

Old Clothes and New Wine

Matthew 9:14- 17 (The Amplified Bible)

14Then the disciples of John came to Jesus, inquiring, Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, [that is, abstain from food and drink as a religious exercise], but Your disciples do not fast? 15And Jesus replied to them, Can the wedding guests mourn while the bridegroom is still with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16And no one puts a piece of cloth that has not been shrunk on an old garment, for such a patch tears away from the garment and a worse rent (tear) is made. 17Neither is new wine put in old wineskins; for if it is, the skins burst and are torn in pieces, and the wine is spilled and the skins are ruined. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.

Acts 2:13 (NKJV)

13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 ` And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,

That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

Your young men shall see visions,

Your old men shall dream dreams.

18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants

I will pour out My Spirit in those days;

And they shall prophesy.

Jesus was here addressing a question concerning not only the religious sects, but also John's disciples. Everyone at that stage was living under the Old Covenant, including Jesus Himself. Jesus fasted. The valid question was, why then did His

disciples not fast like everyone else? When dealing with the demon possessed boy, after the Transfiguration. He told them that they could not cast the devil out because that kind only came out through prayer and fasting. (Matthew 17: 19-21AMP). *Then the disciples came to Jesus and asked privately, Why could we not drive it out? 20He said to them, Because of the littleness of your faith [that is, your lack of firmly relying trust]. For truly I say to you, if you have faith [that is living] like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, Move from here to yonder place, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. 21But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.*

Was Jesus at this point rebuking the disciples for not having fasted in order to be able to cast that devil out? According to Matthew 9:14-17 He was with them and He did not expect them to fast as long as He was with them. He did, however, deal with their lack of living faith! The Holy Spirit, who would empower them to do such things had not yet come. The disciples, and Jesus, would have fasted in accordance with the law of Moses, but they would not have gone overboard like the Scribes and Pharisees who fasted and publicized it in order to show people how "holy" they were. They would not have fasted like John's disciples, because John would have taught his disciples to fast like he did. John lived on locusts and wild honey!

The disciples were living in a sliver of time that is unique - the period of Jesus' short ministry on earth. During this sliver of time, He was molding them, shaping them, making new wineskins out of them. He gave them the authority that was necessary for them to go out and do works just as He did, and they did so. He was divorcing them from all the old religious mindsets and customs they had grown up in. He was preparing them for receiving the Spirit who would teach them all things and lead them into all truth. He was teaching religion out of them!

The old wineskins and the old garments that we wore before being born-again are useless. We cannot patch them! The Holy Spirit is life-giving - old wineskins cannot contain that life. The Holy Spirit is so powerful, so vibrant, so life-giving, so revealing that anyone truly on fire, baptized in Him as the Apostles were on the Day of Pentecost cannot abide the old religious customs. We must shout our Hallelujah's, we must jump and dance and sing joyfully in the liberty, revelation and power that Holy Spirit brings.

When we are born again, we become new and we cast away the old wineskins and the old garments and put on new life! We are filled with the new wine that is the

indwelling Holy Spirit . Paul tells us that we are new creations . *"Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!"*(2 Corinthians 5:17 9 AMP) and *"Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your old unrenewed self] which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion; 23And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude], 24And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image, [Godlike] in true righteousness and holiness."* (Ephesians 4:22-24AMP)

We have to put off all the old practices - including empty religion.

The Gospel, as the Bible tells it, cannot be retained in vessels that are old and worn from religious doctrines, worldly values, pride and self-righteousness. The Gospel can only be effective through vessels that are newly created by accepting Jesus as Lord and receiving the indwelling Holy Spirit who enables us to be renewed "in the spirit of our minds".

What spirit is governing your mind? If it is any other than the Spirit of Truth as revealed in the Word of God, then some changes need to be made. You need a new skin, a new garment.

How do we get rid of the old skins? After all when we accept Jesus as Lord, our spirits are saved, but our souls are not! Our soulish nature still wants to control. Our minds must be renewed. This is what Jesus was doing, bringing about renewal in the minds of the disciples, so that when the Holy Spirit came, they would be prepared.

Now, Jesus is no longer here bodily. We have to tap into the realm of the Holy Spirit ourselves through time spent in the word of God, praying with all kinds of prayer, and fasting. Not according to the Law, but by the leading of Holy Spirit. He is our Teacher. Please note that fasting is the denying of oneself regular sustenance. By doing this we take the body and soul out of control, making the spirit dominant, thereby depending on the Holy Spirit. This induces a desire to pray.

This trio of practices will take us into higher levels in the realm of the Spirit that cannot be reached in any other way. We will hear God more clearly and be spiritually equipped to handle anything the adversary might bring our way.