

## **New Wine and New Wineskins**

Matthew 9:13-26

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[Peter brings a large suitcase onto the platform and sets it down.]

*Leadership Journal* is probably the most respected journal around for pastors of my ilk. It has a great section in each journal labeled "To Illustrate." Years ago I read the following story in that section under the heading "Salvation." It reads:

In January 1985, a large suitcase, unmarked and unclaimed, was discovered at the Los Angeles International Airport. When U.S. Customs agents opened the suitcase, they found the curled-up body of an unidentified young woman.

She had been dead for a few days, according to the county coroner. As the investigation continued, it was learned that the woman was the wife of a young Iranian living in the U.S. Unable to obtain a visa to enter the U.S. and join her husband, she took matters into her own hands and attempted to smuggle herself into America via an airplane's cargo bay. While her plan seemed to her simple though risky, officials were hard pressed to understand how such an attempt could ever succeed. Even if she survived the journey in the cargo bay, she would remain an illegal alien, having entered through improper channels.

Some people believe they'll enter the kingdom of God on their own since they've been unreasonably good citizens or church attenders. But entry plans of our own design prove not only foolish but fatal.

She tried to enter the kingdom of the United States of America through illegal and improper channels. She came in the wrong package, the wrong container. She had *no way*. All she had was faith, hope, and love for her bridegroom. The article points out how foolish and fatal that was. They say she relied on entry plans of her own design.

Well, God does seem very concerned about the proper way to enter His kingdom. You know, in the Old Testament, the temple in Jerusalem was like the presence of the kingdom, for in the temple in the Holy of Holies was the presence of the king. King David wrote, “ I was glad when they said let’s go to the house of the Lord.” The temple was a place of feasting, singing, and celebrating. There were sacrifices, but they feasted on the sacrifices. It was there they anticipated the Great Messianic Banquet.

If you’ve read the Old Testament, you know that there were volumes upon volumes of regulations for those entering the temple. The sacrificial system was an entirely thorough plan for cleansing people of ceremonial uncleanness and sin in order to enter.

For instance, if a man under a vow touched a corpse, he had to go through an elaborate ritual sacrificing turtle doves and pigeons to atone for his sin, and a male lamb to offer for his guilt. If he was a priest, he was required to offer a young bull. If he failed in any of these regulations, he would be expelled from Israel for life: an illegal alien.

Leviticus 15 governs everything from wet dreams to menstrual cycles. If a woman had an irregular menstrual flow, for instance, she was unable to enter the temple courts, unable to marry or have children. She was forbidden by law to touch another, especially a man. She was an outcast with no way in,

no proper channel. And if by chance she was healed, she still must make several sacrifices to atone (pay) for her healing and cleanse her of impurities.

All those regulations were proper channels for entering the temple courts and feasting at the banquet. And they didn't really work. Once a year the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies behind the curtain to offer sacrifices for all the sins of Israel, and he had to keep doing it every year.

It's interesting that the Day of Atonement was the only day of commanded fasting for Israel. I think the idea in fasting is to be empty of something and hungry for something else in order that you might be filled. The only day of required fasting was the Day of Atonement.

In Matthew 9, Jesus the Messiah sits at a banquet with tax collectors and sinners. It's a picture of the Great Messianic Banquet. The Pharisees are really troubled by His apparent disregard for regulations.

Matthew 9:13:

*“Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”*

Jesus quotes God in Hosea saying, “I desire mercy—khehsed—covenant love—and not sacrifice.” Jesus puts Himself in God's place as the Bridegroom. He imitates the Great Banquet. He has just delivered folks from demons, healed the sick and lame, forgiven sins . . . and He talks like God. This is *really big!* —

and these disciples want to know if they have to skip dinner or not.

*And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”*

You may be wondering, “OK . . . are we supposed to fast . . . or not?” Well, are you guests of the bridegroom . . . or not? Is He with you . . . or not? Matthew ends his gospel with Jesus saying, “And lo, I am with you always . . . .” Yet in the book of Acts, Paul fasts and disciples fast.

“So are we supposed to fast or not?”

“What’s the regulation?”

“What’s the practical application point?”

I’ve always been taught to 1.) preach from scripture and 2.) end with some practical application points. But at least in the New Testament, especially in the gospels, Jesus doesn’t end with practical application points. And when people press Him on the issue, He answers with a story . . . or more questions . . . or an application point that’s highly impractical: “Sell all your possessions” . . . “Pick up a cross” . . . “Lose your life.” That’s foolish and fatal!

We want to know:

How much do I have to give . . . to get in?

How long do I have to pray . . . to enter?

Do I need to go to Wednesday night Bible study or not?

Should I fast, and can I have soup — chunky style?

Well, you know, the Old Testament will tell you. Islam — now there’s a religion that will tell you. But not Jesus. It just seems

to tick Him off. The Bridegroom doesn't seem to like questions about regulations, requirements, and proper procedure for His

Bride. It's like the question is already the wrong answer, and we've entirely missed the point.

What is the point?

I have two friends who fasted for a month each, like Jesus. One friend set out to fast. When I heard about his fast, I was thoroughly impressed with him and ashamed of me. My other friend fasted for a month as well, but he didn't set out to fast. (I'm not even sure he was aware he was fasting, although that's what it was.) He had followed a girl into the wilderness.

You'll remember that Jesus fasted for a month, but it wasn't like He set out to fast. He followed the Spirit into the wilderness . . . and there are no restaurants in the wilderness.

One summer in college, my friend Mark followed this girl to the wilderness of California. He sold everything, left Colorado, and lived in a trailer just to be close to Dee Dee. That's foolish and could be fatal. He spent all his money on rent and didn't have a thing to eat. She broke up with him, but still he stayed. Being close to her was better than food.

He finally broke his fast in a hunger-induced delirium by breaking into Dee Dee's parents' house late one night. Through improper channels and driven by hunger, he found a big bowl of Jell-O in the refrigerator, that Dee Dee's mom had prepared for some special event the next day.

In this daze, he started devouring Jell-O in big fistfuls, right out of the bowl. He told me that when the sugar hit his bloodstream, he suddenly realized what he was doing, panicked, put the

cellophane back on the bowl, put the bowl back into the refrigerator, and snuck out of the house.

To this day, Dee Dee's mom can't figure out what kind of thief would break into a house, only eat Jell-O, put the cellophane back on the bowl, and put the bowl back in the refrigerator. Well, it's the same thief that married her daughter and fathered her grandchildren.

Well, when Mark and Dee Dee Reinke told our small group about his fast . . .

- I didn't really think about Mark or me. I thought about Dee Dee. I thought, "Wow! Dee Dee must have been really *hot!*" And she still is. So, in fact, Mark's fast isn't really to his credit but to hers.
- I didn't think about the absence of food, but the presence of love.
- I didn't think about sacrificial regulations, but about *khehsed* — steadfast love.

With one friend's fast, I thought of him;  
With the other friend's fast, I thought of the one he loved.

Colossians 2:20:

Why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?  
Why do you submit to regulations, "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (referring to things which all perish as they are used), according to human precepts and doctrines? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-

abasement and severity to the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh.

What is “the indulgence of the flesh”? To use last week’s metaphor, it’s filling up self with self by self. It’s filling up my bucket—my heart—with my competitive good works. Do you remember how in the skit last week Andrew, Ann, and I argued, trying to fill ourselves up with who fasted best, who was empty best, who renounced self the best? Anthony DeMello wrote:

When you renounce something, you’re tied to it. . . .  
There’s a guru in India who says, “Every time a prostitute comes to me, she’s talking about nothing but God. She says, ‘I’m sick of this life that I’m living. I want God.’ But every time a priest comes to me, he’s talking about nothing but sex.”

These fasting disciples of John are in the presence of Jesus the Christ, and all they can talk about is food and themselves! Paul calls that “the power of the law.” He’s not saying to “sin that grace may abound”; he’s saying, “I fast best—renounce self best—when I’m full of something else” . . . even when the something else is a longing for someone else, like Mark longed for Dee Dee.

Verse 15:

*“The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. And no one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; if it is, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”*

What's the new wine? Matthew 26:27:

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

- This wine is a presence and the presence of a longing.
- This wine is steadfast love, forgiveness, and grace (khehsed).
- This wine is God's covenant love poured out, the sacrifice to fulfill all sacrifices, the blood that cleanses all sin and fully fills all law.
- This wine is the blood of Jesus, and the life is in the blood.
- This wine literally is Jesus.

When God's love in Christ is poured into our hearts, it looks like faith. St. Augustine wrote:

If there is faith in us, Christ is in us. For what else says the apostle: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" [Eph 3:17]. Therefore, [my] faith in Christ is Christ himself in [my] heart.

You're the container, you're the temple of the Living God.

Last week we spoke of how Christ fills our empty buckets—our empty hearts—with Himself and so stops our religious games — trying to fill ourselves with ourselves by ourselves. Because

Jesus fills me with Himself, I can fast from myself: my ego, my pride, my competition, my envy, my fear . . . and fast from playing the game: the religion game. Filled with khehsed—covenant love, I can love. And “the Lord desires khehsed not sacrifice.”

In the morning after Jesus said, “I give you my blood,” the religious folks crucified Jesus on the tree. And like the law says, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.” Jesus had become a curse. He’d never sinned, but He took our sins and became unclean. He touched corpses, women with hemorrhages, lepers, tax collectors, you, and me.

At the ninth hour, darkness having descended over all the land, Jesus cried, “It is finished,” and breathed His last. Atonement was finished, sacrifice was finished, redemption was finished, a new creation was finished, the law was finished. *Game over.*

Matthew records that at that moment, the curtain in the temple—the curtain separating the king and his people—ripped from the top to the bottom. The old wineskins—the temple, the sacrifices, the system, the Law, the regulations—*burst* with new wine . . . burst wide open as the wine of the covenant spilled over this fallen world. For “the Lord desires khehsed (covenant love) not sacrifice.”

The new wine burst out of the Holy of Holies, but it wasn’t lost. “Destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it,” said Jesus. There is new wine, and there are new wineskins. What are they?

Matthew 9:17:

*“New wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.” While he was thus speaking to them, behold,*

*a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples. And behold, a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment; for she said to herself, "If I only touch his garment, I shall be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well.*

*And when Jesus came to the ruler's house, and saw the flute players, and the crowd making a tumult, he said, "Depart; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the report of this went through all that district.*

What are the new wineskins? — People . . . empty people . . . people who want Jesus even more than themselves, fasting from themselves. Isn't that what the bridegroom wants from his bride? The groom wants to be wanted by the bride. The groom wants the bride to want him to fill her emptiness with his life.

We are the Bride, and Jesus is the Groom. He longs to fill our emptiness with Himself and bear life: the fruit of faith.  
"Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin."

Faith is surrendered emptiness, the fast our Lord desires. It's fasting from self. And even that is a gift from Him, like Mark's fast was a gift from Dee Dee and to her credit. Jesus even gives us the longing—the emptiness—for Him. Yet His presence is frightening. His love is frightening. His life is frightening . . . because it's *His* and not *ours*. We're not in control. We've surrendered control. So in our fear, we want regulations and

formulas, laws, systems, practical application points, and plans for success. For those are all about me and what I can do. If church is about those things, it really doesn't even matter if God exists. We just have the best morality, psychology, and sociology on the block, and Jesus is like our mascot, but not our Savior.

I think that's why we love practical application points. They're *practical*. That means we can *do* them and *apply* them. But Jesus is not a practical application point. He is *the* Point. You can't apply Him, and that's the point. You must surrender your emptiness, and He applies Himself to you. He's not a plan you apply. Maybe there's not a "plan of salvation," except history . . . "for this is the plan for the fulness of time to unite all things in Him." It's not a plan of salvation so much as a *person* of salvation. Plans we can control; persons we must surrender to. This is the plan of salvation: Jesus.

He is the wine; we are the wineskins. The wine is no longer kept in temples of stone but in a temple of skin: new, flexible, living skin.

Because the steadfast love (khehsed) of the Lord never ceases,  
 Because His mercies never come to an end,  
 Because they are new every morning . . .

There is always new wine in us and all around us. But we miss it, because we can't control the wine. So we idolize the wineskins. We try to fill the wineskins with wineskins, self with self. We start depending on rituals, laws, and plans, and then in fear we try to keep the wine we have (the Jesus we have) in just *our* bottle: *our* denomination, *our* style, *our* tradition, *our* group. We rebuild the stone temple. We get stiff, then crack, and then lose the wine idolizing the wineskins. We become old,

hard, skin bags full of hot air unable to hold the wine, taste the wine, or see the wine. We miss the wine!

The disciples of John can't taste the wine, for they idolize their own skins. So Jesus introduces us to two new wineskins:

1. The first is the ruler of the synagogue, Jarius. He is an example of someone respectable who has followed all the rules. But he surrenders his emptiness. He has faith. He's like a pastor's kid who grew up in the church but had faith in Jesus.

Jesus says, "Peter, I forgive you. I know your emptiness and hunger, so I'm filling you up and have filled you up with my blood, my love, my grace, and my mercy (khehsed), so that you will love like I love and stop playing games. Game over. It's finished. *Free!*" [Peter pours wine into a bucket labeled "ME" and sets it next to the suitcase.]

2. The second example is included in the first. Scholars call that an "inclusio." It was a way of saying, "This is the same story." This woman is also a wineskin but a very different-looking wineskin. If you thought it was about wineskins, you'd probably miss this wine.

This woman has had unstoppable menstrual bleeding for twelve years. She's a woman, almost certainly single, probably barren; she's an outcast, thoroughly unclean, an illegal alien. She tries to enter the kingdom through improper channels. She breaks the law to get to Jesus. She touches Him on the tassels of His garment, tassels that by law a good Jew was commanded to wear as a reminder of the law. She touches the tassels as if they're magic. That's sin!

She touches Him, defiling the High Priest, the Anointed One, the Temple. (Other gospels record that He felt the power go out of Him. It went out of Him into her emptiness — her surrendered emptiness.) Jesus turned and said, “Daughter, your faith has made you whole” — delivered, well, saved (“sozo”). I believe she entered the kingdom, and the sacrifice was made for her before the foundation of the world, and she didn’t follow *one regulation*. That’s entirely improper! She just longed for her Bridegroom’s touch, and behold: She is full of new wine, faith, Jesus.

It’s a good thing Jesus pointed her out, or we would have used her as a bad illustration in some evangelical journal for preaching.

So anyway, in January 1985, U.S. Customs agents found the curled-up body of a young, Iranian bride in a suitcase at the Los Angeles International Airport. She had tried to enter the kingdom of the United States through improper channels. All she had was faith, hope, and love — longing for her bridegroom, her only plan surrendered emptiness.

And so she became a bad example for churches all over our country; for we love formulas, plans, programs, laws (not Jewish laws, except for tithing, of course), and regulations. Why? Because we can *do* them . . . so we don’t need faith. They’re safe, so we don’t need a Savior.

You may be thinking, “Hey, preacher. Are you saying that Iranian bride was *saved*?” Well, no. I’m just saying she’s an example of faith: faith, hope, and love in her bridegroom.

But how would I know? Maybe it’s faith, hope, and love in *the* Bridegroom. John wrote, “Love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God and knows God.” What she did sure looks

like love to me . . . and maybe the way into the kingdom of Heaven is categorically different from the way into the kingdom of the United States of America. In fact, Jesus is the

Way—the only Way—the proper Way—the living Way—the love of God poured out.

So maybe that suitcase *was* a wineskin, for no one can love without His wine that is love. So then it wasn't an entry plan of *her* design. Love is always *God's* design, and He gets the credit. He gets the credit that she surrendered her life, surrendered her emptiness, fasted of food, and fasted of self just to touch love. So maybe she *did* touch Love (just the hem of His garment . . . enough to get in). And God is love.

Maybe Jesus was at LAX and opened the suitcase first. Maybe He said:

“Honey, I'm your Bridegroom. I'm the One you're seeking. And all who seek find. They may not accept you in the kingdom of the USA, they may not accept you in the kingdom of the institutional Church, but, sweetheart, I can't wait to accept you into my kingdom. Foolish and fatal crazy love like yours belongs to me . . . forever.”

[Peter reaches into the suitcase and pulls out a bottle of wine.]

I don't know . . . I'm just wondering.

But pay attention.

New wineskins are all around you.

Stop reading the labels long enough to taste the wine.

For on the night Jesus was betrayed, He took bread and broke it saying, “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in

remembrance of me.” And in the same way after the supper, He took the cup and said, “This is the cup of the new covenant—the eternal covenant—in my blood shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me. I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

We drink it now and it’s new; we drink it then and it’s new. The presence of a longing — *Jesus*. And pay attention to this: This is the day of atonement; this is the day of salvation. You are being invited to feast on the sacrifice. When you feast upon Him, you fast from yourself. So if you want Him, pray, “I believe. Help my unbelief.” He even helps you get empty.  
[Communion]

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[Prayer] So, Lord God, I don’t know what all you were doing with that suitcase in January 1985 at LAX. But I thank you that you are the judge and I’m not. I thank you, Lord God, because you are the Good Judge, and no one could be better than you. So, Lord, I don’t know what you were doing, but I do know this: I want to have a faith that looks like that woman’s, that I would be so full of love for you that I would be that empty for you.

Lord, I think the world would look at that and think, “Gosh, that would be foolish and could be fatal. If a person lived like that, they might go around ripping roofs off houses just to get to Jesus! They’d break all the laws just to get to Jesus! Why, they’d be *crucified* just to be with Him!” So, Lord, may we be like that, like you. We sang, “Open the eyes of my heart . . . pour out your power and love.” I believe the Lord says, “I have, and I do, and I will. My khehsed is new every morning.”

“For God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us,” writes Paul. “While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

So may the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, “that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1)

In Jesus’ name, amen.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

-Matthew 9:14-15

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

-Matthew 18:20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

-Matthew 28:18-20

And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him. Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. . . . If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things which all perish as they are used), according to human precepts

and doctrines? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh.

-Colossians 2:13-17, 20-23

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them." . . . Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made . . . Now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. . . . Formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to beings that by nature are no gods; but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years! I am afraid I have labored over you in vain. . . . For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. . . . For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

-Galatians 3:10, 19a, 23-24; 4:8-11; 5:1, 13-14

"And no one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; if it is, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

-Matthew 9:16-17

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

-Matthew 26:27-29

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

-Romans 5:1-6

If there is faith in us, Christ is in us. For what else says the apostle: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" [Eph 3:17]. Therefore thy faith in Christ is Christ himself in thy heart.

-St. Augustine

While he was thus speaking to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples. And behold, a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment; for she said to herself, "If I only touch his garment, I shall be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made

well. And when Jesus came to the ruler's house, and saw the flute players, and the crowd making a tumult, he said, "Depart; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the report of this went through all that district.

-Matthew 9:18-26

"If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness; as in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her impurity. And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting. And the priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for her unclean discharge."

-Leviticus 15:25-30

"All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. . . . On the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest to the door of the tent of meeting, and the priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned by reason of the dead body. And he shall consecrate his head that same day, and separate himself to the LORD for the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb a

year old for a guilt offering . . . . He who touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean seven days; he shall cleanse himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and so be clean; but if he does not cleanse himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not become clean. Whoever touches a dead person, the body of any man who has died, and does not cleanse himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from Israel; because the water for impurity was not thrown upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.”

-Numbers 6:6, 10-12a; 19:11-13

“Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’”

-Matthew 9:13a

He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; my soul is bereft of peace, I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, “Gone is my glory, and my expectation from the LORD.” Remember my affliction and my bitterness, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

-Lamentations 3:16-24

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