

Message #40 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

“Don't Put New Wine Into Old Bottles”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about the concept of old and new doctrine. Let's take a look at Luke 5:36-38. It says, “ And he also spoke a parable to them; No man puts a piece of a new garment upon an old one; lest both the new makes a tear, and the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. 37 And no man puts new wine into old bottles; because the new wine would burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles would perish. 38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.”

Notice that verse 36 says that this is a parable. The word parable comes from the root word para, which means, alongside of. We get the same concept when we use the word parallel, which is like when two lines run along together in the same direction and keeping the same distance apart. These are called parallel lines. Para, is the root part of that word also. So a para-ble is like two thoughts that run alongside of each other, and are very similar. Basically, a parable is a story which illustrates rather than explains a concept. Preachers of today are no different than preachers of Jesus' day. Preachers have always tried to explain a concept, and then give an example which illustrates the concept, thereby making it easier to understand the explanation. Jesus used illustrations many times, but he often gave an illustration in the form of a parable without providing an explanation of it. By doing this, those who had little desire for heavenly things were still left in the dark as to the meaning of the parable. Only those who recognized heavenly concepts would be able to understand the parable itself.

Jesus did this same thing to his apostles when he told the parable concerning the leaven of the Pharisees. It wasn't until the disciples understood that Jesus was talking about doctrine rather

than actual bread, that they could then understand what Jesus meant. In Matthew 13, Jesus was asked by his disciples why he taught the people in parables. The reply Jesus gave was a quote from Isaiah 6:9-10. Let's read it. It says, "And he said, Go, and tell these people, Hear indeed, but understand not; and see indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of these people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Now, did you hear what it said? God had no intention of delivering people who's hearts are hardened against him. He only wants to deliver those people who's hearts are tender toward him.

Now, someone might ask the question, "Why would Jesus not want people to know the truth?" The answer to that is that Jesus does want some people to know the truth, but does not want all people to know the truth. The people that he does want to know the truth are those people who are sincere of heart. God wants these people to be set free. But the people who are not sincere of heart, he wants them to remain trapped in their sins. The Bible tells us plainly in John 8:32, that the truth shall make us free. This means free from the bondage of sin and free from Satan's lies. But God does not want to deliver the wicked from their bondage, for their hearts are hard.

Now, getting back to the parable of the new and old wine, and the new and old bottles, we see a parable that certainly has more meaning than just talking about wine and wineskins. Of course, we know that in Jesus' day, the juice of grapes was sometimes put into bladders of animal skins. As the juice went through the natural fermentation process, bubbles would form which caused the wine to expand. When a new wineskin was used for this purpose, the wineskin, being new, was pliable, and would stretch like a balloon. It could expand to accommodate the fermentation process. However, we also know that old wineskins are no longer pliable. They become hardened, and any attempt to expand them like a balloon only causes them to burst.

Now that's a nice thing to know, especially if you happen to be storing new wine. But how do you apply this knowledge to other areas of your life if you don't know what Jesus was referring to. Of course, we have an advantage over the people of those days, for we have the explanation that Jesus gave. He explained that the doctrine he was bringing to God's people was new, and that in order to preserve it, there had to be a new people to put the new word of God into. The new wine that Jesus was referring to was the New Testament of Jesus Christ, and the new bottles, or wineskins, were the people who were able to not only accept the words of Jesus Christ, but to allow this New Testimony to expand and grow within them without breaking apart.

The New Testament that Jesus taught is not contrary to the Old Testament, for both the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, just as New and Old wine are both wine. But the very term implies a new word of God, the New Testament, in regards to the old word of God, the Old Testament. The people who were fit to receive the New Testament were only those people who were able to be expanded by this new understanding, rather than be destroyed. Basically, Jesus was saying that when the New Testament is heard, some of the people have the capacity to expand with the new knowledge, and some people don't.

Now, notice that the people who would be able to expand with the new knowledge of the New Testament were those which represented the new wineskins. They would be pliable enough to

receive the New Testimony of the Word of God and expand with its knowledge. But the people who were represented by the old wineskins were the people who had become so hardened that they could not expand with the new knowledge. These people were hardened in their hearts like old wineskins that have become hard and are no longer pliable. In order to be considered a vessel that can handle the New Testament of the word of God, given by Jesus Christ, you have to be stretchable. You have to have a heart that is soft, that has not become hardened.

In Jesus' day there were many people who's hearts were hardened. As it says in Zechariah 7:12, they had set their hearts to be like an adamant stone. An adamant stone was a stone that was especially hard, and could therefore be used as an axe head, or other chiseling work. People who's hearts are hard are unable to have their hearts penetrated by the word of God.

So, what does this all mean for us Christians today? It means that Jesus was trying to tell us, and is still trying to tell us, that the New Testament of Grace is not just like the Old Testament of the Law of Commandments. And the people who are the body of Christ are not just like the old people of Israel. For God created a new people when he gave his New Testament. Israel was the chosen people of God in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, God's people are no longer one nation, but all people from all nations who are able to comprehend the new testimony of Jesus Christ, and are able to receive it and grow with it. Most of the actual nation of Israel had become so hardened in heart, that they could not see how the Old Testament could include Jesus Christ, for they viewed Jesus as a destruction to their lives rather than as salvation even though the Old Testament had clearly prophesied that there would be a deliverer for Israel who would save the nation. However, because most of them, and especially the priest class of people, had viewed the Law of Commandments as just a hard set of rules, they could not comprehend how Jesus Christ was actually the materializing process of God's word, bringing about a much more expanded view of God himself and of his plan for the people of earth.

The New Testament of Jesus Christ was not a different doctrine, but actually the same doctrine as the Old Testament, only in a much more clearly revealed form, with greater comprehension of God and his ways. It, like the new wine, was an expansion of the Old Testament concepts, and much more clearly revealed, much like taking a small photograph and blowing it up to life size. Now instead of a physical temple in which God dwelled, the people of God would recognize that we ourselves are the temple of God, his place of abiding. Jesus explained this clearly when he told us in John 14:23 that he and the Father would come and dwell with us. We also know that instead of just observing all the rites and rituals of the Law of Commandments, we would move past the rites and rituals and into the spiritual worship that these rites and rituals pointed to. These physical representations had been just the initial symbols of the deeper spiritual concepts which were to come. And, with the advent of God's New Testament, we were being led into the expanded comprehension of a new and greater testimony of God's word on the earth. Here, let me give an example of this.

Under the Law, the Israelites were to abstain from eating certain meats. This was a physical representation in the Old Testament law which pointed to a spiritual meaning and observance. In the Old Testament, Israel had been the only nation in the whole earth who were chosen as the people of God, and who were given the Law of Commandments. Because of this, the rules

governing the abstention from eating certain meat symbolized the physical separation of Israel from the other nations of the world. In essence, the clean animals symbolized the nation of Israel, and the unclean animals symbolized all other nations. Therefore, the Old Testament decree of abstention from eating certain animals was only a shadow picture of that which was to be further revealed by the new testimony of Jesus Christ. With the coming of the New Testament, God revealed his purpose of including all nations of the earth as his people instead of just Israel alone, and therefore the unclean meat which was previously rejected was now accepted because all nations could now come to the Father through Jesus Christ.

Now for example, let's take a look at a pig. This animal was especially disgusting in the eyes of God. First, we must understand that the two specific requirements of a clean animal were first, the ability to ruminate, which means, to chew the cud, and secondly, the animal had to have a split hoof; meaning it was cloven footed. Now, consider that a pig has split hooves. This in itself would seem to indicate that it is partially acceptable. However, the divided hooves of the pig meant that it had been designed to walk on solid ground, and not in the muck and mire. Pads on an animal's feet can handle soft oozy ground, but a split hoof requires a firm foundation. But even though the pig had been designed for standing on firm ground, yet the pig chooses to tread the muck and mire, and even wallows in it.

Now, in addition to this, the pig does not chew its cud. It does not ruminate. In this Old Testament shadow picture, what we see is that the pig is an example of a person who is called by God to leave the muck and mire of this world and to stand on the solid rock which is Jesus Christ, but instead chooses the muck and mire of sin, even to the point of wallowing in it. In addition to this, the person represented by the pig is a person who does not ruminate on the word of God. He does not spend a significant amount of time and energy to the continuing digestion process of chewing on the word of God until it is well enough digested to be of benefit to his own soul. Essentially, this person is wallowing in the muck and mire of this world, and is refusing to fully digest the word of God. As a result, he is nothing more than a filthy fat pig in the eyes of God.

Now, looking again at the the parable of the new wine, and old wineskins, actually the old wineskins represent those people who cannot comprehend the extent of the New Testament, and can only receive it as long as they can twist it together with the Old Testament ritual and rules. They cannot comprehend the change from the symbolic physical representation of the Old Testament to the spiritual equivalent of the New Testament. These are the people who are blinded to the revelation of the New Testament, and therefore they attempt to take the New Testament and make it fit within the Old Testament boundaries. This, of course, is exactly what most of the Jews did at the time of Christ.

But, when we look in 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, we see several interesting things. Paul refers to the Law of Commandments as the letter written in stone. And we see that in verse six it tells us that we are to be ministers of the New Testament, and not of the letter, because the letter kills. As it says in verse seven, the letter, engraved in tables of stone, is a ministration of death. We also see in verse seven that the Law of Commandments, that which was engraved in stone, was

glorious, but then in the following verses explains that this Law could not compare to the glory which arises with the New Testament of Jesus Christ.

Now think about this. Romans 8:14 tells us that those who are the children of God are led by the Spirit. However, this was not how Israel was led in the Old Testament. They followed a set of laws and ordinances. The church of today, the body of Christ, has not been called to follow a set of Commandments which were written in tables of stone, but have been called to follow the directives of the Holy Spirit. And, the laws we now follow are not the old physical symbols, but are now the laws of God which are written in the fleshy tables of our hearts. This is clearly stated in 2 Corinthians 3:3.

Now, what is most important is that the New Testament is not really a different gospel, but rather the emergence of a much greater revelation of God's word. During the time of the Law, the people of God were prevented from seeing the divine revelations of God's Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament Law, God only revealed himself to a select few. But this was done in order to bring man to a greater understanding of heavenly things, and to a greater understanding of what sin is. What Christians need to recognize is that Jesus Christ was represented each and every day by those rites and rituals of the Old Testament Law. Therefore, salvation is not by returning to the Law of Commandments, but by the receiving of God's divine influence on the fleshy tables of our hearts, thereby knowing the will of God in our hearts rather than by a set of written rules.

Just because the Holy Spirit writes his laws on the tables of our hearts does not mean that the Holy Spirit just tells us to do the same things in the same way that the Israelites did. Of course, if you're a Christian, you recognize that we no longer have to have a physical temple, and we no longer have to have physical sacrifices. And, as Paul tells us in the book of Galatians, we should not allow anyone to pull us back into the bondage of the Law, for if we attempt righteousness by observing any part of the Law, we are then obligated to do the whole law. Our righteousness is no longer attempted by our works, but is accomplished strictly by the blood of Jesus Christ because we believe in him.

It must be understood by Christians that to be under the Law is an opportunity for Satan to bring about our condemnation because of sin. But when we are not under the Law of Commandments, Satan cannot accuse us of breaking the law. Revelation 12:7-11 refers to Satan as the accuser of the brethren who has been cast down from heaven. When the Law of Commandments were in force, Satan had been able to accuse God's people of sin by the breaking of the Law. But when Jesus died for us, and we then accept him as our deliverer from our debt of sin, Satan can no longer come before God and accuse us of sin. For as Paul said in Romans 4:15, "Where there is no law, there is no transgression."

It is specifically this point that took such a great amount of power away from Satan. And it is specifically because of this inability of Satan to accuse us when there is no law, that he so wants us to come back under the law. Therefore, he has tempted man in many instances to create new religious systems whereby Christians would only partly come under the Law of Commandments, or similar laws. The religious movements which encourage a return to parts of the Israelite Law

of Commandments have eroded the gospel of salvation by faith in Jesus, and of being led by the Holy Spirit. Today, there is very little encouragement to follow the Holy Spirit, but there is a great deal of encouragement to tell you to follow what other men have termed to be right and wrong. This causes people to replace the leading of the Holy Spirit with a set of rules and regulations. This is exactly what Satan is attempting to do, to pull people back under a law and therefore they will once again be subject to his accusation. This is displayed in various religious movements which have developed doctrines which require adherence to various physical rites and/or observances which bring Christians back under the bondage of law.

When we look again at the parable of the new wine and the old wineskins, what we see is that in today's church there is still a great resistance to the concept of being led by the Spirit. Just as there were many in Christ's day who could not comprehend being led by the Spirit instead of being led by engravings in stone, there are many in the church today who also cannot conceive of being led by the Holy Spirit. This is because of Satan's attempt to bring Christians back under the Law. His twisted doctrine encourages us to depend on our own works, our own might and power, to bring about our righteousness. But, in Zechariah 4:6, it tells us that it is not by our own might and power that God wants us to overcome, but by his Holy Spirit.

Romans 4:15 tells us that where there is no law, there is no transgression. Satan cannot accuse us of transgression if there is no law to transgress. In the days of Christ's earthly ministry, there were many who could not comprehend the concept of Jesus Christ being the fulfillment of the Law of Commandments. As a consequence, neither could they receive the Law of Faith. The final end for these people was to trust in their own ability to keep the law and therefore earn their righteousness. They would, of course, fail in this endeavor, because no man, other than Jesus Christ, was able to keep the whole law.

The bottom line is that following various religious rules and rituals rather than following the still small voice of the Holy Spirit will just ensure that Satan will be able to accuse you before God. And if Satan can successfully accuse you, then you will be condemned. But we should remember the exhortation of the Apostle Paul in Colossians 2:20-21, which says, "Wherefore if you are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances, 21 Such as, Touch not; taste not; handle not;?" And, Galatians 4:9-11, says, "But now, after you have known God, or rather are known of God, how can you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? 10 You observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." And lastly, we read in Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty in which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." You see, Satan would certainly like to have you back under the Law of Commandments because he could then accuse you before God, but if you trust in the perfect law of liberty, and in righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ, you will never come under Satan's accusation again.