

## **New Wineskins for a New Year:**

**You have to do a new thing to get a new thing. You can not go on, year after year doing the same thing and expecting a different result.**

*Matthew 9:14-17 ESV*

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

*(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.*

*(16) No one puts a piece of un-shrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.*

*(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."*

### **Introduction:**

This morning I want to touch on an area of spiritual discipline that is not often discussed and if it is discussed, sometime it is only by the weird and fruity, namely the area of fasting.

As a church we commit a season of every New Year as a fast and to prayer. We are 10 days into this year's 21 day fast and we have another 11 days to go.

It is a spiritual discipline that if you have never entered into it, I would ask for you to personally consider.

We have Steve Hooper and Ronda Ray who have made themselves available to you as a resource to help coach you through this your first fast if you would like to join us.

We have support, testimonies and resource available for you at [clcpeople.org](http://clcpeople.org), which is an online community for our church.

We are all fasting for a variety of reasons.

A fast is a private matter before a person and then God.

In the bible you find many examples of people fasting for different things.

And people always fast for a purpose.

- They fasted often because of the press of life and circumstances (Esther 4:16)
- They fast for break through and for deliverance (Isaiah 58:6, Matthew 17: 21)
- They fast because they need divine guidance on a situation (Ezra 8:21-23, Judges 20:26-28)
- To humble themselves before God, to bring their flesh into obedience to their spirit : Ps 35

As a body we are believing for a breakthrough in the spiritual state and condition of the families of our church. That they would know God in a deeper and more personal way.

That as a city and nation, we would be touched by Christ and those that are lost would have a genuine encounter with Jesus Christ.

We pray for our personal lives God would do a significant and lasting work in us. That the things that have held us back and held us down would be broken off us once and for all.

As I read what people are praying for and fasting for this year I read things like:

- Salvation of family members
- Family members in rehab
- Wisdom and guidance for children
- Breakthrough for finances

- The completion of the inner work of God
- A manifestation of the Supernatural
- Growth of business
- Growth of the ministry

All of these are valid and essential and important things in your life and I believe accordingly are important to God.

### **Types of fasts:**

A fast in the strictest definition means to abstain from food.

In a more colloquial sense it is to go without something in order to draw aside to draw closer to God.

There are a variety of different fast.

There is no strict method of fasting, no special thing that you can do to get God's attention.

And remember fasting is not an act of works, but an act of faith  
It is a spiritual exercise that bares spiritual fruits long before it bares nature fruits.

You fast to please God, not to please anyone else. Paul was clear in his teaching on this.

*1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV*

*(31) So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

And here is what Jesus taught us:

*Matthew 6:16-18 ESV*

*(16) "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.*

*(17) But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,*

(18) That your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The Jews fasted often, they had four annual fast, a multitude of occasional fast and on top of this the Pharisees would fast twice a week.

Now the Pharisees had turned a private, personal season of seeking God into a staged and public ritual.

They would not wash or dress as usually.

They would smear their faces with ashes, they wouldn't comb their hair. They would make great efforts to ensure that everybody knew what they were doing.

All the time they were trying to impose their will on God and on each other.

Hypocrites always over act their part.  
They have no desire for genuine piety.  
They don't know how to passionately seek God, they just know how to look and act like they are passionately seeking God.

The pursuit of Christ is not a season or an act; it is a life long pursuit.

- Normal fast: abstaining from all food, solid or liquid, but not from water (Luke 4: 2).
- Partial fast: abstaining from selected items in your diet or selected meals. A Daniel fast is a type of partial fast.  
"Please test your servants for 10 days and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink." (Daniel 1:12) "I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth" (Daniel 10:3). There are numerous lists of foods "allowed" during a Daniel fast.
- Absolute fast: abstaining from both food and water (Esther 4:16, Acts 9:9). Going without water can have serious physical consequences. "This (absolute fast) is the exception and should

never be engaged in unless one has a very clear command from God, and then for not more than three days."

- Supernatural fast: Moses was miraculously able to survive not eating or drinking for 40 days (Deut. 9:9,18; Exodus 34:28)
- John Wesley fast: eating only whole grain bread and water for ten days

### **How long should you fast?**

- One meal
- One night (Daniel 6:18)
- One day (Lev. 16:29; Judges 20:26; I Samuel 7:6; II Samuel 1:12, 3:35)
- Three days (Esther 4:16)
- Seven days (I Samuel 31:13)
- Twenty-one days (Daniel 10:3-13)
- Forty days (Exodus 34:28; I Kings 19:8; Matthew 4:2)

You see again it is a very personal thing and is based upon what God would have you do and what you are dealing with in your job and every day life.

Jesus drew side into the desert for 40 days; you and I don't have that option.

### **Should everyone fast?**

Short answer... yes and no.

Should every one fast...yes.  
Should everyone fast food? No.

I believe that God is immensely practical.

See if your operating heavy machinery, you don't have the option to fast food.

Diabetics, expectant mothers, heart patients; anyone with a specific medical reason not to fast food, should not.

If you're on your feet all day teaching kids or nursing, you might not feel you have that option, or you may have a sporting commitment, you don't have that option.

But you maybe able to fast movies, an activity, a certain food.

The idea is not just to have a hungry, but to draw aside. And to take that time, replace that activity with reading your word and talking to God about the things that are important to Him, important to you important to your family and important to us as a body.

### **This is a Spiritual Endeavour:**

But I must remind you...this is a spiritual activity primarily.

And it has spiritual opposition.  
And it yields spiritual results.

Many of you who have been fasting for the last 10 days feel horrible.

Not only are you hungry, but things have started to stir up.

Things you thought you had dealt with.

There seems to be opposition and pressure from angles you never imagined and you say to yourself...THIS CAN'T BE GOD...the reality it is.

God desires to do a work in you, in order to do a work through you.

He wants to get your attention in order to move you beyond where you currently are to where you desperately desire to be...and that journey is one of character development and personal assessment.

### **The three olds that Christ points out:**

In the parables that follow Jesus makes three comments on the 'old' that John follows where battling with

1. The old stops working
2. The old doesn't fit
3. The old can not contain the new

### **The old stops working:**

*Matthew 9:14-17 ESV*

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

The disciples of John came to Jesus...and said...

*look here...these boys are suppose to be disciples, that is followers of you, a rabbinical teacher....and there needs to be a little decorum, this isn't good for business, this isn't how religious type people carry on.*

*This doesn't fit the mould.*

*They are not doing the things religious type people do...it is suppose to be prayer and fasting, not partying and feasting...*

And what Jesus replied was absolutely brilliant.

*(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.*

You see the wedding feasts of the Middle East were great festivals; they were even riotous at times.

People were celebrating, they were happy, they were joy filled.

Matthew had just been called by Christ, he had invited all of his friends around and they were having a party, the size of a wedding feast to celebrate Mathew surrendering to the call of God...I wish people would do that when folks got saved.

I wish parents would get that excited when there kids came to Christ. Don't celebrate there 21<sup>st</sup>, celebrate their spiritual birth.

That is what Jesus did.

The custom was for the bridegroom to gather with his closet friends in an intimate party and celebrate a union that would last a life time.

By doing this Jesus immediately separated who he was from everyone who had ever been before.

He was the answer for their prayers, no longer the need for their prayers.

Everything that they had been hoping for thousands of years was in there midst and they need to see that and pursue Him instead of holding on to formula and ritual.

The disciples of John and located themselves.

They saw themselves as a better version of the Pharisees, the upgrade, Jesus declared by his lifestyle and the actions and requirements of His disciples that he was something totally different.

The disciples of John had put themselves as rivals to the Pharisees, Jesus was not playing by their rules and they didn't know what to do about it.

Not only does Jesus challenge their view and practices of spiritual activities, He challenges the effectiveness and usefulness of their endeavor.

John was in prison.

His time and function had been fulfilled.

He had heralded and prophesied the coming of the Messiah and the Messiah was now in their midst.

His followers had not been aware of the transition.

They had not positioned themselves or humbled themselves to be apart of the new.

They had grown stifled, unyielding in their revelation

Jesus had come to do a new thing, but they were trying to fix an old system, instead of embracing a new leader.

Now don't hear what I am not saying.

These were good men.

They were loyal and dedicated

But being dedicated to a dead horse will still not get you a ride home.

Being dedicated to an old lifestyle will not get you free.

Being unmovable in your habits and behaviors will not allow change to take place.

It doesn't matter how much it worked once.

It doesn't matter how good you were at it once.

It doesn't matter how useful and important it was to you once.

If Christ has come

And Christ has claimed your life, your family, your business

If he is truly Lord...then you better start paying attention to what he wants to speak to you and do through you

Because no amount of dedication to the old will ever return the sort of fruit you need.

### **The old doesn't fit**

*(16) No one puts a piece of un-shrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.*

Christ here is simply saying that you can not mingle the prescriptions that flow from the law with the principles of divine grace.

The old garment is already ragged.

Its usefulness is over.

Its time is complete.

It no longer fits.

Some of you are trying to drag the batter clothing of past success into a future where there is no room for them.

You must leave behind the past you must shed yourself of all of your past life.

You must be prepared to put off all of you old clothing.

You must dealing with it radically.

Cast of the rags of your old life.

The vestiges.

The association.

The action.

The habits and embrace the new.

## **ILLUSTRATION...SOUTH AFRICA AND CLOTHES:**

Raining.....

I realized that everything I was wearing except my jeans and my socks, I had stolen.

I had justified having them for so long.

I had to make a choice,

The clothes I wore,

Or the future I desired.

This is not the time to hold your old life together.

Your old dreams.

Your old desires.

While trying to accomplish the new.

If you do, it will destroy both.

Not only will the new cloth get destroyed, but the old will be worst for wear.

The season for the old is done.

It is time for radical departures.

Radical repentance.

Radical fruit.

Don't make excuses any more for why not,

Find reasons to.

**The old cannot contain the new:**

*(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."*

A wineskin was a bag made from a skin of a goat or a sheep and they were used for dispensing wine.

New wine was always put in new wine skins. The wineskins would stretch with new wine as it continued to ferment.

If new wine was put into a wineskin that had not been cared for or had hardened and become inflexible with age and time....now this is important....Then the continuing fermentation would ultimately burst the skin.

Now in the strictest interpretation Christ is telling us that the new wine of His revelation would not fit in the old wineskins of the Jewish religious system.

But why?

I got to thinking about this

Why would it not?

You see older wine skins were actually priced over newer ones.

If you look after your old wineskins, if it was kept in good repair..

If it was regularly filled with wine.

If it was not allowed to go dry.

If it was regularly oiled.

Then it was the preferred vessel for the best wine.

It had been cured well.

It didn't leave a strange taste in the wine.

In fact you only pour cheap wine in wineskins for the initial breaking in because the wine would take on the flavor of the pitch or resin that had been used to seal it.

But the Jews had not looked after the wineskin.  
They had allowed it to become brittle and hardened.

They had lost site of the small things.

The day to day things.

Some purist say that a wine skin is the best vehicle to store and pour wine, but they also tell you it is not for the faint hearted.

Because you must take deliberate and daily care of your wineskin.

A wineskin can last generations.  
A wineskin can go through many fillings.

I have been in leadership since I was 13 years of age; I have been in business leadership for 23 years and church leadership for 22 years.

I have seen fads come and go.

None more so than in the church.

And if you wait long enough of all you who are studying new business theory or church growth principals...it all comes around....it is a little bit like paisley ties and bell bottoms pants.

All you ladies with shoulder pads from the 90's...don't despair, they will come back again...Lord help us!

But the church is especially cruel in someway.

A lot of the rhetoric is about the younger generation.  
How they hold the key.  
The older folk have to get out of the way.  
The new generation is the answer.

Sounds to me like the voice of a fatherless generation, not Godly leadership.

The world tells us the old men will dream the dreams of reformation and the young men will have the vision to fulfill it.

Our sons and daughters shall prophesy it, but those who have kept their wineskins fresh are needed to guide and direct the passion.

There is no such thing as retirement in the body of Christ.

You are either soft and flexible, or brittle and hard.

That is not an issue of age, but dispersion and weather or not you have maintained and cared for what God has given you

### **Lessons from the wine skin for 2010**

There are three things that I think you should consider from this parable as we not only start the year but continue in this fast in preparation for it.

1. Water
2. Oil
3. And daily care

### **Water**

You have to keep your wineskin clean.

The water of the word is absolutely essential on a daily basis if you're going to contain the new thing that God wants to do in your life.

There is no room for excuses.

You can't rinse out your wineskin every second batch.

You have to soak it and prepare it before every infilling.

This Book IS the WORD.

Christ was the WORD made flesh.

You hold in your hand, the written imprint of the Son of God.

You never haven't to doubt what God is saying or what God wants to do, it is daily available for you.

But I can't wash your wineskin.

You have to.

You can get the Bible on CD.

You can download the sermons every week and listen to them again...or free.

You can print them off and study them with friends.

I would encourage you to do that.

Every sermon I have taught is available for free download in printed form.

Get together over tea and cookies.  
Read them, talk about the teaching.  
Pray for each other in your area of need.

**Oil**

We are spiritual beings.

To deny the supernatural touch of God, the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost is to deny your very spiritual self.

Take time to worship weekly.

Draw aside and commune with God.

Not as a replacement to church, but separate from church.

I would encourage you to come to church ready to worship.

*It's too loud* – sit up the back or wear ear plugs.

Find reasons, don't make excuses.

*It's my one day off* – congratulations, you get a day off. All you have to do is come and receive.

We don't want you playing cow bell.

Come to Sunday PM Service.

Come for an extended time of worship and to experience the supernatural.

*Well I don't believe in that, I am a skeptic...* AWESOME! We all were once!

We had a young man come in as an atheist and leave as a Christian last week...a touch from God, seeing people get supernaturally healed in an authentic setting is a great cure for skepticism.

## **Daily care**

Christianity isn't a faith of works, but it is a walk of discipline.

You have to be prepared to change you lifestyle and discipline your diary if you are going to become all that you can for Christ and be used to your fullest capacity by Christ.

Life is filled with people committed to being ordinary...don't be one of them.

Friend, find ways.

Don't make excuses.

These are eternal issues we are talking about, not trivial pursuits.