

JUNE 11, 2023

“New Wineskins”

Matthew 9:17

17 Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”

Special Music:

New Wine

Hillsong Worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRozmcAL22M>



## **GRAPES TO WINE**

**Taste the new wine  
Fresh from the cask  
Enjoy a few sips  
Sweet on the lips,  
Ready for new skins and flasks**

**New wine continues to brew  
Sugar, juice, and yeast.  
Only new skin  
Can contain the gin  
Without breaking the beast.**

**But new wineskins  
And brand new wine  
Age together  
No matter the weather  
Which makes the wine so fine.**

**As wine ages  
It slowly mellows.  
A touch of tart  
Becomes a part  
Blending into a warm bedfellow.**

**We are the church  
New Wine and Old  
Joined with one mind  
To bring sight to the blind.  
Bringing wisdom and bold**

**Enthusiasm  
To a world afraid of wine  
No matter the skin.  
But through Christ we win  
The hearts of the tangled and entwined**

**Hands and feet, crush the grapes  
Hands and feet, make the wine  
Prepare the skins  
Ready to start again  
Our souls with Jesus intertwined.**

**The wine of our savior  
Runs through our veins  
Making us bold  
As his truth unfolds  
Releasing our earthly bound chains.**

There was a time in my life when I took up the craft/hobby of winemaking. I had several carboys (Large glass bottles for fermenting the wine). I did not have a vineyard, so I cheated. I used a kit which already had the juice and several components that are necessary to process the fruit juice into wine. It takes a great deal of patience. You need to check the temperature, alkaline, and chemical makeup of the wine several times a day and make adjustments. It usually took between six and eight weeks to be able to declare that fruit juice, wine. But even then, it wasn't something anyone wanted to drink. That was because there was still a great deal of work to do. First, the wine had to be filtered to get rid of the pulp and miscellaneous fibers in the wine. That took several weeks because I had to do it, let it settle, do it again and let it settle, and do it again, multiple times. Once I was satisfied that I was dealing with a clean product, I then had to sterilize the bottles and drag out the corks and corker. I would then strain the wine one last time and begin the corking process. And soon I would have 24-36 bottles of wine. Since I had four carboys, I could actually process two kits at the same time. Which meant I had a great deal of wine to give away to friends. I still have a few bottles today. I'll be honest with you, if I need wine, especially for cooking, it is a whole lot easier just to buy it from the grocery store.

Making wine in the ancient world was even far more difficult. They didn't have many of the tools or chemicals we have today. Keeping things sterile was extremely difficult and it was easy to ruin a batch of wine due to contamination. And instead of bottles which are easier to sterilize, they were forced to use animal bladders and corks. Larger portions of wine were often created and poured into

stone pots, the same kind used to store water. They would often use these larger containers to fill the wineskins. When Jesus turns the water into wine at the wedding feast, he does it in these stone pots.

Now, anyone making wine could buy new wineskins. This was an acceptable way to sell and distribute the wine, just like we use bottles today. But there was a significant problem with using wineskins. They really weren't reusable, like bottles. There is a process for stopping the fermentation process before bottling wine, but it never stops it completely. New wine continues fermenting even after it is bottled. As that fermenting process continues, it gives a new boldness and depth to the wine. But that process of fermenting continues to give off gasses and stretch the wineskin at its seams. As the process is reduced with age, less gas is produced keeping the wineskin from bursting.

But if you try to put new wine in an old wineskin, the wineskin has already been stretched to its limit and will often burst. This was common knowledge in the ancient world. So, the buyer had to be wary to make sure they didn't buy new wine in old wineskins without checking it. If the wineskin contained new wine it was likely they would never make it home without the wineskin bursting. It was a common way for vendors to trick customers so that they could reuse the old wineskins rather than pay for new ones.

When Jesus turned those jugs of water into wine, the miracle wasn't just that the water became wine, but that the wine tasted like an aged vintage, better wine, wine usually used at the beginning of the feast before people became so inebriated they really couldn't taste the difference. The wine that he created was

**fermented, aged, and made to be perfect, like wine kept in a barrel or pot for a long time, a mixture of sweet and tart, rich on the tongue.**

**We, as a church, stand at the same point as Mary stood when she told her son to make the wine even though he spoke back to her saying it was not his time. I would have liked to have heard that actual conversation as Jesus tried to wriggle out from under his mother's command, and for good reason. Mary just kept pushing, "Just get off your high horse and make the wine. People are waiting and we don't want our friends to be embarrassed." Jesus fell on the side of honoring the will of his mother, probably hoping that it wouldn't make too big of a fuss, because he had not started his ministry yet and did not want to have to explain how he was able to do what he did.**

**We, the congregation of First Christian Church of Fort Stockton, have struggled for years to regain our place in this community. Through our diligence and worship, we have remained a voice of inclusiveness in the city. God has continued to provide for us, even at times we have felt discouraged, thinking to ourselves "Why does God keep us going?" But the truth is, we never know what is around the corner. We don't know God's plans. We often feel stagnant when God is requesting patience of us.**

**This temple of brick and stone that God has built and maintained, has poured his heart and spirit into, has loved with a love filled with grace and mercy, honoring the faces, hands, and feet of all that have come before us and will come after us, this temple of worship and praise is strong enough to handle both new**

wine and old wine. Just like the pots of water that Jesus used. This blending can provide a new blessing that will be poured out on all that worship here.

The matter of trust came up in a conversation I had the other day. Funny thing about trust. Sometimes, it doesn't look like what we expect it to. The church was broken into at least once last year. Whoever came in, didn't break or take anything. They probably just needed a warm place to sleep for the night. People will do what they need to do to survive. It isn't a question of malice. But it does require a great deal of compassion and forgiveness on the part of the parties who feel violated. I personally live by the doctor's rule "First, do no harm."

After my heart surgery several years ago, I got to thinking about the fact that I barely knew my cardio-thoracic surgeon who was going to be performing my operation. That's pretty common these days. We had only met a couple of times. It wasn't until after the surgery that I came to the realization that even though I barely knew this wonderfully skilled surgeon that agreed to do this surgery when others said it was not possible, I had let him hold my heart in his hands. Literally. I had trusted that he would "First, do no harm" to the most important organ in my body.

Trust is something that we have to step into. I have met people, like my surgeon, that I trust. Mostly because I have no choice. And that kind of trust seldom fails me. I have also trusted close friends who have hurt me deeply and never apologized, making it difficult to take the high road, knowing that God expects me to. As long as humans are involved, someone is going to get hurt

every once in a while. Someone is going to stumble. It has been that way since Eve convinced Adam to take a bite of that apple.

It is in those times that God expects us to come together and work out our differences. It is what we are called to do. It is how we remain in concert with our God as we admit to ourselves and before God that our commitment to one another is so much more important than our pride and our traditions:

**23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,**

**24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

**Matthew 5:23-24**

The benefits of this grand opportunity before us far outweigh our differences. God has opened a door that provides a new way to envision our ministry here in Fort Stockton and renew our spirit.

The smiles and laughter of children are so much like new wine to me. The discussions and conversations of our older generations are like old wine to me. When we stand united, in love, peace, patience under the God's umbrella of forgiveness that makes us all heirs to the Kingdom. We are brothers and sisters not only to each other, but to Jesus Christ himself. Because of this we are able to stand against the world and anything it can throw at us. As the church universal, we are all believers in the salvation that our Lord brought to us by dying on the



**Cross and rising on the third day. With Christ by our side, we can do anything. Joined in common ministry, new wine and old, we can make a difference.**

**Our united purpose provided and guided by our Heavenly Father, our Savior Jesus, and the Holy, helps us to lift and serve our community. As old wine skins, we often found ourselves wise but limited physically. But with the addition of new wine and wineskins added to our storehouse, our purpose can be renewed with vigor and grace.**

**It is important as we come together to understand that Old Wine provides wisdom and experience, and new wine brings youth, vitality, and enthusiasm. We cannot expect the same level of wisdom from new wine that we expect from old wine, and we cannot expect the vitality of new wine from old wine. That would be foolish. But we can learn from each other and embrace an attitude grace, mercy, and patience that Jesus teaches us as we listen to one another and seek commonality and unity.**

**For over two thousand years, this idea of old wine and new wine has existed in the church. When the disciples preached at Pentecost and over 5000 new souls were added to the rolls of the Kingdom in a single day, the concept of new wine aging into old wine became a staple of growth in the church. The new wine of today, becomes the old wine of tomorrow. And that is as it should be.**

**Even our table represents this with the sacramental wine and bread. Together we drink of the wine and eat of the bread, not only to obey the command of our Lord, but to celebrate our unity across the globe as believers in Jesus**

**Christ. We are one in the Spirit; young and old, rich or poor. No matter our color, culture, or identity. We are one in the Spirit. Each and every one of us, has had the blood wine of Jesus poured into us with the expectation that we would share it with others, delivering the gospel to all nations.**

**May we as First Christian Church of Fort Stockton and the Discipulos de Cristo Odres Nuevos join in fellowship and purpose, old and new wine, both serving our Creator and his children through our purpose and service.**

**God bless you all!**

**AMEN**

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