

New Wineskins

Luke 5:27-39

June 21, 2026

This Sunday we celebrated what God has been doing in the children and youth of the Little T community. We considered reflections on what God has been teaching a few of our youth framed by Jesus' teaching on new wineskins from Luke 5.

Small Group Questions with Leader Guide

1. Read Luke 5:27-39 together. What stood out to you?

Leader Notes:

Encourage observation before interpretation. Your group may notice:

- Place, setting changes
- Characters and when and how they come into the story
- Repeated words or themes
- Metaphors, images, or parables

Help your group notice the context: Jesus calls Matthew, Jesus goes to Matthew's house to eat, questions and responses ensue. This context forms the basis for understanding the meaning of Jesus' parables.

2. In verse 30, why do you think the Pharisees and scribes are grumbling? Why do Jesus' actions create such a controversy? How does Jesus respond?

Leader Notes:

There is cultural context here surrounding:

- How tax collectors were viewed: Collaborators with the Roman Imperium who defrauded their own people.
- What table-company and sharing meal meant in Ancient Near Eastern culture: it was a significant act of solidarity, fellowship, and acceptance.
- By extension, what sharing a meal with "sinners" and tax collectors would have meant.

Jesus responds by clarifying his mission (verses 31-32). He is doing something NEW. Good news, grace, and healing are coming to the sick, and an invitation of grace to sinners. He comes preaching good news to the poor (Luke 4:18-19), by associating, even identifying with, the despised and outcasts of the community. Jesus' actions and words create a strong reaction - a

scandal even - for the Pharisees and their friends who have their own ideas about who is *IN* and who is *OUT* when it comes to God.

3. Read verses 33-35. How does Jesus' parable about the bridegroom answer the question of the Pharisees?

Leader Notes:

The focus is on *time*. Jesus is signalling a new kind of time – a unique moment, like a wedding feast, where the usual ways and rules are put on hold because of the incredibly special nature of the occasion.

4. Read verses 36-39. Pay close attention to Jesus' telling of parables and discuss their meaning. What is Jesus saying with the parables of the patch and of the wineskins?

Leader Notes:

Parables are used to express a core truth, or a big idea, in a creative way. Help your group wrestle through the parables.

The big idea leans into the fact that old ways of doing and categories of thinking are not suited to contain the *new* thing that Jesus brings. They are too rigid and brittle to contain the liveliness and dynamism of the Kingdom that Jesus brings: a new age where God's new creation is breaking in to heal, redeem, and resurrect the old creation.

Some interpretations have tried to fit Judaism and Christianity neatly into the categories of "old" and "new", claiming that Jesus is replacing the old way of Jewish religion with the new way of Christian grace. This reading is reductionistic and unhelpfully dismisses Jesus' own claims about himself fulfilling the law and prophets. The "new" that Jesus brings is a *fulfillment* of what the *old* was always about and always pointed to – the dawn of the Messianic age where God's reign and purposes would come to their fulfillment in the Messiah.

5. With whom do you most identify in this passage: Levi, the Pharisees, or the disciples? Why?

Leader Notes:

This question shifts to application and placing ourselves within the story. Encourage honesty. People might not want to say, for example, that they identify with the Pharisees. However, we can encourage honest self reflection to be able to name areas in our life where we may see hardness or resistance to the new that Jesus is inviting us into.

Some might be challenged by Jesus' scandalous assertions about who is welcomed into the kingdom of God.

Some might identify with the disciples: feel caught in the middle between the Pharisees and Jesus, still in the process of understanding the full significance of Jesus and his kingdom for their lives, feeling pressure from the other side to stay in the old.

Some might identify with Levi responds to Jesus by leaving behind his old allegiances to follow him.

6. How does this passage shape our understanding and praxis of mission as a church?

Leaders Notes:

Help your group think through the implications of Jesus' own mission and what this means for us as his disciples. Who are the people we are called to welcome? How does Jesus' work in our own hearts connect to our participation in his mission in the world?

Closing Prayer

Close in a time a prayer. Pray into some of the themes and topics that came up in your discussion. Pray for any requests, needs, or praises that arise from your group.