

# Luke 5:33-39

“New Wine”

July 28, 2024

## 1. Intro

- a. Last week we looked at the story of Matthew’s calling to follow after Jesus, and how Matthew threw one last party before he left everything
  - i. At this party were his fellow tax collectors, as well as a whole host of other “sinners”
  - ii. But as we saw, there was also an uninvited group that crashed the party...
    1. The Pharisees and their scribes
      - a. And as they so often did, the Pharisees found something to grumble about regarding Jesus
        - i. In this case, it was the company of sinners that Jesus was eating with that left a bad taste in the mouths of the Pharisees
      - b. And so they asked Jesus’ disciples, “Why do you all eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”
        - i. And in his answer, Jesus calls these religious leaders out for their self-righteousness
          1. “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”
    2. Why did Jesus hang out with sinners so often that the people accused him of being a drunkard and a glutton?
      - a. Because those who realize that they are sinners, realize that they need a Savior
        - i. The Pharisees certainly didn’t need to be saved from anything
          1. In their own eyes, they kept the law of the Lord PERFECTLY
            - a. In fact, they went above and beyond just keeping the law, didn’t they?
              - i. They looked at the law of God and said, “If the law of God says ‘Don’t stand here,’ then we will build all sorts of fences to make sure no one even gets CLOSE to that place.”
            - b. And so they added their own traditions to the law
              - i. And in these traditions, the religious leaders of Jesus’ day saw themselves as RIGHTEOUS in their own eyes
      3. One area where these leaders created their own traditions regarded the practice of fasting
        - a. So as Jesus confronts them on their self-righteousness, we move on to verses 33-39...

## 2. Luke 5:33

- a. <sup>33</sup>And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.”
- b. The first question we need to ask is, who is the “they” that say this statement to Jesus
  - i. Well, in Luke 5, when you look at the flow of the previous passage into this one, it seems like he is talking to the Pharisees

1. Jesus was talking to the Pharisees and the scribes in verses 31 and 32, so it would be logical to assume that THEY are the ones continuing the conversation
- ii. In Mark 2, when Mark gives his account of this interaction, Mark simply says “people” came to Jesus and said this to him...
  1. So that doesn’t really give us any more help
- iii. But in Matthew 9, as Matthew recounts things from his perspective, he says SPECIFICALLY that it is the disciples of John who are asking Jesus why he and his disciples do not fast
  1. What we see from all of these different perspectives of this story is that, by this time in the party, there were all sorts of people gathered there at Matthew’s house
    - a. Many of them are having a great time feasting and drinking with Jesus
      - i. But some of the people gathered there are angry
      - ii. And some are simply confused
- iv. So let’s stop and think about why the disciples of John were confused
  1. Why was fasting such an important practice for them, that they couldn’t grasp why Jesus wasn’t joining them in their fasting?
    - a. In Matthew 11:16-19, the same passage where Jesus is accused of being a glutton and a drunkard, Jesus says this...
      - i. *16But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, 17““We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ 18For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.*
    - b. In other words, “Nothing that either I or John do can make you people happy!”
      - i. Jesus came feasting with tax collectors and sinners, but John came neither eating nor drinking
        1. And they said that John must have a demon
          - a. That is the ONLY explanation for his strict fasting that he and his disciples practiced
          - b. In fact, if you know your history about John, Matthew 3 tells us that he had a very unique fast, didn’t he?
            - i. Matthew 3:4 says that his food was simply “Locusts and wild honey”
        - ii. John lived a life of radical, self-imposed simplicity
          1. If you think about the fact that John was the last in the line of Old Testament prophets, this makes sense
            - a. When you read of men like Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, these men often lived under very severe conditions
              - i. And it wasn’t always because they had to
              - ii. Many times, God called them to live through seasons of radical poverty and self-denial as an illustration to show the people of Israel how poor the conditions of their heart had become
          2. As a prophet, John’s message was no different
            - a. Yes, he had come to prepare the way for the Messiah

- b. But he came preparing the way of the Messiah by calling the people to repentance
          - 3. And as an illustration of his message, he chose to live a life of extreme self-deprivation
            - a. And his disciples did so as well
          - c. So it makes sense that they would be confused then, doesn't it?
            - i. This is what they had been taught by their teacher, John, that this was a time of mourning and repentance and self-denial
              - 1. So what are Jesus and his disciples doing eating and drinking at these big parties?
                - a. The confusion of John's disciples is understandable
- v. But on the other side, you have the anger of the Pharisees
  - 1. The fasting of John and his disciples was commendable, as they truly desired to return to their God
  - 2. But the fasting of the Pharisees was to be rebuked...
    - a. For their fasting was, again, simply a way of showing everyone else how righteous they were
      - i. It's important to note that, in the Old Testament law, the only REQUIRED day of fasting for the people of God was on the Day of Atonement
        - 1. There were certainly other fasts that were encouraged, but these were all voluntary
          - a. The Law only mandated ONE day out of the entire year that everyone should fast
        - 2. But that wasn't enough for the Pharisees
          - a. I can't tell you when it was officially started, but by this time in history, the Pharisees had decided that once a year was not enough for fasting
      - ii. In fact, once a month, or even once a week, was not enough for them either
        - 1. The regular practice in these days for the Pharisees was that they would fast EVERY Monday, and EVERY Thursday
          - a. And it can be inferred from the Sermon on the Mount that these fasts were not just quiet, personal fasts
            - i. But instead, Jesus says, these "hypocrites" went around on these days looking all gloomy and downtrodden, so everyone can know how much they are suffering for the Lord
- b. Don't get me wrong... I think there probably were Pharisees who DID fast for good reasons
  - i. They cared deeply for the holiness of their God
  - ii. They cared deeply about maintaining a good example for others to follow
- c. But I think we can rightly state that MANY, if not MOST, of the Pharisees were not so pure in their motives
  - i. Many fasted in order to pat themselves on their own backs for their high standards of righteousness
  - ii. Many fasted in order to get those pats on the back from others

1. Whether it was in their giving, or their praying, or their fasting, these men loved to be SEEN by others
3. And so again, here at this feast, we have a group of sinners feasting and drinking with Jesus
  - a. We have a group of confused disciples of John wondering why Jesus isn't denying himself as their teacher did
  - b. And we have a group of bitter and angry and self-righteous Pharisees, no doubt saying in their mind, "God, thank you that I am not like THIS man..."
    - i. And then Jesus answers them all in verses 34-39...
3. Luke 5:34
  - a. *<sup>34</sup>And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup>The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." <sup>36</sup>He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. <sup>37</sup>And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. <sup>38</sup>But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. <sup>39</sup>And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'"*
    - i.
4. In this answer from Jesus, we find three different sections... and we'll look at each of these in depth this morning
  - a. The first answer that Jesus gives is regarding the wedding guests and the Bridegroom
  - b. The second answer is to show how the old and the new do not mix
  - c. And the third answer is that, when Jesus makes the wine, the new is better than the old
5. So first, the wedding guests and the Bridegroom
  - a. In verse 34 and 35, Jesus answers his questioners by asking them a question...
    - i. *"Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?"*
      1. Now for us, as 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians, we understand that Jesus is the Bridegroom, and his bride is the church
        - a. We have ample Scriptures in the New Testament that speak to this reality
          - i. But what would 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews have thought of when they heard these words?
          - ii. What would the people of God think of when they heard this man who claimed to be the Son of God, also refer to himself as THE Bridegroom?
      2. Maybe they began to think back in their minds to the words of Isaiah in Isaiah 54:4-6, when God said to Israel...
        - a. *<sup>4</sup>"Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. <sup>5</sup>For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. <sup>6</sup>For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off," says your God.*
          - i. Could it be that this Jesus truly is our Maker in the flesh, our husband who has come to redeem us?
          - ii. Could it be that He who has cast us off has come to bring us back home?
      3. Or maybe their minds went back to another passage of Isaiah, where, in Isaiah 62, verses 1-5, the Lord says these comforting words to His people...

- a. <sup>1</sup>For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. <sup>2</sup>The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. <sup>3</sup>You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. <sup>4</sup>You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. <sup>5</sup>For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.
- i. Isn't that incredible?
    1. God says to His people, "I will not be silent forever... and one day you will no longer be called Forsaken, but instead your name shall be My Delight is in Her"
      - a. And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you!
    2. Could it be that our Bridegroom has come?
      - a. Here is this man REJOICING with sinners, and calling himself the Bridegroom
        - i. Could it be that our days of salvation have arrived?
  4. The Old Testament is RICH with language of God being married to His people, and of Him relentlessly hanging onto her, despite all of her wicked ways
    - a. One only has to think of the book of Hosea to remember how steadfast the love of God is for His own
- ii. So you can only imagine how the people might have felt just a little spark of hope as Jesus began to speak of these things
1. But then he hints to them the reality that these things have not yet arrived in their fullness
    - a. For the Bridegroom was not here to stay, was he?
      - i. Jesus says in verse 35, "*The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.*"
        1. The Bridegroom had returned, but he would soon be taken from them
          - a. This would have been a mystery to those listening on that day, but of course we know that Jesus is speaking of his death upon the cross, as well as the resurrection that would soon follow, and his eventual ascension into heaven
        2. The people – even his own disciples – had no idea how short-lived their time with Jesus really was
          - a. They would understand later, after they had been given the Holy Spirit
      - ii. For now, the Bridegroom was here, and so he feasted with sinners
        1. But until he returns, WE are expected to fast and pray
          - a. In Matthew 9:15, Jesus asks the question in this way...
            - i. "Can the wedding guests MOURN as long as the Bridegroom is with them?"

2. It's not hard to see that we live in a sinful and broken world, is it?
    - a. All you have to do is turn on the news or scroll through social media, and you see that this world is rapidly falling apart
      - i. And for us as Christians, this should cause us to mourn
        1. For we live in the already, but not yet
          - a. The Bridegroom has come, and he has begun to establish his Kingdom across this earth
          - b. But the Bridegroom has also gone away for a season, and we mourn the results of his absence upon this earth
        - ii. Christians, our role as we face the sinfulness and the brokenness of this world is NOT to throw up our hands in anger and frustration
          1. Our role is NOT to add to the endless cries of hopelessness and bitterness that are echoing all around us
          2. Our role in this ever-darkening world is to continue to be the LIGHT
            - a. And we do so by mourning over the sin in our own hearts, and the sin of those around us
            - b. We do so by fasting and praying until the return of the Bridegroom
  3. So Jesus speaks of the Bridegroom and the wedding guests in his answer
6. But he also gives them a series of short parables to show them clearly: the old and the new do not mix
  - a. *"No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old."*
    - i. This is pretty straightforward, isn't it?
      1. If you go to the store, and you buy a t-shirt that is 100% cotton, you don't really want to buy a shirt that's already tight, do you? WHY?
        - a. Because we know that as you wash and dry that shirt, it's going to shrink, right?
      2. So Jesus is saying that if you have an old t-shirt that's REALLY well-worn and comfortable, and it gets a hole in it...
        - a. Don't patch it with a new piece of cotton, because that new piece of cotton will eventually shrink
          - i. And when it does, it will make the damage EVEN MORE unsightly to your favorite shirt
            1. This is common sense, right?
              - a. But what does it have to do with fasting???
      3. Jesus is speaking to their traditions, isn't he?
        - a. You disciples of John, and you Pharisees... you've grown comfortable in your old ways and your man-made traditions
          - i. But something NEW is here in your midst
          - ii. And if you try to make the NEW fit into your OLD traditions, all it's going to do is tear both apart!
            1. The old and the new DO NOT MIX
    - b. And then Jesus tells a second parable in verses 37 and 38,
      - i. *<sup>37</sup>And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. <sup>38</sup>But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.*
        1. This one may be a little more hard for us to understand in our day

- a. Back in those days, as Jesus says, new wine was put into fresh wineskins
    - i. These fresh wineskins were pliable, and able to move freely and even swell up to a certain degree
      - 1. As the wine fermented, the gases in the wineskin expanded, and the wineskin was able to expand along with them
    - ii. But as time went on, the wineskins would begin to lose their elasticity
      - 1. They no longer had the ability to expand, but instead got tough and hardened
        - a. This is OK if the wine in these skins was old wine, because it didn't let off near as much gas as new wine
        - b. But if you were to pour new wine into these old wineskins, it wouldn't be long before these skins would tear
          - i. The wine would be lost, and the wineskin would be useless
          - ii. If you try to mix the old with the new, they will BOTH be ruined!
      - 2. The old and the new DO NOT MIX
- ii. At the heart of what Jesus was beginning to teach them in these lessons was that the days of the Old Covenant were coming to a close
  - 1. The people of Israel still lived under the Mosaic Law, even though they themselves didn't live it out well
    - a. They still had to sacrifice animals to be made right with God
    - b. They still had to go before the priest to have their sin atoned for
    - c. They still were bound to the ceremonies, the dietary laws, the Sabbath restrictions
      - i. In every aspect of their lives, the people of Israel were still FULLY under the Law
        - 1. And as they had done since the days of Moses, and even since the days of Abraham and all the way back to Adam, they transgressed against God's laws
          - a. Every single person failed to uphold the laws of the Old Covenant, every single day
          - b. It didn't matter how many fences the Pharisees built to try to protect the people from breaking these laws
            - i. All these fences did was make the transgression worse
      - ii. For centuries, the people of Israel had failed to keep their end of the Covenant
        - 1. But wasn't that the point?
          - a. These things were ALWAYS meant to show the people of God how absolutely incapable they were of living up to God's law
          - b. And they were ALWAYS meant to be the shadows of what was to come
            - i. Or better put, WHO was to come
- iii. For in Christ, the New Covenant was established
  - 1. Not as a "Plan B" that God had to throw together because "Plan A" didn't work out
    - a. No, Christ was ALWAYS meant to be the fulfillment of ALL of God's covenants

- i. And as the book of Hebrews says, “Jesus is the guarantor of a BETTER covenant!”
        - 1. Turn in your Bibles with me to Hebrews chapter 8
- iv. In Hebrews 8:6-13, the writer of this letter expands upon Jeremiah 31, and he applies it directly to Jesus...
  - 1. <sup>6</sup>But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. <sup>7</sup>For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. <sup>8</sup>For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a NEW covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>9</sup>not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. <sup>10</sup>For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>11</sup>And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. <sup>12</sup>For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” <sup>13</sup>In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.
- v. Jesus has come to mediate a NEW covenant
  - 1. In this covenant, the law is no longer something we hopelessly try to uphold in our own strength
    - a. The law is now written on our hearts, and God has put it into our minds
    - b. And all who are brought into this New Covenant now know what it is to TRULY know God
      - i. Through Christ, God is merciful toward our iniquities
      - ii. Through Christ, God remembers our sin no more
        - 1. This is why Jesus refers to the wine of the Lord’s Supper as the blood of the New Covenant
          - a. Through the shedding of his blood upon the cross, Christ has become the mediator of the New Covenant
          - b. And it is INFINTIELY better than the OLD Covenant
    - c. This is why Jesus was so emphatic here – the old and the new CANNOT mix
    - d. This is why the Apostle Paul was so frustrated with the Christians in Galatia
      - i. After being brought into the grace and the mercies of the New Covenant under Christ, these Christians were inexplicably going back to the old rules and traditions of the Old Covenant
        - 1. And Paul says to them, “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you???”
  - 2. Friends, the old cannot mix with the new
    - a. This is just as important a doctrine as it was two thousand years ago
      - i. We are not saved by our good works... we are saved BY GRACE
      - ii. And even though once we are saved, we are expected to do good works, even those works are BY GRACE
        - 1. Every time we try to set up a bunch of rules and regulations to try to earn more merit before God, it is as if we are trying to patch our old t-shirts with new patches again



- a. Its as if we are trying to put new wine into old wineskins
      - 2. The result is the same every time – BOTH will be ruined
        - a. We could honestly spend the rest of the day camped out on this teaching, but we need to move on to our last point
    - vi. And, like so many things regarding Jesus, it is a completely paradoxical point
      - 1. If you know anything about wine, the best wine is the old wine, right?
        - a. You can pay high dollar these days for a bottle of wine that is upward of a hundred years old, or even older
          - i. The flavors in these wines is more smooth
          - ii. The alcohol content tends to be higher
          - iii. Even the smell of old wine is more pleasing to our senses
        - b. As a general rule for most wines, the best wine is the old wine
7. But our last point it this: When Jesus makes the wine, the NEW is better than the OLD
  - a. In the last verse of our passage for this morning, Jesus says, “And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’”
    - i. If Jesus was truly just talking about wine here, we could look at that as a positive affirmation of the old, couldn’t we?
      - 1. But Jesus wasn’t talking about wine
        - a. He was talking about how we relate to our Father in heaven
          - i. And when it came to the manmade traditions of the Pharisees, Jesus was saying that it was time to be done with the “old” wine
            - 1. For the NEW wine is exceedingly better than the old
      - 2. Even though the story is not given in Luke’s Gospel, we’ve already gotten the perfect illustration of this paradoxical reality in John 2
        - a. In John 2, we read of the first of Jesus’ signs, when he turned the water into wine at the wedding at Cana
          - i. In this story, there is an important detail that is often overlooked
            - 1. When the bridegroom began to run out of wine, he was about to suffer a major embarrassment in front of all of his guests
            - 2. After some prodding by his mother, Jesus steps in to save the man from his embarrassment... but look at what he DOESN’T do
              - a. It would have made sense for Jesus to tell the servants to go around and gather up all the empty wine bottles and fill those up with water, and then he would turn that water into wine
                - i. But that’s not what Jesus does
    - 3. John specifically says that Jesus went to the six stone water jars that held twenty to thirty gallons of water
      - a. These jars were SPECIFICALLY used for the Jewish rites of purification
        - i. And rather than having the empty wine bottles filled with water, Jesus has these giant purification jars filled instead
        - ii. And it is from THESE jars that Jesus supplies the wine for the rest of the celebration
          - 1. And this wasn’t just any ordinary wine, was it?
            - a. John writes that the master of the feast, after he had tasted the wine, called the bridegroom over and said,

“Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.”

- b. Do you get the implications here?
  - i. This NEW wine that Jesus had miraculously provided was far better than the OLD WINE that was typically served at the beginning of the feasts
    - 1. Once people had begun to get a little intoxicated, it wouldn't matter so much if you served them a wine that wasn't as good
      - a. Who's going to notice it at that point' right?
    - ii. But this wine that Jesus made was far more smooth in flavor
      - 1. It's taste and smell was far more pleasing to the senses
      - 2. And, if we just look at the content of this passage honestly, Jesus' wine was likely a lot more alcoholic as well
        - a. In every aspect, this NEW wine that Jesus made far exceeded the old wine the people desired
  - c. And it is no accident that this new wine came from the jars used for the Jewish purification rites
    - i. In this, the first of Jesus' signs, Jesus was already beginning to show how the old was becoming obsolete, for the new had arrived!
- b. My friends, Jesus has come to bring us into the New Covenant
  - i. Under the Old Covenant, we were only made clean through the blood of bulls and goats
    - 1. We were only made clean by the actions of a high priest who went to God on our behalf
      - a. And this high priest would have to do so again and again and again
  - ii. But through his death upon the cross, Jesus has shed the blood of the New Covenant
    - 1. Our sins have been forgiven
    - 2. The mercy of God has been given to us
    - 3. And we can now KNOW our Father
  - iii. The new wine of Jesus is exceedingly better than the old wine
    - 1. And the great hope we have as his people is that, when we all sit at the table of the great marriage supper of the Lamb, Jesus will drink this wine with his people once again
      - a. The Bridegroom will have come back for his bride
        - i. All praying and fasting will cease
        - ii. And Jesus will once again feast with a bunch of forgiven tax collectors and sinners
    - 2. Until that day, friends, steer clear from the old wine of works-based salvation
      - a. Trust fully in the work of Christ upon the cross
      - b. Trust fully in the GRACE of your God