

THE BIG IDEA: God's math includes us in the equation but removes us from the answer.

The Take-Off

Over the next 2 weeks, we're going to talk specifically about what the Helper wants us to do, and it all starts this morning with seeing how he wants to get us out of the way.

Admittedly, it's a bit weird to say we need to get out of the way in order to be used by God, but as we go through the message, I think it will become more and more obvious why we need the Helper to get us out of the way.

I'm afraid it may be a little painful, too.

But that's to be expected if we're going to grow, right?

If you want to get stronger, you've got to tear down the muscle.

If you want to get smarter, you've got to hit the books.

If you want to be more faithful, you've got to be in situations that stretch your faith.

Stretch is such a good word, isn't it?

If athletes don't stretch, muscles get tight.

If believers don't stretch, faith gets rigid.

Jesus got that - he said in Matthew 9:17 that you can't put new wine into old wineskins, because the end of that is losing both.

Nope, Jesus said to get new wineskins so that we'd be able to handle the new thing that he's doing.

Wine is a symbol of the Spirit, and here at The Gathering, God is already pouring out the new wine of The Helper.

Now, we've got the old wineskins out of the way so that we don't miss what God is doing.

This morning, let me share with you 2 "new wines" that the Helper wants to pour into us, and then let me share with you 2 "old wineskins" that we've got to get rid of.

The wine is what he wants us to do, and the wineskins are what he wants us to not do.

Clear as mud? Hopefully it'll become more clear as we go along.

First, 2 things he wants us to do, and then 2 that he doesn't.

The Helper wants us to...

1. Do great works

- a. John 14:12 is a crazy statement by Jesus
- b. Not just that we'll do great works, but even greater works than Jesus!
- c. If there was ever a statement that proves beyond any doubt that God is not a fan of the "rock star on the platform" church model, this is it.
- d. If that was God's plan, he would have left Jesus here to do it all, right, because he was really good at it?
- e. Raise your hand if you've ever raised a dead person to life? Restored someone's sight? Saved someone's soul?
- f. Exactly. This isn't a statement about us one-upping Jesus and the works he did.
- g. It's a statement about the potential in the church for many to do a greater number of works than Jesus.
- h. He was in one place at one time, but the church is worldwide at all times.
- i. This statement also makes it clear that God didn't send the Helper to help us live safe, status quo lives.
- j. This is a promise from Jesus that implies movement, a holy discontent, and "full but not satisfied" mentality
- k. God wants to pour the new wine of great works into our church, and I am pumped about it!

2. Speak God's words

- a. Here's the second thing that the Helper wants us to do: speak God's words everywhere to everyone.
- b. A few verses to think about:
 - Acts 1:8 - receiving the Helper turned them into witnesses (Peter preached to thousands) (cf 1 Peter 1:12)
 - Acts 4:31 - they prayed, got filled with the spirit, and began to speak God's word with boldness!
 - 2 Peter 2:21 - men who were moved by the Spirit spoke from God
- c. So we can totally see that part of receiving the Spirit is opening our mouths
- d. But what are God's words like?
 - Proverbs 15:23 - they're right on time
 - Isaiah 50:4 - they're learned (this takes discipline)
 - Isaiah 61:1 - they have the power to set people free
- e. What "new wine" does the Helper want for us? To do great works and to speak God's words.

- f. What “old wineskins” can cause every bit of that to be wasted?
- g. Let’s take a look at 2 things the Helper doesn’t want us to do in order to find out.

The Helper doesn’t want us to...

3. Convict the world

- a. We need to unpack some critical words that Jesus shared with his disciples about what the Helper would do (and what they wouldn’t)
- b. Turn with me to John 16 and let’s pick it up in verse 5
- c. Verse 8 is the passage that we need to embrace - whose job is it to convict people of sin? The Helper’s.
- d. It’s not mine, it’s not yours, it’s his.
- e. We like to believe that we’re all about the truth, but more times than not, the church is all about telling sinners the truth.
- f. But look in verse 13 and tell me who the Helper is leading to the truth? Us.
- g. There is only one reason the church likes to tell the world the truth about themselves: pride.
- h. We act like the moral police because we honestly believe that we’re better, or at least better enough to make the judgement call about their sin
- i. But the Helper can’t send prideful people to do great works for God
- j. Pride is the old wineskin that cannot sustain the great works the Helper wants us to do
- k. But it isn’t the only one. We’ve got one more old wineskin to discover.

4. Confuse the world

- a. The second thing the Holy Spirit doesn’t want us to do is confuse the world.
- b. Now, we’re moving toward the weeks in the series when we’ll start talking about the gifts that the Spirit gives us, and people are so quick to bring up how confusing tongues is, and I agree.
- c. Tongues can be confusing, but what was most confusing in the Corinthian church was the fact that they were all speaking in tongues and using the gifts while at the same time tolerating sin.
- d. If you look back in the letter, you’ll find division in chapter 3, lawsuits against each other in chapter 6, and in the middle of all of that, a man was sleeping with his step mom in chapter 5, a sin so bad it wasn’t tolerated by the people outside the church!
- e. What confuses the world is not the gifts of the Spirit, but rather a church using the gifts without looking like the Giver.
- f. Later, James would write in James 3:10 that this kind of “Jekyll and Hyde” hypocrisy should not be!
- g. James 3 is where we find the second “old wineskin” that will ruin the new wine of speaking God’s word: the tongue.
 - verse 6 - it is set on fire by hell
 - verse 8 - it is untamable, wild, full of poison
 - verse 9 - we are not to use it to praise God and curse men

The Landing

In Isaiah 6, we see both of these old wineskins dealt with before God sent Isaiah out on his mission.

After seeing the holiness of God, Isaiah said in verse 5 that he was ruined (pride) and that he was a man of unclean lips (tongue).

It wasn’t until after the hot coal of God’s fire touched him that he was ready to be sent out.

There is something about how **God removes us the glory but still uses us in the story** that blows my mind.

But take a quick look at God’s math: 2 things he wants us to do minus 2 things he doesn’t want us to do equals 0 chance of us getting glory for what is done.

God’s math includes us in the equation but removes us from the answer!

Next week, we’ll talk about how God brilliantly strikes at our pride and our tongues at one time.

You will not want to miss it.

Let’s pray.