...***

*And please understand — legalism is **always** some sort of man-made system created to gain favor with God...*

- Unfortunately, legalism comes in endless varieties...

***But all legalism has one thing in common — it always demands that others conform to the legalistic standard...***

*And I believe the reason for this is found in the common saying, “**misery loves company**”...*

- You see, the legalist is ultimately a miserable person — the legalist feels trapped and tired — always running on the treadmill of performance...

The fact is that the self-righteous pride of the legalist is *false bravado* — it’s whistling in the dark to keep the fear away — because at heart the legalist is *always afraid*...

- Afraid that he has ***not done enough*** — afraid that he is ***not doing enough*** — afraid that he can ***never do enough***...

Every day he starts over — like the mythical Sisyphus, he pushes the rock up the hill during the day only to find it back at the bottom of the hill the next day...

- And legalism has no end because ***it doesn’t do anything*** — legalism is like trying to pay off your house with Monopoly money — it doesn’t count...

*With this in mind, let’s move to our second section...*

## 2) The Response (vs 15)

**15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?"**

*The Lord Jesus responds to the disciples of John with the truth that **it was not time to fast...***

- Jesus refers to Himself as **the bridegroom** and the disciples are **the friends of the bridegroom** — and nobody fasts at a wedding (or at least they shouldn't!)...

*Notice also that the Lord Jesus equates fasting with mourning...*

***"Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?"...***

From this I understand that Jesus is telling us that biblical fasting is a break from the normal order of things...

- Biblical fasting is a choice not to eat for a period of time because *something is not right* or because *something of a higher priority needs to be addressed...*

*Now, I would argue that the Bible is a book that has a very positive view of eating...*

I would argue that the Bible is much more about **feasting** than it is about **fasting**...

And as I mentioned earlier, there was only one commanded fast under the Old Covenant — and it was only once a year — but there were several feasts that were to be celebrated each year...

*The Lord Jesus spoke of feasting with Him in His kingdom in...*

### **Luke 22:28-30 (NKJV)**

**28 "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials.**

**29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me,**

**30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."**

*We also read of the ultimate feast in...*

### **Revelation 19:9 (NKJV)**

**Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" ...**

*Now, as we move to the second part of **Matthew 9:15** we see the rest of Jesus' response to the disciples of John...*

**But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.**

The days of the disciples feasting with Jesus will not last forever...

- The time would come when the Lord Jesus would **be taken away from them** — He would be arrested, crucified and placed in a tomb...

But He would rise again and spend 40 days with them...

- After those forty days the Lord Jesus would again **be taken away from them** as He ascended into Heaven...

And though they would receive the Holy Spirit and conduct their ministry in the power that the Holy Spirit provides, their face-to-face fellowship with Jesus would be over — temporarily...

- Through the hardships of ministry there would be plenty of opportunity for fasting — for seeking the guidance of the Lord as they *set aside food to focus on Him...*

***LESSON — Fasting should not be artificial — we do not have to manufacture times of fasting when feasting fits the situation...***

*We must understand that opportunities for fasting will come of their own accord...*

- There will be times of difficulty — times when we need guidance — then we will know that it is time to fast...

*Let's move now to our final section...*

### 3) The Illustrations (vs 16-17)

**16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.**

- [explain illustration...]

This is not a good solution because not only is the original problem unsolved, but it is actually made worse...[expand]

**17 Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."**

The wineskins that Jesus refers to here are the skins of animals that were used to hold wine...

- If the wineskins were old then there were ***inflexible*** — and most of us don't understand that ***age*** and ***inflexibility*** go together... 😬

So, if you were to **put new wine into old wineskins** then as the wine ferments it would break the old wineskins and *both the old wineskins and the new wine would be ruined...*

- ***The remedy is simple — put new wine into new wineskins...***

New wineskins are flexible and they can expand as the new wine ferments...

Now, I understand the **old garment** and the **old wineskins** to refer not only to ***the Old Covenant*** but also to ***the traditions*** that had become associated with Judaism in Jesus' day...

- These traditions were the rituals of the scribes and Pharisees — the extra-biblical rules and regulations that had accumulated over time...

*I believe that this is the context of this passage...*

The Pharisees and the disciples of John had a *tradition* of fasting...

- A tradition that was not found in the Law of Moses — and they wanted to impose this tradition on Jesus and His disciples...

But the Lord Jesus ***simply refused*** — He would not give in to their legalistic traditions...

- And this has a very personal application for me because it connects to one of the primary reasons why people have left this fellowship...

Now, it is no exaggerations to say that hundreds of people have come and gone from this fellowship over the last 23 years...

- And some have departed for ***legitimate reasons*** and some have departed for ***illegitimate reasons***...

But one of the reasons for leaving that bothers me most is those who have departed to go into some sort of legalistic system...

I suppose that they want more rules and regulations — but it is simply trying to patch a old garment with a piece of unshrunk cloth...

- It is trying to put new wine into old wineskins...

And I guess that these situations bother me so much because I know that I have to wrestle with legalistic tendencies in my own heart...

- In my fallen flesh I want a system of rules and regulations to let me know how I am doing — I want a scoreboard — I want something that shows me how I'm doing...

But the Lord simply says “**No**”— there is no system that can make us right with God — only Christ Himself can make us right with God...

- With this truth in mind, I encourage you to follow the example of the Lord Jesus — refuse to give in to legalism...

Refuse to give in to it in your own life and refuse to give in to it in the life of others...

- [expand — I have given in to the legalism of others in the past — and it never ends well...]

## **Conclusion**

*Now, as we wrap up our time together...*

- I simply encourage each one of us to let go of any sort of legalism that we have adopted and instead walk with the Lord in surrender and trust...*

*He wants to bring new wine out of each of us and He refuses to put that new wine into old wineskins...*

*Let's pray...*