

“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved.” Matthew 9:17 NLT

## lectio // Matthew 9:14-34

New stuff! Matthew ties this patch-n-wineskin story to a question John's followers asked. “Why don't your followers fast?” One: who said they don't or didn't? Fasting a visible connection to it, possibly with torn and tattered clothes and ashes on your head and face. Maybe Jesus followers weren't practicing “fasters” when he found them. Jesus talks about how difficult, even impossible to mix OLD and NEW. In both cases the NEW destroys the continuity or even purpose of the OLD. A new patch shrinks differently than the old material, making the hole worse than before. The new wine expands differently than the old skin it's kept in, causing the skin to flex beyond its capability. Mixing old and new causes BOTH to fail. With that thinking one has to see that patching old clothes with old patches and filling old wineskins with old wine is the only way to keep them both whole. The opposite would be also so counterintuitive - putting a OLD patch on new clothing and OLD wine in new wineskins. YUK. Who would do that? But at the bottom of the parable is a conundrum - how do you get rid of OLD, not just in clothes and thermos, but when it comes to thinking? What was it about “fasting” that was old and needed to be replaced? Certainly not the discipline. And how are people convinced that they need to let go of the good-ol-ways of doing things, not to disrespect the tradition, but to actually make room for NEW. Why does God continually do NEW, because He can! And desires to always be creating. God can constantly do EVERYTHING new and never repeat himself! How often did Jesus heal or cast out a demon the same exact way? Have you noticed that each time the miracle seemed to catch everyone off guard, even us as the reader. Why is that?

## oratio

Dad,  
 You are always doing something NEW. Your mercies are new every morning. Not just in freshness, but probably in creativity as well. I've only thought of it in terms of “fresh” not realizing the full power of doing something NEW every time your mercy is given. You are inexhaustible in your creativity! The next time I hear someone quote the Isaiah passage about you doing something new, I'm going to quit rolling my eyes and being so critical and jaded by that. I'm going to agree and think, “yeah, you can ALWAYS do something new” and be excited about the endless possibilities.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root