

# “The Old and The New”

(Luke 5:33-39)

## Introduction

➤ There is nothing quite like having something new – a new car, a new house, a newborn baby. While not everything “new” is good, or even better, there is something unique or even special about newness. Implicitly, that which is new is not broken, flawed, or used. This is certainly true of the Christian life.

**Eph 4:22-24** ~ “to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,<sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,<sup>24</sup> and to put on the new [*kainos*] self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

**Col 3:9-10** ~ “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices<sup>10</sup> and have put on the new [*neos*] self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”

**2 Cor 5:17** ~ “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new [*kainos*] creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new [*kainos*] has come.”

**Gal 6:15** ~ “For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new [*kainos*] creation.”

**Rom 6:4** ~ “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness [*kainotēs*] of life.”

➤ As it is in English, the New Testament (Greek) words for “new” (*kainos/neos*) carry a range of meanings – it does not always mean something brand-new. It can refer to something relatively new, in contrast to that which is old (e.g., Lk.22:20). It can distinctly refer to that which is unused (e.g., Lk.5:36, 38; Matt.27:60). It can also refer to something strange (e.g., Mk.1:27; Acts 17:19).

✓ **Illust:** “Before the time of biblical Greek, *kainos* had a distinctive meaning from its synonym *neos* (GK 3742) in that *neos* meant new in time and *kainos* referred to something new in the sense of unused. However, in NT Greek there is some overlap in the meanings of the two words so that you cannot assume the older distinction is still present. The “new covenant” phrase, for example, is referred to by both *kainos* (Heb. 9:15) and *neos* (Heb.12:24)” (William D. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*; “New”).

Luke 5:36-39 ~ “He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new [*kainos*] garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new [*kainos*], and the piece from the new [*kainos*] will not match the old.<sup>37</sup> And no one puts new [*neos*] wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new [*neos*] wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed.<sup>38</sup> But new [*neos*] wine must be put into fresh [*kainos*] wineskins.<sup>39</sup> And no one after drinking old wine desires new [*neos*], for he says, ‘The old is good.’”

- It is important to note that when the Bible speaks of something “new” – it does not always mean something “brand-new” or something that is contrary to the way things were. This is a common misunderstanding and can lead to doctrinal error – namely that God changes His mind or character (e.g., saying “God is doing something new”; see Num.23:19; Is.43:18-19; Mal.3:6; Jms.1:17).
- In speaking of the “newness” of the Christian life – while remaining the same physically – the Christian is fundamentally and spiritually changed. The true Christian life is neither a façade nor a makeover. They have new affections, new desires, new ambitions, new allegiances, a new heart and mind, a new purpose, a new worship, and a new destiny! No true Christian can honestly say, “When I became a Christian, nothing changed.”
- The Christian’s new life is certainly on display in the passage before us this morning (recorded in all three synoptic Gospels). The central theme of this passage is the exclusivity of Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is, the salvation that is by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This is, once again, contrasted with self-righteous religion (all other religions) that cannot save.

**Luke 5:33-39** ~ “And they said to him, ‘The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.’ <sup>34</sup>And Jesus said to them, ‘Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>35</sup>The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.’ <sup>36</sup>He also told them a parable: ‘No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. <sup>37</sup>And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. <sup>38</sup>But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. <sup>39</sup>And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’” (also Matt.9:14-17; Mk.2:18-22)

- This conversation, which occurred after Jesus called Matthew (“Levi”), and Matthew through a great banquet for Jesus (Lk.5:27-32), can be divided into four headings.

### 1. The Question / Accusation (vs.33).

- The *“they”* (vs.33) references back to the scribes and Pharisees (vs.30). The Gospels of Matthew and Mark indicate that John the Baptist’s disciples were also in the mix (Matt.9:14; Mk.2:18). Jesus was, perhaps literally, surrounded by those who were against Him and those who were critical of Him (although it is possible that some of John’s disciples were merely curious). Like a song with endless verses, they attacked Jesus on yet another issue. They were relentless in their attempts to discredit Jesus and resolute in their desire to disbelieve in Him.
- Matthew and Mark record the following statement as a question: *“And they said to him, ‘The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink’”* (vs.33; Matt.9:14; Mk.2:18). This helps us to understand their true motive. They were comparing John’s disciples (themselves) with Jesus’ disciples, with the intent of embarrassing or defaming Jesus. They were offended that Jesus would *“eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners”* (Lk.5.30). Apparently, during or at the end of Matthew’s *“great feast”* (5:29), they collectively (not coincidentally) questioned Jesus about fasting. This was more like a passive-aggressive accusation than it was an honest question. They were effectively saying to Jesus, “Why are your disciples not as spiritual (religious, righteous) as John’s disciples?”
- The self-righteous Pharisees viewed fasting as badge of honor, and a means of earning salvation. Thinking that they were saved by their own goodness and good works, they flaunted their fasting as proof of their (superior) righteousness.

**Luke 18:9-15** ~ “He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: <sup>10</sup>Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ <sup>13</sup>But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

**Matt 6:1-2, 5, 16-18** ~ “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup>Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ...

<sup>5</sup>And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ...

<sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>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.”

➤ These self-righteous hypocrites had convinced themselves, and others, that fasting was a meritorious means of God’s grace and righteousness. Simply put, the more fasting you did the more spiritual (saved) you were. This type of self-righteousness still exists today, people thinking that they have earned God’s saving grace by their innate goodness or by their good works.

We can easily fall into this (dangerous or deadly) trap. For example: instead of reading our Bibles to know more of God’s truth and God’s will, we read it thinking that we are earning or securing God’s salvation; instead of praying to commune with God, we pray to feel or sound spiritual; instead of memorizing Scripture to hide God’s Word in our hearts, we do it to feel superior or to impress others as we quote from memory; instead of going to church to worship God and fellowship with the saints, we go to church to portray ourselves as religious and to warrant God’s saving grace; instead of fasting as a spiritual discipline to draw ourselves closer to God, and wean ourselves off of being dependent on worldly things, we fast in order to flaunt our super-spirituality and hopefully “earn points” with God; instead of raising our hands in praise and worship to God, we can raise our hands hoping everyone will see us and conclude that we are super-spiritual.

We can do this with every spiritual discipline, with every act of worship, with every good work. We must be very vigilant against the religion of self-righteousness (performance-based, legalistic, Christianity), unless we become like the Pharisees who were very religious but utterly unsaved (see Matt.23:1-36). We are all prone to be prideful, and narcissism is a vice that haunts us all.

➤ According to God’s Word, Jesus’ disciples were not doing anything wrong by not fasting (but they had failed to “live up to” the self-righteous religion of the Pharisees; see Matt.5:20). It is important to identify that the Mosaic Law only required one fast annually, on the Day of Atonement (Lev.16:29-31). By not fasting on this particular day, Jesus’ disciples were not breaking any commands of God. But they were transgressing the legalistic rules and traditions of the Pharisees, who actually held and regarded their own Pharisaical rules and traditions above the very commands of God. They had created a religious system of self-righteous legalism that was completely devoid of any heart for God.

**Mark 7:6-10** ~ “And [Jesus] said to them [i.e., the Pharisees and scribes], ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; <sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ <sup>8</sup>You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.’ <sup>9</sup>And he said to them, ‘You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!’” (see Is.29:13)

➤ Notice the superlatives in their loaded question: *“The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers”* (vs.33). As innocent as their question may appear, their attitudes and motives were anything but pure. It seems as though they were accusing Jesus’ disciples as not being as pious or spiritual as their disciples – they did not fast as much or pray as much.

## 2. The Explanation (vs.34-35).

➤ Not surprisingly, Jesus’ answer is piercingly profound: *“And Jesus said to them, ‘Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?’”* (vs.34). He likens Himself to a bridegroom, the meal to a wedding feast, and those eating with Him to the guests (attendants) of the bridegroom. During the times of the New Testament, after a wedding the married couple would partake in a week-long party in celebration of their holy union before God. Throughout this week-long feast, the friends (or guests) of the bride and groom would joyfully participate in the celebration out of love and honor for the newly married couple. This was not a time for fasting but for feasting! This was no time for mourning but for rejoicing! The wedding was not a solemn occasion but a sacred celebration!

✓ Illust: “[Jesus’] explanation was divinely bold and packed with meaning for His Jewish listeners. A newly married Jewish couple did not honeymoon but stayed home for a week-long open house *during which there was continual feasting and celebration*. The bride and groom were treated like king and queen that week (sometimes they even wore crowns). They were attended to by chosen friends known as ‘guests of the bridegroom,’ which means literally, ‘sons of the bridal chamber.’ *These weddings guests were exempted from all fasting through a rabbinical ruling that said, ‘All in attendance on [behalf of] the bridegroom are relieved of all religious observances which would lessen their joy’*” (R. Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word: Luke*; p.190; italics mine).

➤ God’s people were instructed to fast in order to awaken and satisfy their hunger for God! Fasting was a sacrificial and solemn act of seeking and drawing close to God. Why then should Jesus’ disciples fast when He was sitting right there with them (see Lk.10:38-42)? How could they mourn when the incarnate Son of God was among them? Why would they ascribe to the religious duty of fasting, when they were feasting on the sweet and sacred fellowship of being with Christ? How could they be so bitterly judgmental when people were getting healed and saved all around them?

**John 3:25-30** ~ “Now a discussion arose between some of John’s disciples and a Jew over purification. <sup>26</sup>And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness – look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him’ [Jesus’ disciples were baptizing (Jn.4:2)]. <sup>27</sup>John answered, ‘A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. <sup>28</sup>You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ <sup>29</sup>The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. <sup>30</sup>He must increase, but I must decrease.”

➤ Blinded by their self-righteous pride, they could not see that this was not a time for mourning but a time for celebration! They were so focused on their legalistic religion that they failed to recognize that they were in the very presence of the Son of God. Their spiritual narcissism would not allow them to humble themselves before the Lord, to truly repent of their sin, and receive Jesus as their Savior.

In essence, Jesus was saying there will be a time in which they mourn but now is not that time (vs.35). How can the disciples mourn when Jesus was in their midst? How can they fast for God when they are in the very presence of God? Once again, the Pharisees had missed the entire point – they had chosen (as many people do today) a Christless religion that cannot save over a saving relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

➤ Ominously, Jesus then said: *“The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days”* (vs.35). As He did many times, Jesus foretold His imminent arrest and death.

**Luke 9:22** ~ “... The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” (Matt.16:21)

**Luke 9:44-45** ~ “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. <sup>45</sup>But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.” (Matt.17:22-23)

**Luke 12:50** ~ “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!”

**Luke 13:33** ~ “Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.”

**Luke 17:25** ~ “But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.”

**Luke 18:31-34** ~ “And taking the twelve, he said to them, ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. <sup>32</sup>For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. <sup>33</sup>And after

flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.’ <sup>34</sup>But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.” (Matt.20:17-19)

- While Jesus’ disciples (and the scribes and Pharisees) did not understand what He was saying, Jesus made it clear that when Jesus *“is taken away from them ... they will fast in those days”* (vs.35). This would be the time for mourning – when their Lord and Savior is tortured and crucified (Jn.16:20-22).

### 3. The Illustrations (vs.36-38).

- To make His point, Jesus *“told them a parable”* (vs.36). This twofold parable highlights the infinite difference between the false religions of human achievement, and the true relationship with Jesus Christ that comes only from divine accomplishment. Specifically, they showcase the fact that the old way Judaism has been replaced and transcended by the new way of Christ! In other words, Jesus is the Messianic fulfillment of and successor to the Old Covenant (i.e., Judaism). In Christ, God has established the New Covenant (i.e., Christianity).

These two parables illustrate the fact that in Christ the Old Covenant has given way to the New Covenant. The first illustration teaches that the new cannot be connected to the old, and the second illustration teaches that the new cannot be contained in the old. Both parables demonstrate the utter foolishness of external religion apart from an internal relationship with Jesus Christ.

- It is imperative that we understand that this teaching is not that there is now a new way to be saved. Jesus was not saying that Old Testament saints were saved by works and New Testament saints are saved by grace. No one has ever been (or will ever be) saved by works. Salvation has always been by God’s grace through faith in Christ alone! The Old Testament saints were saved by their faith in the Messiah who was still to come, and the New Testament saints are saved by their faith in the Messiah who has come.

**John 14:6** ~ “Jesus said ... ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

**1 Cor 5:6-9** ~ “Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup>Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new [*neos*] lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

- No one can be saved by keeping the law of God. All the Old Testament laws and sacrifices were intended to show our need for God’s atoning grace through Christ. They were to be obeyed as the expression of one’s saving faith, not as a means of earning one’s salvation (Ps.51:16-17; Mk.12:7; Heb.10:5-10). For we are not saved by good works but unto good works (Gal.2:16; Eph.2:8-10; 2Tim.1:9; Tit.3:5).

**Heb 10:3-4** ~ “But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup>For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” (see Heb.9:22)

**Heb 10:11-14** ~ “And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup>But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup>waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. <sup>14</sup>For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”

- All the Old Testament laws and sacrifices find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ (Matt.5:17; Lk.24:27, 44; Jn.5:39, 46). They were symbols that pointed to our need for a Savior, and identify Jesus Christ as the Savior. Contrary to what many believe, the New Testament did not make the Old Testament obsolete – the New Testament is the explanation and fulfillment of the Old Testament.

## A. The new garments (vs.36)

To make this point, Jesus “... *told them a parable: ‘No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old’*” (vs.36). This is a simple parable with a profound meaning. If a person were to sew a patch of new fabric onto an old garment it would not only not look right, it would not be right. Doing this would result in destroying the new garment and desecrating the old. In other words, a person cannot “patch” the New Covenant of Christ over the “garment” of the Old Covenant. To do this would be, in effect, to ruin the New Covenant of Christ while at the same time being left with the insufficient and inadequate Old Covenant of Judaism.

**Gal 1:6-9** ~ “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – <sup>7</sup>not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup>But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. <sup>9</sup>As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.”

**Gal 5:1-6** ~ “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. <sup>2</sup>Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. <sup>3</sup>I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. <sup>4</sup>You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. <sup>5</sup>For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. <sup>6</sup>For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.” (see Gal.3:10; Jms.2:10; Rom.3:20)

Jesus’ teaching was that Judaism was no longer a suitable or sufficient (it was never intended to be the lasting covenant of God). With the coming of Christ, Judaism had become like an old, worn-out garment that could not be mended by sewing in patches of Christ and His Gospel. Jesus’ new, internal and eternal covenant of forgiveness and grace could not be attached to the old and external traditions and rituals of the Pharisees. No man-made religious system can be attached to the new covenant of Christianity.

## B. The new wineskins (vs.37-38)

To further make His point, Jesus likened Judaism to old wineskins that were unable and unfit to hold the new wine of Christ’s covenant. “*And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. <sup>38</sup>But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.*” (vs.37-38). In ancient times, wineskins were made from the skins of goats. Once the skin was prepared, it was filled with new wine. The natural elasticity of the new skin would allow the fermenting wine to expand without bursting the wineskin. If new wine was poured into an old wineskin, the brittle and inflexible skin would break and burst under the fermenting pressure of the new wine; thereby destroying both the new wineskin and, more importantly, the new wine.

**Luke 22:14-20** ~ “And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, ‘I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup>For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’ <sup>17</sup>And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, ‘Take this, and divide it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup>For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ <sup>19</sup>And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ <sup>20</sup>And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”

The old structure of Judaism – which was never intended by God to be a heartless and hypocritical man-made religious system – is no longer a sufficient or suitable structure for those who are seeking God. In Christ, God has established a new covenant – the covenant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which He sealed in His own blood. Therefore, the new wine of true righteousness and holiness, found only in Christ, could not be poured into the old wineskins of an external and ritualistic religion. Likewise, Christianity cannot be added to any other man-made religious system. Only Christ, and Christ alone, can truly save!

#### 4. The Admonition / Condemnation (vs.39).

➤ Jesus' last statement, in this passage (found only in Luke's Gospel) is a curious one: *“And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good’”* (vs.39). With this saying, Jesus exposed the hard-heartedness of the Jewish leaders. They were not willing to leave their religion self-righteousness, legalism, and hypocrisy in order to be truly saved. They would rather cling to their “good works” than repent of their sin. They would rather follow their rituals and traditions, than follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They would rather boast in all their “goodness” (super-spirituality) rather than humble themselves before God and boast in Christ alone!

**1 Cor 1:28-29** ~ “God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.” (1Cor.1:31; Gal.6:13-14; Eph.2:9)

**Phil 3:3-9** ~ “For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh – <sup>4</sup>though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup>But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss [zēmia] for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup>Indeed, I count everything as loss [zēmioō] because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss [zēmioō] of all things and count them as rubbish [skybalon], in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith”

➤ The word “loss” (zemia; vs.7, 8<sup>2x</sup>) carries with it the imagery of cargo of a ship that is lost or damaged at sea, or thrown overboard in an attempt to save a sinking ship, and the word “rubbish” (skubalon; vs.8; used only here) literally can be translated as what is thrown to dogs, or the excrement of animals (that which is given to dogs, or that which comes out of dogs). “Loss” is that which is dispensable, and “rubbish” is that which is (to put it mildly) disgusting.

➤ The scribes and Pharisees heard the Gospel and rejected it, effectively saying, *“The old is good”* (vs.39). Consequently, rather than love Christ they loathed Him.

✓ Illust: “What Jesus was saying is simple: you can't take the kingdom of God and the arrival of Jesus and simply put it on top of the Pharisees' traditions. It won't fit. Something new was happening. There was a new covenant. Yes, it built upon the old, but it couldn't be absorbed totally by the old. You must have a new aspect if you're going to fit into the new covenant, and by extension, you can't have Christ and squeeze Him into your old life and expect that to work” (R.C. Sproul; “New Wineskins”; Lk.5:33-39; July 5, 2012).

➤ Upon hearing the Gospel message to repent of sin and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, most of the Jewish leaders clung more tightly to their self-righteousness. Ironically, and tragically, they rejected Jesus as their Savior thinking that they were already saved apart from Christ.

**Matt 7:21-23** ~ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ <sup>23</sup>And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” (see Matt.25:12; Lk.13:25-27; Jn.10:27-30)

## Conclusion

- True Christianity cannot simply be reduced down to a religion of morals and ethics. It cannot be cheapened into an impassive collection of religious codes and rituals. When a person truly receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, it reflects the death of their old self (apart from Christ) and their life in Christ. The Christian has a supreme love for God, a sincere faith in Christ, and the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit.
- So, the question that must be asked before we close is this: “Have you died to everything you were apart from Christ, and been reborn by and in Christ Jesus alone?” Or, “Have are you trying to morally (or spiritually) renovate or remodel your old life in an attempt to be righteous apart from Christ?”  
Becoming a Christian is not the self-renovation of a new and improved you; It is the deliberate execution of the old you apart from Christ, and the divine rebirth of you in Christ and Christ in you.  
When you come to Christ, it is not the “beginning of a new you” it is the death of the old you and the beginning of Christ in you (Rom.6:4-6; Gal.2:20)! In other words, Christianity is a comprehensive and exhaustive transformation of a person’s life. The Christian is a person who has totally and finally surrendered their life to Jesus. They have asked Jesus into their heart and now live in the newness of Christ!
- While very religious, the self-righteous are utterly unsaved. May we not be counted among them! The Gospel proclaims the only way a person can be saved – by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. A person is not saved by good works, but unto good works. We are called to live for Christ, not for our praise or glory but for the praise and glory of God alone.