

Erlo Stegen:

"Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." (Matthew 9:17 - NIV).

May we truly understand this text. Especially those who desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit need to pay special attention, as we read in Eph 5:18, "be filled with the Spirit".

In the Lord Jesus' time wine was put into wineskins, not bottles like today. Wineskins were made mainly out of goatskin. They treated it until the skin got soft. They sowed it together very meticulously so that even liquid can be put into it without leaking.

Wine ferments. The wineskins allow this fermentation process to take place because the skin stretches and so it doesn't tear. An old wineskin cannot be used for new wine, since the skin has already stretched once, and as the new wine ferments it will tear the old wineskin.

The Lord Jesus spoke these words to the pharisees and the disciples. The Lord Jesus referred to the Jews. They had the old wineskins of serving God. They had their tradition of worshipping God. So when the Lord Jesus came with His new wine they couldn't handle it. They had their old system and way of doing things. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus is brand new all the time, so it requires new wine skins.

The message of the Gospel is new every day. That is why we "must be renewed daily" (2Cor 4:16). If you pray, "Lord give me the new wine", but you are not renewed daily, you will lose whatever He gives you very quickly. The old skins are inflexible, hard and brittle. It cannot bend, bow, stretch. It will just burst. So when you follow the Lord you must be renewed daily.

If you're not soft and flexible you will be at loggerheads with one another and things will simply not work. If you're not renewed day by day you will miss out on His working when He pours His new wine into others. The only way the new wine can be poured into the wineskins is if the used wineskins are prepared to be renewed again to receive the new wine.

Let's now forget the other people, let's look at ourselves.

The Lord Jesus says that if any man is in Christ he is a new creature; the old has passed away and all has become new.

The congregation that doesn't allow itself to be renewed, will be passed by when the Lord works; and when the Lord's Spirit doesn't work, other spirits, evil spirits, will start to work in that congregation.

Has everything become new in you or is something of the old still to be found in you? Are there still some of the old thoughts, or the old way of speaking you used to have in your life?

If you pray, "Lord fill me with your Holy Spirit with overflowing life". Even if God grants you your request but you still have the old wine skins, your old ways, you will lose those blessings in no time; maybe within a week all those blessings will be gone.

So if everything has not been made new in your life it will not last when God fills you with His Spirit. God might even regret it that He has filled you with His Spirit, like He regretted that He made man in Noah's day.

Can your husband or wife testify that all is new in your life? Are there still things in your life with which you won't be able to stand before God? Do you still look at pornography or defile your own body? Maybe there's a grudge in your life or irritability in your life.

You cannot mix God's new life with the old.

Go on your knees and search your life before God and ask Him to show you if there's still anything of the old in your life. You're wasting your time asking God to fill you with His Spirit while there's still of the old life in your life.