

A. NEW WINE

- The New Wine of God's life and His living word requires New Wineskins.
- Jesus wanted His followers to start the process by learning about the heart of God: Matthew 9:13 EXB— Go and learn what this means: 'I ·want [desire; require; am pleased by] ·kindness [compassion; mercy] ·more than I want [not] animal sacrifices [Hos. 6:6].' [For] I did not come to ·invite [call] ·good people [the righteous; meaning the “self-righteous” who feel no need to repent] but to invite [call] sinners [those who recognize their need to repent].”
- We must be willing to leave the old behind to connect with His New Way. That means letting go of:
 - Old thought patterns that drive old behaviors
 - Previous ways of dulling or drowning out the conscience
 - Former mindsets\ about our pasts
 - Ineffective methods for dealing (or *not* dealing) with our issues
- We are seeking to follow Jesus' instructions to go and learn what means to have:
 - New Life in place of our old selves: Rom 6:4 JBP-- We were dead and buried with him in baptism, so that just as he was raised from the dead by that splendid Revelation of the Father's power so we too might rise to life on a new plane altogether. If we have, as it were, shared his death, let us rise and live our new lives with him! Let us never forget that our old selves died with him on the cross that the tyranny of sin over us might be broken
 - New Hearts that want to deeply know the Lord: Jer 24:7--I will give them a heart to know Me, that I *am* the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.
 - New Freedom from earning our way through works: Rom 7:6 NLT-- But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.
 - New Mercies that are already ours simply by receiving: Heb 4:16-- Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- So when we inevitably find ourselves having been tempted and failing while in this fleshly body, we boldly approach God's throne to receive mercy and find grace.
- That means we need not strive to rid ourselves of a guilty conscious, but go directly to God to receive mercy (√) and find grace for moving forward: Heb 9:14 NLT--The blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.
- Insights:

B. FINDING GRACE

- Finding God's grace is literally like a treasure hunt! In every situation God's grace enables us to know Him more and to trust Him to lead us forward on a New Path.
- Find--to find by enquiry, thought, examination, scrutiny, observation, to find out by practice and experience (G2147)
- The avenue of repentance leads us to this New Path. Repentance = New Perspective, God's perspective; re- (do over), pent (see from the highest place).
- Many of us have created distance and insecurity in our relationship with God due to not knowing His mercy. Others have learned to suppress the conscience.
- Our conscience prompts us to look to the Lord for His mercy and grace when we sin. It provides us the opportunity to connect to God's New Wine through repentance.
- "In repentance there is a bitter sweetness, or a sweet bitterness — which shall I call it? — of which, the more you have, the better it is for you. I can truly say that I hardly know a diviner joy than to lay my head in my Heavenly Father's bosom and to say, 'Father, I have sinned, but thou hast forgiven me; and, oh, I do love thee!'" (Charles Spurgeon)
- Repentance can be painful. But God intends it to lead us into newness for the future: Acts 3:19 NASB--Repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord
- Worldly sorrow creates distance and insecurity in our relationship with God due to not knowing His mercy. It is full of regret and without remedy. It doesn't allow you to let go of the past: 2 Cor 7:10-NASB-- For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.
- "Good pain is pain in the service of a purpose. Bad pain is pain endured because we are resisting a needed growth step." (Henry Cloud)
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Have you ever thought that God could make you richer from having sinned and known His mercy than you were before?

Is there any place in your life with Jesus that you are resisting His nudge toward newness?

- Godly sorrow helps us discard our Old Wineskins so that we begin to see new ones that come as the fruit of repentance: 2 Cor 7:11 NASB--For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

- Here are some of the New Wineskins that true repentance will bring forth in us:
 - Earnestness—eagerness and diligence to handle a matter (Strong's G4710)
 - Vindication—“*apologia*,” to give a plea or an answer for oneself (G627)
 - Indignation—righteous anger over sin – either your own or that of others (G24)
 - Fear/Alarm—“*phobos*,” vexation; healthy fear of sin and of ever repeating it (G5401)
 - Longing—earnest desire for purity and godliness (G1972)
 - Zeal—excitement of mind; fervor of spirit (G2205)
 - Avenging of Wrong—ready to see God's justice done; confident assurance that I am vindicated even though I sinned (G1557)
- Once repentance has done its work, our hearts and minds are refreshed. We're ready to listen to God, to trust Him to lead us on the New Way He has for us.
- Insights:

C. A WAY FORWARD

- When we deal with our sin and identify the Old Wineskins underneath, we're ready for God's amazing grace. Grace brings a wealth of newness including a New Way.
- Grace is at the root of joy and peace in the Lord!
- The well-known definition of grace is “*unmerited favor*.” This is true but grace encompasses so much more than just our undeserved relationship with God.
- Grace = “*charis*,” God's good will and favor toward us; His merciful kindness by which He exerts His holy influence upon our souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of Christian virtues. (Strong's G5485)
- In other words, grace is God working in and through us that which we are unable to do without Him:
 - 1 Cor 15:10 NLT--But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace.
 - Phil 2:13 AMP--For it is [not your strength, but it is] God who is effectively at work in you, both to will and to work [that is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose] for His good pleasure.

- When we find grace, we've begun to see that we cannot please God in our own strength. Instead, God's enabling grace provides a New Way forward.
- "Grace will blow up your little kingdom of one while it introduces you to a much better, more glorious King. Grace will work to expose your blindness while it gives you eyes to see. Grace will drive you to the end of yourself while it holds before you the promise of fresh starts and new beginnings. Grace is a person, and his name is Jesus." (Paul Tripp)
- **Fresh Start**—coming to the end of ourselves means we are ready for God to step in:
 - Ps 51:10-12 MSG--God, make a fresh start in me, shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life. Don't throw me out with the trash, or fail to breathe holiness in me. Bring me back from gray exile, put a fresh wind in my sails!
 - 2 Cor 4:16 JBP--This is the reason why we never collapse. The outward man does indeed suffer wear and tear, but every day the inward man receives fresh strength.
 - Is 43:19 NLT--For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.
 - Luke 5:37-38 NASB--No one pours new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.
 - Rev 21:5 ESV--He who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."
- Every day of our life in Christ is filled with Newness as we learn to go to God's throne to receive mercy and find grace to follow His New Way Forward: 2 Cor 9:8--God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work.
- Insights: