

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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World Headquarters: The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri

Program Number 138  
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The Sermon: NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES

Scripture: Luke 5:36-39

And he spake also a parable unto them: No man putteth a piece of new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

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Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

One of George Bernard Shaw's successful plays is written around the theme of taking a ragged, dirty, uncouth little street urchin and dressing her up and coaching her to play the part of a fine society lady. It takes more than a bath, a new hair-do, and some clean clothes to make a lady. It is even more impossible to make a genuine, sincere, and earnest Christian by any such superficial means. There is power in Christ to change the meanest, the lowest, the most sinful man into a new creature; but you cannot make a good Christian out of a bum from skid row by giving him a bath and a shave, dressing him in clean clothes, putting a hymn book in his hand, and teaching him the Lord's prayer. Underneath all these superficialities, he will be the same old bum. Unless the power of Christ can make a new man of him, he will not be changed, no matter how much the outer appearances may be changed.

Jesus said that men do not put a piece of new cloth upon an old garment. Luke tells the story with a slight difference -- that men do not put a piece of a new garment upon an old. New cloth, in this little parable, means raw, undressed, unshrunk cloth. A patch of new cloth would therefore shrink at the first washing, and pull away from the old, making the hole bigger and uglier than it was before. Or if you prefer the other version, a patch taken from a new garment would ruin the new garment, and at the same time the color and texture would not match the faded and worn appearance of the old. Both garments would be spoiled, and neither benefitted.

Jesus also said, "No man putteth new wine into old bottles." New wine is wine

that is still undergoing the very active stages of fermentation. The wine bottle of Jesus' day was usually the skin of a sheep or goat, tanned over a smoky fire so that the smoke would impart a special flavor to the wine. New wineskins were soft, pliable, flexible, not liable to burst under the expanded gases of the new fermentation. An old wineskin would be dry, brittle, possibly cracked. At the first pressure of fermentation the unyielding skin would burst, destroying both wine and bottle.

In the very nature of things, Jesus could not accomplish his purposes by putting a few patches of reform on the old garment of Judaism. He could not pour the new wine of his gospel into the stiff, unyielding wineskin of an old legalism. His gospel, and his life imparted by that gospel through its sacraments and ordinances, could not be put as a patch on any old religious system of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, or the Essenes. He rejected the old form of all the established religious bodies, and said "I will build my church," a whole new garment instead of a patch on the old -- a new wineskin for a new wine of Christianity.

In the individual life, the new wine of Christ cannot be put into our old ways and habits of life, which were formed without any regard to him. It takes a new creature to live a new life. This is a basic truth often overlooked by those who think that one can become a Christian by shaking hands with a preacher and signing a membership card. It is the principle laid down by Jesus when he said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom

of God ..... Ye must be born again." It is the principle taught by Paul when he wrote to the Ephesians: "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" and to the Corinthians: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

New life always demands new forms. New life always gathers and organizes new materials into the form best adapted to its needs and purposes. The radish life which is in a radish seed does not go back to the old radish plant from which it came. It gathers new material and organizes a new radish plant to produce more radishes. The germ of life in the human body selects and organizes new material to form a new body that will contain the new life, and in turn pass life along to a new generation. The son does not patch up his father's or his mother's body to live his new life in, but life creates a new form in which the personality is housed. New life creates new forms.

New knowledge creates new forms. Once man thought that the earth was flat, and all his other thoughts and acts were geared to that concept. Men feared to venture out of sight of land lest they fall off the edge of the earth. Travel, trade, and commerce were restricted. Then a few bold men sailed away and proved that the world was round. A world revolution in trade, commerce, science, art, and culture resulted from that discovery.

New inventions create new forms of living. In the 19th century travel and transportation were little different than they were in Caesar's day. Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, roads were much the same as they had always been. Then came the automobile. The automobile demanded a new kind of highway on which to run, and though we are still a quarter century behind on our road building, our highway system is now the marvel of the world. Our whole concept of life has changed with the automobile. Men no longer have to live herded tightly together in a crowded city. They move to the suburbs, and use the automobile to take them to decentralized industries, businesses, and shopping centers, where huge parking lots are provided for the convenience of motorists. We have become a nation of wanderers, living a good share of our life on wheels. So it is

with any new invention. New inventions demand a new world in which to be used. The atomic age will literally burst at the seams and destroy our civilization unless we can evolve a new world and a new type of society to contain this new age of atomic power.

New revelations of God demand new forms; they cannot be crowded into old creeds. Men do not put a new patch on an old garment, nor new wine in old bottles. When Christianity had become stilted and stiff and unyielding in its old forms, its doctrines changed and corrupted, its ordinances perverted, its authority used to oppress the bodies, darken the minds, and enslave the spirits of men, men tried reformation. But each reformer found sooner or later that a patch of new cloth on an old garment, or new wine in old bottles wouldn't work. The old could not contain the new.

Then came a young lad who startled the world by declaring that God had told him not to join any of the established churches, who claimed that he had received authority from heaven to establish a new church and a new order of things. Under this divine impulsion and commandment Joseph Smith organized a new church on April 6, 1830, with provision for apostles, prophets, elders, seventies, and deacons as in the New Testament Church. He claimed that priesthood authority had been restored through angelic ministry. Gifts of wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, healing, tongues, and interpretation of tongues again began to appear in this new church.

Into this new form, this new bottle, God placed the new wine of the old and everlasting gospel, which had been lost to men on earth. The new life of this gospel, newly restored, was designed to prepare men for that imminent day when all things will be made new. The new life of the triumphant kingdom will demand new forms. The promise is given that when this new life shall have reached a proper growth, "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The old creation shall be folded up as an old garment, and changed. The old wineskin will be discarded, and the new wine of the kingdom poured into a new physical creation better suited to implement the new righteousness of Christ's eternal and glorious kingdom.

