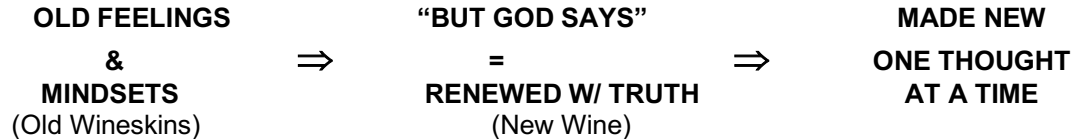


A. NEW WINE

- Jesus has promised to “make all things new.” He invites us to His throne of grace where He reveals our Old Wineskins and replaces them with His truth. (Rev. 21:5)
- When getting to know Him is our priority, we learn that His mercy is new every morning and that we “find grace” (meaning a new way forward). (Heb 4:16)
- Trusting Him relationally day after day allows us to be renewed again and again:



- The most common Old Wineskins we deal with are pride, shame, fear, offense and unforgiveness.
- Our New Hearts have the capacity to receive and believe God’s truth instead and the power to obey it because the Spirit dwells within us. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)
- Jesus said we can’t put New Wine into Old Wineskins, so we’ve been asking Him to reveal these old ways of believing and behaving that keep us from newness. (Mt 9:17)
- Bitterness is another Old Wineskin that will damage our relationship with God and others: Heb 12:14-15 NAS--Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled
- LISTENING EXERCISE
Is there any relationship where you are not experiencing consistent peace?

Is it possible that you may have developed a bitter root due to conflict or maybe just because the relationship is difficult in some way?

Are you open to the Spirit showing you anything inside of you that may be contributing to relational tension?

- Insights:

B. BITTERNESS

- New Wine is a product of the Spirit's work in us. We've seen that unforgiveness may be preventing us from the joy and peace that God can bring to our relationships.
- The fruit of unforgiveness is bitter. Other sources of bitterness are jealousy and selfish ambition: Jm 3:13-17 NAS--Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.
- Old Wineskins are produced by the Old Nature. The enemy wants us to keep them. New Wine produced by our union with Christ is sweet and loving. Note the contrast:

OLD WINESKINS

Bitterness: cutting, piercing, sharp, pungent, acrid

Jealousy: indignant, envious, resentful, defensive, discontent

Selfish Ambition: pushy, partisan, self promoting

NEW WINE

Sweet, agreeable, mild, pleasant, and kind

Kind, sympathetic, having goodwill, and contentment

Generous, caring, considerate

- It's not difficult to see the difference! (Sources: Strong's and Thesaurus.com)
- Our human nature is bent to be self-serving. Plus the kingdom of darkness is tempting us to align ourselves with a spirit of jealousy. (Num 5:30)
- Bitter jealousy is harmful to our inner lives and our relationships: Pr 14:30 AMP--A calm *and* undisturbed mind *and* heart are the life *and* health of the body, but envy, jealousy, *and* wrath are like rotteness of the bones.
- Insights:

C. PERSPECTIVE

- It is difficult (no, impossible!) to be vessels of New Wine on our own. New Wine flows only as we stay yielded to the Spirit and in agreement with God's truth.
- Jesus says that the way we view things has a huge impact on the way we experience life: Mt 6:22-23 NLT—Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when your eye is

unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

- If our perspective of life's circumstances is healthy, in agreement with God's truth, then we'll have the light we need to stay free of bitterness.
- The Bible points out at least 3 perspectives that can lead to bitterness:
 - 1) Comparison with Others
 - Gal 6:4-5 MSG--Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.
 - 2) Focus on What We Don't Have
 - Ruth 1:20-21 NLT--Don't call me Naomi (pleasant). Instead, call me Mara (bitter) for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me home empty.
 - 3) Our Idea of Fairness
 - Mt 20:13-15 ERV--"But the man who owned the field said to one of them, 'Friend, I am being fair with you. You agreed to work for one silver coin. Right?' ¹⁴ So take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same pay I gave you. ¹⁵ I can do what I want with my own money. Why would you be jealous because I am generous?'
- These ways of thinking are not life giving. They hinder us from knowing God's heart more deeply and from becoming more like Him.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Holy Spirit, please show me if there's a relationship or situation in my life where I'm regularly tempted to make comparisons?

Lord, reveal the places where I keep my eyes fixed on what I don't have rather than on what I do have:

Father, is there anywhere in my life that I have doubted Your love and generosity towards me because of the gifts You have chosen to give to someone else?

- “We ‘put away’ bitterness in part by preoccupying ourselves with God’s love and forgiveness toward us.” (Blake Glosson)
- Jesus removed our bitterness at the Cross! Embracing this perspective brings newness to our hearts, minds and relationships: Eph 4:31-32 NAS--All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
- Let’s purpose to be vessels that are ready to receive and give away sweet New Wine: Jm 3:12 ERV--No spring can yield both salt water and fresh water.
- Insights:

D. PERSONAL APPLICATION

- ONE THING

The One Thing that I’d like to take away from today’s class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

- PROCESSING THE TRUTH

- Try adding this question to your devotional time on a regular basis: “*Lord, who do I need to forgive?*” Use these suggested steps to guide your prayer to forgive:
 - Lord, thank you for forgiving me completely and unconditionally.
 - In obedience to Your command to forgive others as You have forgiven me, I choose to forgive [name of person] for [list their specific words, attitudes, or actions that have been hurtful].
 - As I calculate what this person has cost me [name the costs and long term effects], I want to release them from anything I think they owe me.
 - Please forgive me for harboring [confess specific judgments, thoughts, emotions or other sinful responses] toward this person.
 - I choose to release him/her into Your hand. By faith, I receive the cleansing, healing and freedom that You have promised to those who forgive.
 - Fill me now, I pray, with your love and mercy as I move forward in this relationship.
- Prayerfully consider which Old Wineskin to tackle and then work through it prayerfully:
 - Name It: Take time to consider how best to describe the mindset you’ve targeted
 - Identify Its Source: Let the Spirit take you to a time or repeated situation that contributed to the Old Wineskin being present in your life
 - Short Term Strategies: Practice abiding, prayer, praise, gratitude, and meditation. Try different strategies based on where you are on any given day.
 - Long Term Strategies: While your New Wineskins (mindsets) are being formed, seek God’s help in pursuing surrender, waiting on Him and greater faith and trust.