

Friday 7th August 2020

‘No-one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skin will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.’

Matthew 9:16-17

In biblical times wine was not kept in bottles but in watertight containers made from animal skins. New wine expanded as it fermented, stretching the wineskins. After the wine had aged, the stretched skin would burst if more new wine was poured into it. New wine, therefore, was always put into new wineskins.

Jesus used this analogy to explain that he had not come to patch up the old religious system of Judaism with its rules and traditions. His purpose was to bring something new, though it had been prophesied for centuries. This new message, the gospel, said that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, came to earth to offer all people forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God. The gospel did not fit into the old rigid system of religion, it needed a fresh start.

The message will always remain ‘new’ because it must be accepted in every generation. When we follow Christ we must be prepared for new ways to live, new ways to look at people and new ways to serve.

The New Covenant is fulfilled in Christ. Why try to patch up our old life when we can have a new one?

The question we must ask ourselves is are we prepared and ready to accept the changes which will have to take place when churches reopen, or will we grumble among ourselves because the changes don’t suit us? As we gather again it is worth considering if this is part of God’s bigger plan. Our love and trust in Him should make us confident that he will continue to guide and guard us. Let us look forward to the new things that the Holy Spirit will accomplish in our midst.

Father in heaven help us, give us courage and hearts that are open to the changes within the church when they occur. May your Holy Spirit have his way among us, for your divine purpose and will to be done. May the spirit of renewal begin and flow out into the streets of our town, and country, bringing hope, healing, justice and truth in its path. In thy mercy hear our prayer for Jesus sake. Amen.