

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Jesus uses practical everyday wisdom to counter the religious critics of His day. The coming of His kingdom meant they must repent and turn away from their old ways, and receive Him. In Luke 5:33-39, He uses word-pictures about fasting, bridegrooms, new cloth, new wine.

Jesus says, "*no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, the old is good.*" There's lots of difference between unfermented and aged wine. The Pharisees were keepers of the old ways, and they prefer their old wine to the new wine of Jesus' kingdom teachings.

1- NEW CREATIONS? - Jesus the Christ comes to fulfill God's Old Covenant promises of the New Covenant. Not to patch law with gospel, not to pour His new wine into old wineskins of Judaism. But to transform people from old to new, all who believe and receive Him.

You become a new creation in Christ, with the new spiritual life that God had long promised, so that you now worship God in spirit and truth, with His springs of living water. And you become a living temple, indwelt by the Spirit of God Himself, in union with Christ.

2- NEW KINGDOM? - The Old Covenant looked forward to fulfillment in the Christ, who makes it obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15). Jesus' gospel of the kingdom isn't about religious rituals. They pointed to Him, who fulfills it all in His own life and ministry, "*securing eternal redemption by means of His own blood, which purifies our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*" Rituals don't save. Jesus saves.

Your experience of His redemption begins with regeneration by the Holy Spirit, opening your heart and mind and will to God's truth and grace, and through repentance and faith you believe and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Put off the old and put on His new life!

3- NEW CALLING? - "Pharisees are true to human nature. They weren't ready for a change," observes RK Hughes. "They weren't ready for the newness of the kingdom of God. But Christ changes people. He will change you, unless you cling to the old. He stands before you with a call to discipleship. A call to a new life." How will you answer?

4- THE NEW FAST? - Isaiah 58 says, "*This is the fast that I choose, to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, to share your bread with the hungry and cover the naked; then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily.*" This is Christ in Luke 4, appointed by God to fulfill it.

5- THE NEW CLOTH? - Isaiah 61 says, "*My soul shall exult in My God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness.*" Christ gives not patches but a whole new robe. "No man can put on the robe of Christ's righteousness until he has taken off his own. If there is one stitch in the celestial garment we must insert ourselves, then we are lost," notes CH Spurgeon. We are new creations in Christ (2 Cor 5:17-21).

6- THE NEW WINE? - When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He said, "*this cup is the new covenant in My blood, poured out for forgiveness of sins.*" And He said, "*I will not drink it again until I drink it new in My Father's kingdom.*" This speaks of the "*marriage feast of the lamb*" in Revelation 19:7. Our observance of Communion is like a rehearsal dinner for the Lamb's feast, when believers who have washed their robes in His blood, are ushered into His presence.

7- THE BRIDEGROOM? - Isaiah 54 says, "*your Maker is your husband, the Holy One of Israel is your redeemer.*" This is the Lord Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified, resurrected, ascended, living, and reigning. The bride is the church, redeemed by the price of Christ's body and blood, that He might present us to Himself as holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27).

8- THE QUESTION? - Did Christ do all this for you? Believe and receive Him as Lord and Savior! You will be brought into union with Christ, a new creation, clothed in His righteousness, filled with His new life, sanctified to live out God's promises by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Christ's new dynamic infuses us, and we experience a spiritual fullness we could not have imagined," explains Hughes. "This in turn produces perpetual joy. We are not only friends of the bridegroom, we are the bride." United to Him by grace through faith! May all this be true of you, as you turn to Him in repentance and faith, receiving Him as Lord and Savior! ☐