

5–Day Devotional: New Wine, New Life *Mark 2:18–3:6*

Day 1: Solemn Fasting or Joyful Feasting?

Scripture: *"And Jesus said to them, 'Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.'" — Mark 2:19*

Reflection: Jesus introduces a brand-new order of spiritual life. Rather than perpetual melancholy or rigid performance, the presence of Christ brings the glad joy of a wedding feast. The gospel is not a patch to mend an aging framework of legalism; it is the disruptive, life-giving presence of Jesus Himself abiding with us.

Application: Evaluate my spiritual walk today. Am I operating out of heavy obligation or out of the joy of Christ's presence? Choose one area of my life to approach with celebration and gratitude today.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, thank You for abiding with me and bringing true joy to my heart. Help me to live in the glad reality of Your presence today rather than falling into rigid religious formalism. Amen.*

Day 2: Fresh Wineskins for New Wine

Scripture: *"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins." — Mark 2:22*

Reflection: The expanding life of the Kingdom requires soft, pliable hearts. Old wineskins, a critical posture, hunting for failure, and rigidity, cannot handle the dynamic movement of the Holy Spirit. God loves us too much to leave us as we are, and His disruptive work breaks us out of ruts to renew our spirit.

Application: Identify one tradition, comfort zone, or mindset I am holding onto tightly. Yield it to God today and ask Him to make my heart pliable and ready for His new wine.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, soften and renew my heart by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Guard me against a critical spirit or hard heart, and make me a fresh wineskin ready to contain Your expanding Kingdom life. Amen.*

Day 3: Enjoying the True Rest of the Sabbath

Scripture: *"And he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.'" — Mark 2:27–28*

Reflection: The Sabbath was intended to be a refreshing blessing and a prophetic foreshadowing of God's ultimate rest and restoration. Human

rules turned it into a heavy legal burden. Jesus redefined it. Today, our sabbath rest is no longer attached to a rigid day of rules, but is fulfilled in a Person—Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath.

Application: I step away from self-reliant striving today. I set aside time to consciously rest in Jesus, laying down my burdens and trusting Him with my work and needs.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, You are my rest and my restoration. Forgive me for relying on my own efforts and rule-keeping. I receive Your peace today and rest in Your finished work. Amen.*

Day 4: Restoring Life and Doing Good

Scripture: *"And he said to them, 'Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?' But they were silent." — Mark 3:4*

Reflection: In the synagogue, Jesus confronted religious hard-heartedness that valued cold tradition over human restoration. True Sabbath rest brings re-creation and divine life. Following Jesus means prioritizing active love, healing, and doing good over ritual observance and judgmental observation.

Application: Look around you today for someone in need of encouragement, grace, or practical help. Actively choose to do good and extend Christ's life-giving compassion to them.

Prayer: *Lord, give me eyes to see people through Your compassionate heart. Deliver me from passive religious judgment, and use my life to bring healing, good, and restoration to others. Amen.*

Day 5: Embracing Kingdom Transformation

Scripture: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." — 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Reflection: Real change is uncomfortable because it involves disruption of our traditions, methods, and expectations. Yet, stepping into Kingdom authority and walking as a new creation yields transformational growth. I can choose how I relate to change: remaining rigid and brittle, or stepping forward with hope, full of new wine.

Application: Reflect on how God is reshaping my life. Write down one specific commitment to embrace God's ongoing transformation with hope and flexibility.

Prayer: *Holy Spirit, I yield my life to Your continuous, transforming power. Change me from glory to glory, and give me the courage to step into the new life and authority You have prepared for me. Amen.*