

NEW YEAR--NEW WINE, NEW WINE SKINS

Luke 5:37-39--“And no man puts new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desires new: for he says, ‘the old is better’ ”.

The new year 2018 beckons with the accustomed good intentions of New Year’s resolutions, and the countdown to midnight on December 31st. Are you this new year about to make new resolutions? Jesus shares a parable in Luke 5:37-39 when he talks to the Pharisees. He compares the new wine to the gospel of salvation with the old wine skins of tradition and custom, the “old-man”, and concludes that the new wine of the gospel cannot go into old wine skins of tradition because the new wine will burst the old wine skins. The Pharisees got the point—make place for lasting change.

That got me to thinking about New Year’s Resolutions—many will make them and many will break them, because the new wine of new year’s resolutions cannot simply be placed in the old wine-skins of traditions without preparation, modification and effort. There must be some change, some accommodation. We all will review our lives this past 2017 and be thankful for the mercies of being alive and God’s grace. We will want to make lasting changes this new year, for the better, but those changes can only take root if we plan to make changes to the underlying structure of heart and soul. Those changes can only be made by steadfast attention to a metamorphoses of the old wine-skins, the old self, the old habits that we desire to change, for the new plans and intentions cannot mix with the old of derelict duty and some traditions. Change always occurs within an environment and context. God can take old wine skins and make them new. He can reclaim them, recall them, remake them, re-fashion and remodel them. My prayer today, then for myself and each of us is not merely for new wine but for new wine skins in which we can place the new wine of good intentions. I challenge us to new wine skins, to deep and lasting change through Christ “for the former things have passed away, and behold all things have become as new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Let us plan to hang out with Jesus even more for a man is known by his friends and the company he keeps. Surely the best friend to have is Jesus, day by day, every morn, noon and eve. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxkA6xja8II>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ERTHdOHbjU>