

TEXT: Luke 5:27-32, 33, 34-35, 36, 37-38, 39. See also Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TEXT:**

1. **What is the new wine?** The teaching of Jesus in all its freshness, originality, and power.
2. **What is the new wineskin?** People who believe and practice the pure, unadulterated teaching of Christ.
3. **What is the old wineskin?** People who mix the teaching of Christ with false teachings and practices.
4. The contrast is not between the Old and New Testaments, but between true righteousness and the false righteousness of the Pharisees. The Pharisees “charged him in their query with throwing (by the neglect of fasting) a slur on the time-honoured practices and observances of the most religious men of Israel. His reply acknowledged that, as far as he was concerned, they were right. He had quietly put aside the rigidly appointed fasts and other ceremonial rites by means of which the great Jewish teachers – to use their own expression – had put a hedge about the Law” (Pulpit Commentary).



**APPLICATION OF THE TEXT:**

1. **In the Bible, wine isn't always alcohol.**
  - A. The following well expresses the commonly held interpretation. “New, unfermented wine put in old, brittle and dried out wineskins, would form gases as it fermented and would soon burst the old skins. The proper thing to do is put new wine in new skins; when the new wine forms gases, the new skins stretch to meet the situation” (Butler). Wrong!
  - B. Jesus is talking about sealed skins. Otherwise, there is no danger of bursting. Balloon analogy. Leaking maybe, but not bursting.
  - C. Even new sealed skins can't stretch enough to withstand the forces of fermentation. “Chambers, in his *Cyclopaedia*, early edition, says: ‘The force of fermenting wine is very great, being able, if closely stopped up, to burst through the strongest cask.’ What chance would a goat-skin have?” (Patton, p. 66). Job 32:19. McGuiggan checked with experts and learned that one-gallon of grape juice produces 50 gallons of carbonic acid gas during the fermentation process.
  - D. New wineskins were used to **prevent** the fermentation of wine. Patton explains, “The old would not suit, not because they were weak, but because they would have portions of the albuminous matter or yeast adhering to the sides. This, having absorbed oxygen from the air, would become active fermenting matter, and would communicate it to the entire mass” (Patton, p. 66). “The new bottles or skins, being clean and perfectly free from all ferment, were essential for preserving the fresh unfermented juice, not that their strength might resist the force of fermentation, but, being clean and free from fermenting matter, and closely tied and sealed, so as to exclude air, the wine would be preserved in the same state in which it was when put into those skins” (Patton, p. 67). “New wine was put in new wineskins **to keep it from fermenting**. To put it in old wineskins with all those dregs of ferment in them would precipitate fermentation in the new wine” (McGuiggan, p. 113).
  - E. In many other Bible passages, wine is just as clearly unfermented grape juice.
  - F. “This is helpful in many ways. It tells us this was a common experience – common enough for Jesus to use it as an illustration. It shows ‘new wine’ covers unfermented wine. It shows people could and did keep it unfermented. Finally it shows they drank unfermented wine!” (McGuiggan, p. 153).
  - G. How do you decide whether wine in the Bible is grape juice or alcohol? Context.
  - H. Don't make arguments based on a unfounded assumption. For example, “I can drink alcohol because Jesus turned water into wine.” There are profound implications of such an argument on the righteousness of Christ. John 2:1-11.
  - I. If you want to drink alcohol as a beverage, just find one Bible passage that clearly refers to alcohol that authorizes what you want to do. Colossians 3:17.
2. **We must completely clean out the leaven of false beliefs and practices.** 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-3, 6-8; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.
3. **We must get out of our comfort zone.** Luke 5:39. The contrast is between the smoothness of false beliefs and practices and the bite, the tanginess of the truth; between Isaiah 30:9-11 and Philipians 3:7-15.

**CONCLUSION:** Are we new wineskins? Vessels for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work? 2 Timothy 2:21.