

Devo before worship

[Jer 1:4-5 NKJV] 4 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

[Psa 139:13-18 NKJV] 13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully [and] wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And [that] my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, [And] skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When [as yet there were] none of them. 17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! 18 [If] I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

We know these things.

**We call him Father God, we even pray "Our Father who art in heaven..."
But does our heart BELIEVE it?**

Talking with a really good friend the other night about hard times in life, that they come from God, are allowed by Him for good.

I was reminded of what God gave to me early on in my walk with him, about the hard times I had growing up with a family in divorce

Genesis 50:20

But as for you, you meant evil against me; [but] God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as [it is] this day, to save many people alive.

Job 2:10b Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?

Do you KNOW that God is your Father? Not that your virgin-born, a physical offspring of God directly, but that He made you, He knows you, He loves you, and He is your Father because of who he is and what he's done for you on the cross.

Please hear Him this morning.

New Wine

Matthew 9:9-17

I think it was the late pastor Chuck Smith who said,

“You shouldn’t teach the parables until you’ve been teaching for ten years.”

I think I’d agree.

There’s so much in the words of Jesus, in the Bible, that we can miss the real intent, the real meaning, quite easily.

This message on New Wine, is something that God has been ministering to me for the past few years. I’ll admit, I haven’t studied it in depth at length and don’t claim to be the expert here, but I do believe God is revealing something quite powerful, very delicious spiritually, and something that is both old and new, fresh and well-aged and well-preserved, all in-one.

This event is told in **Matthew 9, Mark 2 and Luke 5.**

It’s interesting to see who says what and how much of the story is told in each.

To get us in the past, right before this Jesus is teaching in the house when the friends of the paralytic man lower him down and Jesus tells him he is forgiven and then to prove it, heals the man physically.

The power and importance of the spiritual before the physical

That would be a great study on its own

[9:9]

Matthew at his desk, doing his job, making a lot of money - but not happy. Not fulfilled. Knowing that there has to be something more. If only...maybe he was praying, maybe he was waiting for God to give him an answer...

[Matthew,] follow me

Those words, so intimate. Personal. Direct. Simple. Inviting.

What in the world or who in the world are we following? Is it Jesus?

There’s an easy answer to that question - are you fulfilled this morning? Or are you at your desk, your job site, your couch...unfulfilled...alone...maybe with no physical need...but your thirsty. You’re in need of so much more in life...

Matthew followed.

He got up. He left. This was it. He was the One worth following.

[:10]

Wait, he follows, what dinner is this? How'd they get there?

Luke and Mark tell us...

Matthew (Levi) threw Jesus a great feast.

Big money.

Big guests.

No expenses spared.

Old English queen ordering thousands of carcasses of meat for a big party at the castle

Feasts were a big deal. This is the guest of honor Matthew always desired to have in his own home.

But if Matthew was following Jesus, how did it happen that Jesus followed Matthew to his home?

I'll bet, as he followed, they talked. It was on his heart to invite Jesus into his own home. To tell everyone that this was the Man he had always wanted to follow but now knew who he was.

This man was worth everything to this rich Levi.

Remember the rich young ruler? He could have taken a page from Matthew's gospel.

The story of our lives...would it even be written in a book? And if it was, would that book be a part of the Gospel? These four guys had their names written down on these pages for us, but all of our lives are written in the pages of God's book.

I love that Matthew doesn't boast about inviting Jesus over, he just immediately says the generic "in *the* house" not in MY house...God would see that the others would make it clear whose feast it was.

Many tax collectors and sinners

Matthew had some friends. He knew how to pick them.

Remember, tax collectors had a bit of a fringe connection with Jewish society...working for the man, for the Romans, taking taxes, handling money...not a well respected position by the high society or any of the society

But this was a feast like none-other. With a guest of honor like no other.

[:11 - 13]

The Pharisees challenge the disciples...but who answers? Jesus.

He immediately comes to the defense of the very people being looked down upon.

The outcasts, the dirty, the unscrupulous

He doesn't cover up their need, but exposes it for what it is...hurting people who need to be healed. And to be called to repentance is the open door to healing.

That'll change our perspective on the lost, won't it?

Mat 9:13 NKJV - "But go and learn what [this] means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Go and learn what this means! They knew the scripture, they claimed it, but had NO IDEA WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANT.

Leave the party, go and learn it. You can't stay where you are and get the answer you need. You can't keep doing what you're doing and be obedient. Your obedience is not the type of obedience God is looking for. He's looking for mercy the (new), not sacrifice (the old)

But could they, would they? Were they not trapped in their old ways of doing things?

Go ye

to lead over, carry over, transfer

to pursue the journey on which one has entered, to continue on one's journey

to depart from life

to follow one, that is: become his adherent

to lead or order one's life

Jesus was calling them to follow him, but they couldn't receive it straight out. He was telling them to go figure it out because following Him was too simple for them. perhaps even as Pharisees? IDK, maybe that's too far outside the box

And learn

to learn by use and practice

to be in the habit of, accustomed to

Their appearance on the outside said they had it all done, they were spiritually perfect. But their hearts and lives were not even close to being used to, accustomed, or had any idea what the appearance of God was really like.

[:14 - 17]

The Pharisees didn't go right to Jesus, they challenged the disciples.

The disciples of John had a challenge, but they went right to the Lord with it, seeking his input, an answer and not an argument or chance for a feeling of superiority.

Immediately Jesus goes right to a wedding analogy...a parable of sorts

He is trying to reveal the deepest spiritual truth to them...the relationship between God and Man (looking forward to getting back to that study in Genesis, too)

"Fast when the bridegroom isn't around." Why suffer, why limit themselves from enjoyment when the time was a time for enjoyment. For rejoicing. For celebrating.

I think we fast when we should rejoice sometimes and we rejoice when we should be fasting sometimes...but that's another topic altogether

There is a connection here with the three parables/analogies: there is a disconnect between what we think of God and who He really is. A disconnect between how we are behaving and how we should be behaving (in all things). And a disconnect between how we view people and how God views people...and I'm sure about a million other facets that could be mined for all ages.

Then unshrunk cloth - patching of a garment

All I can think about is the dorky patches my mom would put on the knees of my sweatpants and sweatshirts in probably the 2nd grade. After getting made fun of a few times, that was the end of that. It's not like we didn't have the money to buy new sweatpants for school at that time in life.

I mean, it's one thing to save a garment like that but not wear it someplace where appearance can be important. But, there was a lot going on in life then, and I was little, so I can't fault my mom. I'm sure she meant well. *But whatever embarrassment I must have felt has a life long impact on my not owning a pair of sweatpants.*

"The tear is made worse"

There's something being revealed here...that there is a tear. There is a schism between the people who say they are of God and that very God himself. That there is a separation of God and man, and man and man. And that the only way to fix it is not to patch the old garment, but to put a brand new one on. I'm sure there's a lot more to this, but I think in some way this is an essential bit to the final part.

Nor do they put new wine in old wineskins

I'm not a drinker anymore... I used to be before I was saved. If Jesus hadn't healed me, and I hadn't died by today, I'd still be an alcoholic, drug addict, abuser and who knows what else.

As a believer, and especially being called to pastor, I know that alcohol is not for me. I have no desire for it, and if the desire ever comes, it's only in the entertainment factor that went along with it, and when I really consider it, I am repulsed. And to be honest, that only comes when I haven't been spending time at the heavenly dispensary...

To be honest, I think the Bible may teach that alcohol is not for any Christian as we are all kings and priests and the Bible says alcohol and strong drink are not for those folks...but, if you're a believer, and do drink, I won't hold it against you. That's been you and the groom and I'm not about to put a burden on you I myself cannot bear without him.

And I don't talk about it much outside of it coming up in scripture. I'm around a lot of unbelievers, friends, who drink, and I'm glad to be around them at work events, other social things and to be that light without being a pharisee to bring condemnation on them. When the party turns, as at some point it always does when alcohol is involved, I kindly say my goodbyes and well wishes and find myself someplace else to be.

But that being said, because of all of the trouble with wine in the world and in our own lives, I think that as the church, we stray away from these accounts and ultimately words of our Lord when the words include "wine"

We love the thought of communion, we take it wholeheartedly and purely with grape juice, and I'm not advocating otherwise (why cause someone to stumble, buy the juice, it's fresh, it's *new* wine in the absolute sense right..."**wine...vine...all come from the Latin vinum...**" **Latin class in high school paid off**

But when we think of wine, either we're tainted by our current usage of it, or the perception of it and our aversion to it and so we tend not to meditate on what the Word of God is saying to us by it

[John 2:1-11]

Now I know this story isn't about new wine in the strictest sense, it's actually "good wine," but to a party that ran out...the good wine is new wine...

I think the story at large helps tell a bigger picture here. Scripture+scripture

V4...oh moms and their aspirations and projections on their children...always with the love of only a mother

“My time has not yet come”

The need for wine, the pressure to reveal Himself coming from his proud mother who knew and believed from the beginning who He was and is...

But the connection here is a bit uncanny.

Mat 26:26-30 NKJV - And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it], and gave [it] to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The communion cup, the red wine representing the blood of Jesus about to be spilled...
The cup of the NEW covenant.

If time, Hebrews 10:4-22

Heb 10:4, 16-17, 19-20 NKJV - For [it is] not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. ... "This [is] the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," [then He adds], "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." ... Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,

A NEW covenant. The OLD one couldn't be patched.

There was no amendment to the old constitution that would usher in the kingdom. It had to be a new covenant...the old was just a picture of what was to come, a temporal picture of the eternal reality

A new and LIVING way.

The old way was a way of death...the law and sin bring death and judgment.

But John 14:6

Law into their hearts and minds i will write them

Joel 2:19-29 NKJV - The LORD will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations. "But I will remove far from you the northern [army], And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, With his face toward the eastern sea And his back toward the western sea; His stench will come up, And his foul odor will rise, Because he has done monstrous things." Fear not, O land; Be glad and rejoice, For the LORD has done marvelous things! Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; For the open

pastures are springing up, And the tree bears its fruit; The fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad then, you children of Zion, And rejoice in the LORD your God; For He has given you the former rain faithfully, And He will cause the rain to come down for you--The former rain, And the latter rain in the first [month]. The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame. Then you shall know that I [am] in the midst of Israel: I [am] the LORD your God And there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame. "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on [My] menservants and on [My] maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

I'm sure you KNOW this, but does your heart BELIEVE it?
That it IS the last days. Guys, we are in the end.
Look up, the day of your redemption draweth nigh.

God is working. He is moving. He is pouring out His spirit on His sons and daughters.
He is giving vision. He is not done.

But there is a problem...

There is rejoicing going on when fasting should happen.

There is fasting going on when rejoicing should be done.

There is old wine in old wineskins that *cannot* receive the new wine.

There are attempts to *patch* the old wineskins, to bring unity where there can be none

There are people sacrificing when they should be merciful

Falsely merciful when they should be leading others to repentance

Why are we constantly picking on each other?

Why do we care so much about our kingdoms (either ours personally or our denomination's?)

But God's word says enough in correction of the church, I don't need to. I need to love them, because they're me and I'm them in a way - we're all the body like it or not.

God is not done with the church. Here's where it gets real for me.

I knew God was calling us out five or six years ago from these passages of scripture.

At first I thought it was just from our church in New York to go plant one in Maryland. But deep down I knew it was something more. But I couldn't quite come to grips with that yet. Yet I knew

God wasn't done with the people of that church. Even coming back we couldn't say something was specifically wrong but just that we would do things completely different.

As we were in Maryland, and things happened in NY, and we got to see more and more of things behind the scenes in the region, in what was obviously now the non-denomination denomination and the things that were happening from coast to coast within it, some good, some bad, but what can I say, that's true for all of us, I began to come to grips with the fact that God was calling us out of even the denomination.

Again, not that God is done with the denomination. Not that I think anything completely sinful is going on in the denomination, and would still highly recommend it and even desire fellowship with those in it and do ministry alongside them...but as time has gone on, it has become clear to us that what God is showing us is larger than a denomination. Larger than any denomination. It is of His body. And for me to live out my faith to the fullest (tell me how to do that, cause outside of grace I don't know how and can't muster the strength to lift a finger but...), that God is pouring out his spirit on his sons and daughters. Giving all of us dreams, visions, and revealing his heart to us in the rejoicing of a new wine...but the old wineskin would be ruined if we stayed. We would be lost, the vision would be lost, and there would be unnecessary destruction of the other.

The thing is that it's not NEW wine. It's the old just revealed again. The good made from the Water of the word.

*That God is moving in ALL of **His** people. No matter the denomination (aside from those that are obviously heretical and not truly the body).*

Mustard see, tree, branches, birds of air nested...not what we're supposed to be but what it has become

And I can only speak to what I know of the American church...and that's the problem, we shouldn't be the american church...we are the church. His body.

But we are divided. We are fighting, biting and devouring one another, claiming the best spots at love feasts, forgetting that we are one body, One Spirit, One God and Father of all.

And I've heard it in almost every person I've spoken to about this very thing, that like Matthew in a sense, we have been doing our job, our ministries, our lives one way, the prescribed way all of this time, but we know there has to be more. We all think we're the only ones thinking this way, but we're afraid to say it sometimes, like it's wrong to consider if we're even going about it in the right ways!

We see, we hear, we feel, we know God calling, but it is outside of the wineskin we are used to. It is a new direction, a new word, but really the old word made new - which is Good.

Jhn 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

But that doesn't happen by program, by Sunday service times, or by the way we've always done it, or by the guy in the pulpit or the flashy worship band selling out concerts...not that God isn't using them, not that they aren't genuine, full of the spirit, a part of his body, our brothers and sisters in Christ...the church. But that we cannot, and should not look to others to define our ministry. Our calling. Our purpose. We cannot look to the ways the church has operated in America and tries to operate (Baptismal slide anyone?)

***I need a heart change, I need a heart change
Penetrate the depths of my soul
I need the real thing, not the American dream
Of choosing the world and still having you
I need a heart change to see the truth
Seeker & servant "heart change"***

<https://seekerandservant.bandcamp.com/track/heart-change>

Not that having the American dream is wrong...I would love a house, some fields, some animals, an ATV to ride with the kids, and you know, I know that God will give me things like that in a way, in time, it's healthy to have a family and live the quiet life.

But we can't let these things be our guide. The way the church in America operated throughout the 20th century and now is trying to stay "relevant" and even "emerge" from whatever they're trying to soak into, is not the way God operates.

Having a job is great. But God might be calling you to not have a job and go be a missionary in Cambodia. He might be calling you to grow a beard, put on camel's clothes and eat locusts and honey in the wilderness...no that was his cousin, John the Baptist

But what I'm saying, and I believe it's the heart of the Lord here...

- **Is that what he is calling all of us to, is bigger than all we can ever ask, seek or imagine.**
- **It's leaving our country and becoming a nation.**
- **It's tending the sheep one day, slaying a giant the next, and becoming the the king of Israel whose throne God looks forward to sitting on the day after**
- **It's lying on our side for half a year eating food cooked on cow dung (even though God said human feces but our religious mindset and albeit good sense of living and queasy stomach couldn't go that far for the Lord) and proclaiming a message of repentance**
- **It's standing outside the temple and telling everyone that the system is corrupt and they're corrupt and invaders are coming and we had better repent because we**

couldn't give that message from within the temple because they wouldn't hear it and those who were giving the message wouldn't allow it

- It's crying out to God that we're too young yet he's called us to be prophets to the nations
- It's persecuting believers, killing people and arresting them one day and discipling others, rescuing others, writing about the heart of God and being arrested FOR him the next
- It's being a little boy in a place where the old men aren't hearing, the young men are sinning and abusing their power, and you're the one hearing from God in the middle of the night

These things are what the scripture says...THE OLD and the NEW.

But somehow we've forgotten them.

Someone we've boxed God back up into a book store, a sanctuary, and a trunk or treat night.

I'm not saying God doesn't use them, or is against them or I would or would not do those things...but when we consider the cross, and all the Lord went through, and what he prayed the night before

Luk 22:39-42 NKJV - Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

And that time is short...there's not much left on the clock of the age of grace before the seven years of tribulation and the end...

How can we keep living in the old way that has the name that it is alive but is not... (Rev 3:1)

We must BE the church.

As we come to a close, back to the wedding feast at Cana

V6 according to the manner of the purification of the Jews (interesting that the new wine gets put into vessels needed for a Jewish purification rite)

Kept the good wine until now

In a sense, the wedding feast is just about over. The age of grace is coming to an end. But at the very end, everyone has well drunk and doesn't realize that they're out of wine yet, but the leaders know something is up.

The good wine is made from filling up the purification pots with water at the instruction of Jesus.

There is NEW wine for us as believers. It is the GOOD wine.

It has been carefully preserved for us in the scriptures, which not one jot or tittle will pass away

But we have to allow God to make us ready to receive it.

If we remain old wineskins, we will burst. We will be spilled and wasted.

- So keep drinking from the old, receiving the new.
- Keep looking for the new, but making sure it is good and made from the old.

***Be willing to go and find out what it means that God desires mercy and not sacrifice
Be the church. Allow God to heal you and heal others. But it may not come in the way
they expect. You may have to do things outside of the way others think you should
do them, and guaranteed, if it's God moving, it'll happen in ways you didn't expect.
You may have the vision, the dream, but when it comes in reality it'll happen in ways that
you couldn't plan, you didn't necessarily purpose.***

It'll be poured out ... and like the wedding feast at Cana...

People will believe God. And His glory will be made known.