

**May 2**

**Scriptures:** Read Luke 5

**Key Verse:** “... new wine must be put into new wineskins...” (Luke 5:38)

## **Overview**

Let's follow Jesus' thinking here. New wine needs new wineskins—that makes sense. Old wineskins have already been stretched by the fermentation process. Stretch them anymore and they'll burst. So the old wineskins are useless now; they've served their purpose. But does that mean the old wine is useless? By no means. In Jesus' own words, “the old is better”. Let's pursue this a bit.

You've heard the term, “the old boys' network”. I remember, as a young pastor, attending church conferences and seeing the old boys' network in effect. A church would be in distinct need of a pastor—in my mind, it needed a young, fresh, new approach: someone in tune with the time. But what would the district officials do? They'd appoint one of the “old boys”, a friend of long acquaintance, to go in and continue the old traditions, stultifying the church even more. My young pastor friends and I would shake our heads with not-so-muted disdain. The status quo seemed to be preferred to creatively pursuing the far horizon. The district officials chose men from the ark, while we younger pastors wanted someone from the cradle. We wanted style, they wanted character.

I see things more clearly, now that I've reached the hoary-headed age of 42. The brand new church needs a young pastor—while the young leader “ferments”, the church expands, relatively painlessly. On the other hand, if the young pastor is catapulted into an established situation, chances are there'll be an explosion (not of growth, but of disintegration). The seasoned pastor, on the other hand, is the man to cultivate, prime, nourish, discipline, and guide the seasoned church in producing ongoing fruit. Of course, there are exceptions, but generally speaking, whereas character always has style, style doesn't always have character.

Jesus' teaching was new. The established religious system couldn't bear the pressure of His expansive view of the kingdom of heaven; something had to give. But even while the establishment crushed Jesus' life, His shed blood, like the released juice of the grape, created a whole new wine. And ultimately, it was the old wineskin that burst—and a new world, which will culminate in Jesus' return, was begun.

But there's something unique about Jesus' new wine. It's rooted in the old. It has the style of a new day dawning, and the character of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It's the best of new and old.

## **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, in You we are a new creation. Your life in us is the new wine of Your kingdom. Help us to share You with others today.