

New Things - Matthew 9:14-17

Introduction: There is nothing quite like getting something new is there? There's the sheer delight of a child who gets a new toy for Christmas; the wonder of parents having a baby born into the family; the excitement of a teenager getting a new car; and the joy of a family moving into a new house. That's the way it is with new things.

But have you noticed that as time passes, how the newness of these things begins to wear off? Things become ho-hum. The routine of life begins to destroy some of the wonder and joy of new things until before we know it; the new has become old and not quite so exciting.

But the Bible often speaks about new things. God says in **Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)** "*See, I am doing a new thing!...I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.*"

Jeremiah 31:31 (NIV) "*The time is coming...when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel....*"

Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV) "*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you....*"

In **Luke 22:20 (NIV)** Jesus said, "*...This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.*"

2 Cor. 5:17 (NIV) "*...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*"

Revelation 21:5 (NIV) "*He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!...."*"

Do you see the point? Jesus came to make us new. He gave us a new commandment: That we love one another. He promised a new covenant that will be written in our hearts. He prophesied of a new heaven and a new earth where we one day will rule with Him. You see, Christianity is not just a patched-up form of Judaism, it's a new work of God in our hearts and minds.

There are 2 primary Greek Words in the New Testament that are translated new.

"*Neos*" means youthful. It has to do with chronological newness. Some things are new because they came after, or are most recent, like when you purchase a used car – but it is new to you and so you can say "*I have a new car.*"

"*Kainos*" means fresh. It has to do with qualitative newness. We may say, "*I have a new car fresh off the assembly line.*" It is not only new chronologically, but it is new qualitatively.

It is that second idea of newness that Jesus speaks about in **Matthew 9:14-17 READ.**

Last week if you recall when Matthew invited Jesus, His disciples, and a bunch of his tax collector friends to his house for dinner, this offended the Pharisees who believed that if Jesus was really a Holy man, he wouldn't be hanging around such riff-raff.

In today's text, it's not the Pharisees, but the disciples of John the Baptist who come to Jesus with an objection. They too are a little confused at what Jesus is doing. To them, John had preached a gospel of repentance, a call to a holy life, a life of separation. Like the Pharisees, John's disciples were committed to living a serious life of religious duty. Their motto would have been "*A pickle a day keeps the preacher away.*" A real holy man wasn't supposed to be enjoying himself.

But here was Jesus eating with sinners. Why wasn't He fasting? Why wasn't He mourning for the sins of the people?

Jesus answers their questions with 3 illustrations.

In the first illustration in vs. 15, Jesus compares Himself to a bridegroom who at the wedding party would not expect his guests to go without any food. You have a reception, and you celebrate with the bride and groom.

In the second illustration in vs. 16, Jesus explains that when you have an old garment, it's not a good idea to patch it up with a new piece of cloth. As soon as you wash the garment, the patch will shrink and tear away from the old garment that has already shrunk as far as it is going to shrink.

And in the third illustration in vs. 17, Jesus compares His teaching and way of life to the common practice of the fermentation of wine. Wine was a common drink in Palestine. And back then, wine was kept in animal skins that had been dried and treated. The new juice would be poured into a new wineskin and sown shut. As the juice began to ferment and expand in the skin, turning into wine, it would stretch with the new pliable wineskin. But if you put this new wine into an old, dry and hardened skin, when it would begin to ferment and expand inside the skin it would literally tear the skin apart and both the wineskin and the wine would be lost forever.

What do these illustrations teach us about new things? I see three principles here. First, there is the principle of:

1. Oil and Water - Law and Grace Don't Mix. (15)

There is an old truism that says; you can't mix oil and water. The same can be said for law and grace. Jesus said in **Mt. 5:17 (NIV)** "*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*" Jesus was saying that He was the fulfillment of the law. And the fulfillment of the law was grace.

Throughout time there has been a tendency among well meaning people and well meaning congregations to try and mix grace with legalism. You cannot live under both at the same time.

The law served a very important roll in the life of God's people. Paul says that it acted as our schoolmaster showing us that it was impossible to try to live a holy life apart from God, and demonstrating to us that we desperately needed a savior who would forgive us of our sins. Paul was a man who knew a thing or two about legalism. He had lived as a

Pharisee, a keeper and defender of the law, and he had lived so zealously for God that he even saw it as his responsibility to kill anyone who opposed God.

But then when Paul was saved on the Damascus road, God showed Him His grace. Paul experienced the love and forgiveness of the Lord, and it changed his life. As a fully devoted follower of Christ he urged the early church to not add the requirements of the law, namely circumcision to their new grace-filled faith.

Holiness was not to be driven by rules and regulations, but by a God's Holy Spirit living in the believer. The Holy Spirit would write His will on the hearts and minds of His people. Believers would want to please God, and live holy lives not out of duty, but out of love.

But there is and probably will always be this tension between law and grace. In our walk with Christ, there are times we love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and living a holy life of service to God is delightful. Then there are other times that we feel like God is a million miles away. We don't sense the presence of the Spirit, and our service to God becomes one of duty and religious ritual, and we just go through the motions.

So we have to constantly ask ourselves, why do I do what I do? Am I serving the Lord out of duty or delight? Am I being motivated by legalism or love? Do I come to church to worship or to wander? Am I living under law or grace? Where is my heart?

Churches need to be careful as well. A church can slip out of grace and into legalism. You know what the seven last words of the church are don't you? "*We have always done it like this!*" Or, the counterpart, "*We have never done it that way!*" Churches can be steeped in tradition and ritual and lose the freshness of being led by the spirit of God. We can get caught up in doing the same old, same old, and be satisfied with getting the same old results.

But as we've seen in Scripture, God is in the business of doing new things. God creates life. God takes dead things and resurrects them. God can and will take a church that is willing to move from traditions to grace-filled growth.

I believe Sonoraville is such a church. You've demonstrated that you are willing to go in new directions, to try new things, and are willing to trust the Lord for the outcome. I believe you understand that failure only happens when you don't try.

So, if you want God to do something new in your life; if you want Him to do something new in the church, then it's time to move into grace! The second principle is the principle of:

2. Duct Tape - Patches are only Quick Fixes. (16)

I found the following uses for duct tape on "The Duct Tape Page" on the internet:

Patch the broken toilet tank.
Patch a rusty spot on fender. Works best on a silver car.
Patch radiator hoses.
Patch a crack in the dashboard padding.
Cover the annoying "check engine" light that won't go out.
Pit Crews use it to temporarily patch car bodies.
Tape an annoying person's mouth shut.
Substitute nail polish remover.
Emergency facelifts.
Tape up the kids for an emergency baby sitter.
Pest control

As you can see, duct tape has many uses, but almost everything is temporary. Duct tape is a quick fix at best.

And just like when I was a kid, and my mom would patch up and sew up my old clothes, before long that patch would begin to unravel or the pants would tear loose from the patch, I learned that no matter how much you try and patch up things, they'll eventually wear out.

The lesson is clear. How many of us go through life trying to patch up the dead and decaying parts of our lives? We have a problem with sin: perhaps it's our temper, or our impatience, or maybe it's our tendency to open our mouths and stick our foot in, and we think – all I really need is a little patch job. If I could just get a little bit of control over this area, then I would feel better, or do better, or be happier.

But God isn't in the duct tape business. Jesus is saying in vs. 15 that He didn't come to patch up Judaism so it could last a little longer. He wanted to create an entirely new way for people. The old had served its purpose and now it was time for something new. Now God wasn't going to write His law on scrolls, but on the hearts of people. Now God wasn't going to continue to accept animal sacrifices for a covering of sin, but His Son was going to be the final sacrifice taking away the sins of the world. Now God wasn't going to speak through His prophets and those who were occasionally filled with the Spirit, He was going to fill all believers with His Holy Spirit and men, women and children alike were going to be able to proclaim the good news.

God doesn't do patch jobs. But we say, *"If I could only try a little harder. If I could only be like so and so. If I could only do better."*

But listen, God doesn't want our *"if only's"* He wants a new creation. He's calling for us to be born again. He's challenging us to consider ourselves crucified with Christ so that it's not we who live, but Christ living in us.

Perhaps the reason you're struggling so much trying to live the Christian life is because you're trying to live with patches on, instead of throwing out the old garment, and becoming clothed with the new garment of Christ.

Jesus said in **Mt. 11:28 (NIV)** *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* Come to Christ and let Him live His life in you. Die to yourself and present yourself as an empty vessel to God. Let His Holy Spirit

fill you and control you. Get yourself to the point where you realize that despite all of the trying, you cannot live a life pleasing to the Lord on our own.

It's only in living the crucified life that we are set free to live in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in the struggle of the flesh. It's Christ in us, not a new cloth patched onto an old garment.

Remember: Law and grace don't mix. Patched-up lives are only quick fixes, and finally, there's the principle of:

3. The Ultimate Makeover. (17)

Once a family from the hills of Tennessee visited the big city for the first time. They went to their hotel, and while the mother was checking in, the father and his son ambled over to the elevator. They'd never seen one before, so they watched with amazement as an old, haggard woman hobbled on, and the doors closed. A few minutes later the doors opened and a young, attractive woman got off. The father punched his boy and said, "*Billy, go get you mother.*"

Let me ask you some questions: Does your Christian life seem ineffective? Do you struggle with the sense that you are not growing or changing at all? Does God seem far away? Is your prayer life dry? Is it hard for you to understand the Bible and how it relates to your life?

If you answered "yes" to any of those questions, it may be that you're in need of the ultimate makeover. Jesus is saying in vs. 17 that He will not pour His new wine into old wineskins. The old wineskins won't hold new wine. New wineskins are needed. The point is that Jesus wants to do something entirely new in your life, but in order for that to happen, the old has to be discarded.

Conclusion: The story is told about a family who wants to get away from it all. So, for their vacation, they plan to go camping. But instead of sleeping in a tent and living out in nature, cooking over an open fire, and hauling water from a stream, they purchase a new fully equipped motor home, so they can park it on a cement slab in the midst of a few pine trees and hook up to a water line, a sewer line and electricity. They even added a satellite dish attached to the top. Now the family could go camping and never have to go outside because the new motor home is decked out with the same furnishings as in their living room. So, nothing really changes.

The adventure of new life in Christ begins when the comfortable patterns of the old life are left behind. You can't keep doing the same old religious rituals and believe that God is going to do something new in your life. You can't think that God is going to turn your life around while you continue to live a life of self-centeredness. God doesn't work that way. The old must be discarded and the new accepted.

Before God can re-create, there must be a death. You see, without death, there is no life. Before a new crop can be brought forth, the seed must be broken and die. Before God can change you, you must be born again. And as a born-again believer, a new creation in Christ, before you can see Christ transform your life – you must die to self. You must have the ultimate makeover. You must be born again!

That's how Jesus does makeovers. He totally recreates! Have you been born again? This is a great day for God to do a new thing in your life.