

## The Parables

### Week 1: New Clothes and New Wineskins

#### Matthew 9:9-17

Happy New Year!

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- One of 6 babies (7 if you count Kaitlin Oakland) to be born within NC in the next 6 months!
- Wende, Amber, Shelby, Kerri, Kami, Nicole
- And all of them are going to need MEALS! If you like to cook, please contact Deanna in the nursery today!

New Series: **The Parables**

#### Why the Parables?

- Because God said so
  - Sometimes it takes weeks for me to clearly hear what God has in mind for teaching NC.
  - For 3 months I've been telling the elders I've been struggling to hear from God about the series to kick off 2016
  - I thought it was Philippians, then Jude, then maybe an OT book...
    - But I just wasn't getting the green light with any of them.
  - Tuesday morning before Christmas, cleared my calendar... "here we go again..."
  - God was clear before 9 AM: The Parables

#### How long?

- I'm not sure.
- Probably at least 4 or 5 months.
- Depending on how you count them, there are anywhere between 33 and 51 parables taught by Jesus in the gospels.
- Additionally, Jesus isn't the only one who used parables in scripture
  - There are 2 dozen OT parables, from Judges, Nathan to David, a dozen in Ezekiel, a great one about shepherds in Zechariah, and several in Isaiah
- We will NOT teach them all, most likely.

#### Specific Order for the NC series?

- No – at least not “in order of appearance” or chronological
- Some have suggested the chronological order of when Jesus taught them has significance.
  - I looked into that for several hours, and found a red flag in the temptation to take them out of context if one tries to tie anything significant in the order.
  - It is generally true, however, that the parables followed a basic pattern:
    - They progress from recognizing Messiah, to following Messiah, to living accordingly, to thinking beyond earthly life, to envisioning heaven and eternity.
    - Basically, this pattern follows Jesus' progression in his last 3 years on earth
    - This makes perfect sense because Jesus taught in parables constantly.
    - To infer any other significance in the chronology is unwise.

**The Parables are always about context.**

- Context is everything
- Jesus would be ministering, visiting, hanging out, traveling, eating...
  - He was constantly questioned
  - And he often answered in parables, with the culture and context of the day in mind.
    - You should try it next time someone questions YOU 😊
  - So many parables can be taken out of context, and perhaps more than any other nuggets in scripture, teachers and preachers take parables out of context.
  - I intend to avoid that with all that is in me.

### Finally, I love allowing others to teach.

- Once a month, one of the elders or preaching training guys will teach on a parable. Some have chosen their own, others are letting me assign one to them.
- I love learning from each of them, and I trust you do, as well.

Onto today's parable!

- Open to **Matthew 9:9-17**
- **New wine and new wineskins (bottom right corner pic)**
- **"It's not about the wineskin."** (Say that with me...)
- Pray

### Context:

- Jesus has begun his ministry – baptism by John, God's voice from heaven
- many witnesses reporting signs and wonders
- Jesus is Jewish, but teaching unlike any other Jew before Him.
- At this time, John the Baptist was in prison, soon to be beheaded by Herod
  - They were fasting for deliverance for John
- At this time, the Pharisees had come up nearly 600 new laws since Malachi had been penned
  - all of them oral traditions about how to conduct oneself as a proper Jew.
  - 170 years later, another 2 dozen or so new laws would be added
    - these 613 laws would be put down in a work called the Talmud, for all proper Jews to live by, in addition to the written law, or Torah.
- On this day, Jesus was continuing to show Himself a different sort of Rabbi.
  - However, this exchange marks the first time Jesus is approached with a direct question from a religious leader.
  - He had recently gone into the Synagogue and read from Isaiah the prophetic scripture about Himself –
    - ***Luk 4:18-21 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."***
  - He had taught the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5-7
  - He confronted a demon in a possessed man in a synagogue in Capernaum, casting the demon out
    - and the demon recognized Jesus as "the Holy one of God"

- Just a few days before this, He healed a paralyzed man, and was accused of blasphemy by doing so on the Sabbath.
- Up to now, they'd been questioning Him and His motives privately – amongst themselves
  - **"Who is He?"**
  - "What's His real motive?"
  - "What power/authority is He using?"

**Mat 9:9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.**

- Traitorous Jew following Jesus???

**Mat 9:10 And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.**

**Mat 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples,**

- Note they don't ask Jesus directly... not yet...

**"Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"**

**Mat 9:12 But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.**

**Mat 9:13 Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."**

- Finally, the connection was made!
- Jesus answers the Pharisees himself
  - Now, that would make a great sermon itself, but I mention all of the above to set the context...
- But still, the Pharisees are yet to ask their first direct question to Jesus.
  - The disciples of John break the ice.

**Mat 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"**

- What a fascinating scene this is!
  - 3 groups of Jewish men – following 3 Jewish leaders or philosophies (Pharisees and law, John and repentance, Jesus and Liberty)
    - The Pharisees were obsessed with exterior perception
    - John's disciples were calling for repentance from sin (with many rules/regulations as well) because Messiah was near.
    - And Jesus – identified just earlier by a demon as "the Holy one of God" – having dinner (and probably a pretty good meal!) with a bunch of misfits, outcasts, traitors, sinners...
  - Bruce preached last week, using **"the new kid in town"** as an illustration.
  - Jesus was the new kid – never more obviously juxtaposed against the Pharisees than at this moment in time.

**Mat 9:14 "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"**

- IOW, "we are the truly religious ones, sacrificing ourselves for.... something..."

Now, "fasting" (in this case) is just a term used – a tradition observed – to get religious people talking about religion.

- The Pharisees fasted twice a week, for various reasons – none of which are in the Books of the Law, all of which are in the Talmud.

- Is fasting a New Testament concept? Absolutely – Jesus mentions it several times in several contexts, as does Acts regarding the elders fasting, as does Paul command married couples to fast in 1 Cor. 7 on occasion.
- **But fasting – in this context – isn't the subject. It's a ruse.**
- **It is a religious term designed to get Jesus to tell them what his religious platform is all about.**

Jesus answers the skeptical religious leaders in 2 different ways:

First, **Mat 9:15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.**

- Jesus doesn't duck the fasting part of the question
  - And this isn't the first time He addressed fasting (Mat 6:16, sermon on the mount - don't look gloomy)
  - He says "now is the time to party – God is with us!"
  - Essentially, Jesus on earth is the "before party" to the wedding feast the OT constantly made prophetic reference to!
  - The Bridegroom had arrived!
  - This is a time for celebration!
  - But the bridegroom would be "taken away from them..." and then they'd fast.
  - This is a reference to the death of Christ – the time between His last breath and His resurrection from the dead.
  - Now, fasting – again – is still encouraged in due seasons.
  - **But just like this question isn't truly about fasting, neither is this sermon! ☺**
- Next, Jesus tells two parables, each with the same spiritual teaching:
  - (look at the clock – how long did it take me to get to the parable?) ☺

**Mat 9:16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.**

**Mat 9:17 Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."**

Now, so that you take home what I believe God wants to teach today, say it again with me:

- **"It's not about the wineskin."**

**Let's define 4 things:**

- **Old cloth/garment**
  - Contextually, the old cloth represented the nearly 600 Pharisaical laws added to the written Torah between Malachi and Christ.
    - IOW, Law vs. Grace.
  - In current day, "old cloth" represents any religion, standard of living, moral compass, etc. that exists outside of God's worldview.
    - I've always understood – at a basic level – that God has a worldview.
    - My worldview is insignificant whenever it veers from His.
    - Seeking truth is not an exercise in adding God's truth into my truth.
    - Seeking truth is the elimination of any rivaling faction apparent in my "old way" or in my "old clothing".
- **Unshrunk/New cloth**

- Contrary to some, this does NOT solely represent Jesus.
- It represents anything new being introduced to the old.
- If the old clothing is desired to remain in tact, one needs to use old, washed, shrunk, worn cloth to patch it when it tears.
- **\*\*\* The old cloth / new patch is different from the new wine /new wineskins parable, in a subtle way:**
  - Jesus is saying that if you want to remain set in your ways, living much the same way, and only patch holes here and there as time wears away, then a new cloth is not your answer.
  - If you want new clothes, you need to chuck the old.
  - If you want the same clothes, just patched up, then you're not looking for Jesus.
- **Old wineskin**
  - Similarly, but subtly different, is the wineskin.
  - **Wineskins in Christ's day were used to hold massive amounts of wine.**
  - They were animal skins, varying sizes, and someone would tie/sew the ends shut, and fill the entire skin with new, unfermented wine, leaving the feet "open" for air to escape.
    - I've learned more about fermentation this week than I care to know...
  - **Fermenting process:**
    - Grapes naturally have sugar in the juice, and yeast on the skin.
    - Those two main ingredients are what cause the wine to ferment, over time.
    - Thus the animal skins, to keep the wine in while it ferments.
    - Fermenting typically takes between 3-5 days to complete.
    - During those 3-5 days, the skins are going through their own change.
      - The inside is like a sponge, the outside like a plastic sandwich wrap...
      - The insides get very smooth...
      - Both the inside and outside often smell like and turn the shade of the wine...
      - When the wine is consumed, the skins are repurposed.
      - Now, one can put already fermented wine in a pre-used wineskin, but once a wineskin has housed NEW wine – unfermented – it can never be used for that purpose again.
  - **(next)** One more time, say it again: **"It's not about the wineskin."**
  - But indeed, the wineskin (new or old – you get to choose) is YOU, on earth, created by God to glorify Him, and bear fruit.
    - That is your purpose.
    - Col 1:10, walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.
    - The parable is not about the wineskin... it's about:
- **New wine**
  - The new wine is Jesus.
  - **"It's ALL about the wine."**
  - Consider the characteristics of the wine itself:
    - It doesn't (literally cannot) share space with anything else.
    - Liquid has a way of filling up space and literally drowning out every else.
    - The wine doesn't wash the outside, it completely encompasses the inside.

Consider the preparation:

- **Consider the preparation of the wine... (vineyard)**
  - While reading up on wine-making, I found out:
    - Difference between \$1000 bottles, and \$3 bottles..
      - Outside the commercialization and name-recognition these days...
      - It's all in the preparation
      - Grapes naturally flourish with water and sunlight.
      - But good grapes...
        - Quality of the water, elevation, amount and degree of sunlight, air quality, age of the vine, how fast the grapes get from the vine to the crusher, how long the juice remains in the crusher before it gets to the skin
  - Jesus is not cheap wine!
  - He has been God's plan from the foundation of the earth
  - He lacks nothing – and you are perfectly suited to be filled by Him.
  - Why?
- **Consider the preparation of the wineskin...**
  - #1, it's dead.
  - #2... do we even \*need\* a #2?
    - The long-term view and application of this parable is that Eternal God, manifested now in the perfectly prepared Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, has been poured out from heaven INTO the shell housing the dry bones of sinful man, dead to his sin, made alive by God Himself, and in turn is now a vessel God pours out – into a lost and dying world desperately in need of Him.

So the question is, **What is your Old Wineskin?**

- What is the “Old Kyle,” the “Old \_\_\_\_\_,” the “Old \_\_\_\_\_” ...
- What was your worldview before Christ?
- What are/were your habits?
- What is your assumed wiring?
- What are you obsessed with? Religious about? Unwilling to let go of?
- For the Pharisees, and the disciples of John, it was Judaism.
  - It was living to the letter of the law.
    - The Law was given to show us the righteousness and holiness of God.
    - It was not given to separate out the better observers from the worst.
    - Not to see how high you could climb the law-ladder.
  - **Romans 6:13-14; present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**
  - **Romans 7:4; ... you died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.**
  - This was the message Jesus came to preach! Liberty, freedom, vision!
  - And He used this first parable to introduce Himself as the wine, and all men and women as the wineskins – the vessels of HIS righteousness, not our own.
- The parable doesn't SOLELY apply to Judaism.
  - Yes, trying to fit Christ into Judaism would fail.
  - Trying to fit Christ into ANY religion will fail.

- Trying to fit Christ into ANY set-in-your-ways lifestyle WILL FAIL.
  - I've seen it before: Christ as an accessory, rather than the entire outfit, inside and out.
  - Every part of the old self is eventually wasted. Eventually bursts.
  - ***For some, it takes a lot of tearing of the fabric to get the point.***
  - ***For others, one tear – one burst is all that is needed to die to it all.***

That's the OLD wineskin.

**The NEW wineskin, therefore, if it's not pretentious, or hanging on to anything, is:**

- **Vulnerable**
- **Teachable**
- **Not resistant to Jesus being poured in**
- **Not territorial to "my stuff"**
- **Willing to be tipped over and poured out**
- **Example: We who read the Bible are always amazed that the disciples dropped EVERYTHING and followed Jesus when they met Him.**
- Amazing yes, but it is meant to be the STANDARD.

With the 3 ways Jesus answers the question, let me point something out:

**Ask Jesus your own "rub the chin" questions, but He will always get to the heart of the matter.**

- If you're frustrated at all with what you're hearing or not hearing from God, you're in good company.
- Even John's disciples – very devout men seeking Truth – were frustrated at what they were witnessing, seeing, observing.
- I'm certain Jesus' answer was not what they were expecting.
  - Maybe, "We do fast, just not today."
  - Or "Because fasting is stupid."
  - Or some other defensive remark.
    - If they got what they were expecting, they could move on with their religious lives un-phased by just another poser in religious garb.
- Instead, Jesus got straight to the heart of the matter:
  - He quickly disarms the fasting/religious question
  - And says (**READ**) "You can't fit me into your old ways. You can't add me as an ingredient. You cannot use me as a spice, or a side dish, or even the main course surrounded by all the sides. I AM BEING Poured OUT. I'M GONNA FILL IT ALL. Your old life must go. You are the wineskin, I am the wine. This isn't going to work in your old skin."
- **Are you asking Him the right questions?**
  - The disciples of John asked about fasting.
  - What they really wanted to know was if Jesus was really worth following.
  - DOES JESUS HAVE TO ANSWER YOU WITH PARABLES?
  - In my experience, most people who get frustrated when they engage Jesus in questions about life's purpose aren't really doing basic self-less ministry.
    - The fundamentals of serving others, placing their needs above yours, etc.
    - Rather, they get very specific, and aren't willing to clean toilets, rake leaves, or sweep floors, spiritually speaking.

- IOW, as I taught on Knowing God's Will a couple months ago: Knowing God's will for your life has a prerequisite attached: Knowing GOD.
- You're probably asking the wrong basic question.
  - **Instead of "What do you want me to do today, Lord?"**
  - **Ask, "What do YOU want to do today, Lord?"**
  - Again, **"It's not about the wineskin."**
    - The wineskin is dead.
    - It's NEVER about the wineskin.
    - We are a THICK bunch – we Christians.
    - It's NEVER about the wineskin.
    - It's all about the wine, Christ Jesus – being poured from a willing vessel.

**(next)** How will He be poured out from you today, this week, this month, this year, and for years to come?