

All of Grace or Not Grace at All

(Matt. 9:10-17)

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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I. Introduction ó Title and Text Introduction ó

Matt. 9:10-17 ó This parable (as it's called in Luke's version) focuses on 2 back to back illustrations (The Garment and the Wineskins). Using these common elements, Christ illustrates a profound Gospel truth ó profound in that they teach the clear, mutually exclusive nature (the clear delineation) that exists between the true way of salvation and all of other false ways (i.e. ó the religion of grace in contrast to the religion of works).

And I hope you will see in our study today (whether for the first time or simply as an refreshing affirmation of what God has already been pleased to teach you) how you and I may discern whether we are among the number for whom Christ came, lived and died for. There's good news ó for just such assurance can be found in our text for today.

II. Vss. 10-13: (Read). The Subject of the Parable is established. Here we have identified: For Whom He Came ó soul sick sinners in need of a healing outside of themselves.

A. Vs. 12 - 13:

1. Perceived not their need ó self-righteous
2. Vs 13a ó Quote from Hosea. Mercy vs. Sacrifice (Offering)
3. Vs. 13b ó Lives are transformed ó called to Repentance. Grace vs. Works ó If an element of works, or if you're able to procure your blessing by your offering ó then you perceive no need of a physician

B. That is, if we're among those for whom Christ lived and died, we will in time experience the effect of what he accomplished for us as we're brought to repentance ó we change religions, changing from the religion of works to the religion of grace.

III. Vss. 14-15: Here we have evidence (as exposed by their follow-up complaint focusing on their religious practices) that this transformation (repentance) had not taken place:

A. Comment on how there is a continuity in time between the events of vss. 13 & 14 ó

B. In bringing up the issue of fasting vs. not fasting, they evidence that such a transformation has not taken place.

C. Comment on the significance of the involvement by John's disciples ó

III. Vss. 14-15 (Con't.):

D. So this dichotomy is set forth, leading into the parable and its 2 illustrations: (1) Grace (salvation conditioned on Christ alone) or (2) Works (salvation conditioned on the sinner) and no in-between. And you'll see how the parable establishes this clear delineation of no mixing of the 2 of showing that it is indeed "All of Grace or Not Grace at All."

IV. Verse 16 of The Garment:

A. Un-shrunk cloth -- describe problem of shrinkage

B. Symbols:

1. New garment = Robe of Christ righteousness of that which the bridegroom came to establish, procure, and clothe His bride with. It was woven and created by Him in perfect satisfaction.
2. Old Garment = Religion of works which we cling to and attempt to patch up. It is man's efforts to establish a righteousness of His own (typified by the religious rituals we imagine recommend us of such as fasting here). It is that security blanket of what we naturally cling to.

C. Patchwork Religion will not stand of marrying the old with the new will not work

D. Tear is worse = 1) Comment on how there is stronger delusion when a lie is married with some truth or 2) better of they see the tear of the old worsen in contrast to the new so as to ultimately cast it away.

E. Grace and works will not mix. Romans 11:6: ***"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."***

V. Vs. 17 of Wineskins:

A. New or Unfermented wine in old bottles of describe problem. Not glass bottles but the bottles were of skin (still used in Palestine today). Old wineskins would become weak and lose their elasticity with age and therefore would burst during the fermentation of new wine.

B. Symbols:

1. New wine of the Gospel of the Doctrine of Christ of this bridegroom -- and the Gospel of salvation conditioned on Christ alone.
2. New Bottle of Representative of new state of of one having been born again or anew of called by God's Spirit to repentance, so as to need a Physician.
3. Old Bottle of the unrepentant sinner who continues in religion of seeking God's favor and blessings based upon something done by or through him of an offering (or sacrifice by Him) of not needing mercy. Our lost state.

C. Lesson of Wineskins / Wine Illustration: Again, the old and new (works and grace) cannot be intermingled as was taught in the 1st illustration of the Garment, but here we also see that the vessel must be fitted (as a vessel of mercy) ó made appropriate (willing) to receive the new wine.

1. It is not ðnewö as in recent ó but because it was new to them when they first heard and believed it. It is new when it is revealed through the proclamation of the Gospel (wherein this robe of righteousness ó this garment ó is newly revealed). And it is revealed to one who has been given the spiritual faculties to perceive their situation ó their desperate need ó one who has new eyes, new ears, and a new mind and heart to understand and need this cure. They must be made alive ó as in the ðnewö birth. Like a new bottle ó they are made willing to receive it for now they have life!
2. 2 Cor. 5:17 ó Old things are passed away, all become new. While this newness in the context of that passage is a product of that reconciliation that was made at the cross where all Christ represented were in fact made accepted in the beloved, in time ó it still is a truth that in spiritual conversion, this is made new unto the lost sinner. And the old passes away as light dispels our darkness. Weære brought to faith and its accompanying evidence of repentance that testifies that the faith is genuine, God-given faith. New wine requires new bottles.

VI. Summary: So we see clearly in our passage today the truth that it is truly ðall of grace or not grace at allö / mutual exclusivity of the 2 / No mixing

A. It is not Jesus + / not a patchwork religion: As seen in the illustration of the Garment ó there can be no cobbling together of these 2 diametrically opposed religious doctrines.

Consider how today's popular brand of ðChristianityö composed of so many who invoke the name of Christ (seeing some deficiency ó some tear in their old garment), all the while imagining that what He accomplished merely made salvation possible if they would offer up that small (but crowning) event to procure their own salvation before God. And they naturally cling to that as their security blanket, an old garment they cannot and will not let go of apart from God's saving grace ó apart from the God-given faith and repentance that would have them cast away that old smelly garment of self-righteousness that we all so treasure by nature.

B. "Higher Knowledge" as illustrated by the new wine in old bottles:

But what about those of us who have been taught and embraced the doctrines of grace? How do we know that God has done a heart work and that we haven't simply acquired a "higher knowledge" or something we've simply grown to understand?

Well in vs. 13, the telling indicator of whether our faith is genuine or not is that it will always be accompanied by the inseparable gift of repentance or of a radical change from our natural persuasion (of imagining that salvation is conditioned at least in some way and/or to some degree on the sinner), turning to the truth that all of salvation is conditioned on Christ alone. That turning is the repentance Christ calls sinners unto.

Absent such a casting away of the old notions of salvation by some contributing work of our hand, our agreement to the doctrines of grace is akin to trying to put new wine in old bottles. For new bottles or (those for whom Christ came to call to repentance or to this about-face) or they totally renounce their former self-righteous, religious notions wherein they imagined that salvation was conditioned on the sinner to any degree whatsoever. In repentance, they not only see the truth of the Gospel of grace, but that its antithesis, the false gospel we all initially embrace or was simply a system of works camouflaged to appear as grace to our former unenlightened minds and hearts. New wine requires new bottles.

- C. Consider the parallel passage in Luke (Luke 5:38-39) reads ***"³⁸But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.*** (as we read in Matt. But in vs. 39 he adds ***"³⁹No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better."*** That is one doesn't immediately desire the new or for we cling to our natural predisposition.

But contrary to our natural taste buds, God prepares new bottles (an awakening) that we might change courses and repent so as to say, "Out with the old and in with the new." As new bottles, we not only embrace the new wine, but in doing so we've lose our taste for the old.

- D. How about you? Has God granted you repentance? Has He granted you this radical change of heart and mind? If so, then you too can rejoice. For that evidences that the bridegroom has indeed come and swept you off of your feet and clothed you in the new wedding garment or in His very righteousness.

VI. Summary (Con't.):

Seeing clearly from God's word that there is no mixing of the old (works) with the new (grace), I pray that you too can rejoice in this bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, and with your heart say "Out with the old & in with the new."

As Christ Himself tells us, He (Christ, the bridegroom) calls His bride (the redeemed elect & those for whom He came, lived and died) to repentance. For in the newness of life, they are brought to see that truly it is "All of grace," exposing that what they previously believed really is "not grace at all."

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself & the Bible.

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