



June 2024

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

He told them this parable: “No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins” (Luke 5:36-38).

**W**ine “bottles” in Palestine in the day of Jesus were made of skin, usually that of a goat or sheep. After new wine was poured into a wineskin, as it fermented, it gradually released carbon dioxide. The sheer amount of carbon dioxide released during fermentation is, I am told, so high that it stings eyes and burns throats. The strength of the carbon emissions is five times more concentrated than the carbon emissions from cars and airplanes.

If the “bottle” of wine (*the wineskin*) was new, then it had some elasticity and was able to stretch to accommodate the pressure of fermentation. But old wineskins were old and brittle, with little if any elasticity, and would burst during the fermentation process.

**God is always and forever making things new.** His creation is ongoing, and it is always being renovated, redeemed and renewed. This fundamental truth about God helps us to read the Bible, understanding that the New Testament improves upon and builds on the Old, rather than the other way around. The New Testament doesn’t co-exist or present a little bit of the old and little bit of the new. It’s ALL new. *The new covenant in Christ has to be all new because old wineskins cannot accommodate the grace, mercy, love, forgiveness and maturity we experience in Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.*

In this parable of the old and new wineskins Jesus is explaining the gospel of the Kingdom of God is so radically new and so dynamic that it cannot be contained in old systems and structures, like most critically, the old covenant, its premises, laws and stipulations.

That said, though the Cross of Christ changed everything, God did not “cancel” the old covenant in the way that some in our world today presume to “cancel” the past. This word “cancel” is being liberally sprinkled all over our culture by some like parmesan cheese on spaghetti, in such a way as to demean, diminish or devalue the past.

God does not “cancel” the past. He does not topple the statues of Moses, Abraham, David and the prophets of the Old Testament. The new covenant in Christ is “*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone*” (Ephesians 2:20). God does not ignore the past, nor does he treat it as if it never existed.

God doesn’t treat my past or your past as meaningless or silly or irredeemable. God transforms the past. As we become what God is making and building of us (“*For we are God’s handiwork...*” Ephesians 2:10) we should never disregard or devalue the past—it has a place in what God is doing in our lives now and what he will do in the future.

God *redeems* the past. The word “redeem” means to compensate for something that was flawed

and now seen as inadequate or even obsolete (“*by calling this covenant ‘new,’ he has made the first one obsolete...*” Hebrews 8:13). When something is *redeemed*, it is transformed, enhanced and improved. When something faulty or defective is *redeemed*, it is salvaged, saved and elevated... when something is *redeemed*, it is raised—even from the dead! Surely this is what the Cross of Christ and the resurrection of our Lord is all about!

There is no use acting as if the past never existed. God doesn’t! God *redeems* the past. *Redeem* means to gain or regain something that was lost or diminished or damaged. There is no redemption without the reality of something that has previously existed.

We remember these well-known observations about the past:

*Those who do not know history are forever condemned to repeat it.*—Credited to both Will Durant (1885-1981) and George Santayana (1863-1952).

*Not to know what took place before you were born is to remain forever a child.*—Cicero (106-43 B.C.).

*History is a vast early-warning system.*—Norman Cousins (1915-1990).

*Those who ignore history... cannot know the present.*—Levi Strauss, founder of the famous blue jeans company (1829-1902).

*We learn from history that we learn nothing from history.*—George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950).

Sadly, this contemporary movement (that includes the “cancel culture” idea) presumes that the past as we know it can be redacted, changed, edited and even rewritten so that it fits the prevailing values and ideals of our culture. The idea seems to be when past laws, values, beliefs, institutions, presidents and prime ministers differ with current philosophical virtues and accepted norms, they must be destroyed and treated as if they really never existed (somewhat like a fantasy) including, in some people’s thinking, Jesus Christ.

*Every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it.*—George Orwell (1903-1950)

*Every generation, no matter how paltry its character, thinks itself much wiser than the one immediately preceding it, let alone those that are more remote.*—Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

When viewed from a Christ-centered focus, history is far more than facts about events that have actually happened, but rather a tracing of how humanity has struggled to find God and of the many inadequate religious attempts to define and confine God. History is a process, an evolving quest for significance and meaning, which of course cannot fully be realized apart from God.

Our world is awash with “new-ness” but it’s really novelty that attracts humanity, rather than the way in which **God is making all things new**. We hear our culture’s quest for “new-ness” all the time. A new toothpaste that will make your teeth brighter and even give your teeth “sex appeal.” A new, upgraded cell phone or another electronic device. A new medicine for headaches or arthritis. A new kind of hamburger at the local fast-food franchise. A new wax for your floors, a new style in clothing, a new detergent that will make your clothes “whiter than white.”

The truth of the matter is that our world is attracted and even seduced by novelty, but scared to death of the way in which **God is making all things new**. When following Jesus, one cannot hold on to an old way of life, because the old and the new don’t mix. One cannot pour the dynamic new wine of God’s grace, love, mercy and forgiveness into the old wineskins of Christ-less religion.

Real, authentic, Christ-centered faith is new wine. New wine of the gospel of Jesus Christ rises from the death and decay of the past, but it does not deny the past. New wine of the gospel of Jesus Christ is transformational, it is alive, vibrant and dynamic. The gospel will always be fresh and always be refreshing to Christ-followers—the gospel is not a novelty which wears off, but an enduring faith in which **God is making all things new. The gospel redeems us!**

Paul's words ring loud and true:

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We are God's own dear children. We are new in Christ. As we mature in Christ we are continually renewed, refreshed and revitalized. New creation is far more important to God than the first creation we read about in Genesis. In the last chapters of Revelation (21-22) we read that God will eventually transform the entire creation so that there will be new heavens and a new earth.

We don't have details of this new heavens and new earth, but we do know that God will *"wipe away all tears, there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away"* (Revelation 21:4).

No more war in Ukraine or Gaza. No more soldiers bleeding out on battlefields, and body bags arriving back home for husbands, wives, children and parents to grieve. No more torture. No more sexual trafficking. No more rape and murder. No more horrible deaths due to cancer. No more children dying in childbirth and women giving birth in pain. A new creation.

**God is making all things new**—in that grand, symbolic and so fascinatingly intriguing word picture given to us by Isaiah 11:6-9— a world where predators and prey like a wolf and a lamb will eat together in peace, a world in which a lion and an ox will nuzzle each other in the straw.

God speed that day! **Thank God for his marvelous, ongoing and continuing work in us personally and in the world at large as he continually makes all things new!**

And thank you so very much for your dedication and partnership in our ongoing work as we are dedicated to proclaiming, publishing and broadcasting the good news that **God is making all things new!**

Your friend and fellow partner,



Greg Albrecht  
President, Plain Truth Ministries

## CWR/PTM Prayer List—June 2024

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

*Please continue to pray for my son who has recovered from pneumonia but is now suffering from neuropathy in his feet and legs.—New York*

*Please keep my mother in your prayers, as she is elderly and struggles with various health issues.—Utah*

*Please pray for me to find employment and for my relationship with my teenage daughter to improve.—California*

*We have financial difficulties following my husband's recent stroke. We are also having problems with our well. We've spent so much money trying to get it fixed, but it still doesn't work. Please pray for us!—North Carolina*

*I need your prayers. I fell and broke my hip, and I've been recovering in the hospital.—West Virginia*

*Please pray for my husband's recovery from surgery to repair a torn meniscus. Thank you in advance for your prayers. We continue to keep everyone at PTM in our prayers as well.—North Dakota*

*Please pray for our daughter, son-in-law and grand-daughter to have a closer relationship with Jesus.—Oregon*

*Please pray for our family as we are dealing with financial difficulties, health issues and anxiety.—Florida*

*Please pray for me. I am struggling with many health and financial problems, as well as loneliness and depression.—New York*

*Our family is struggling with severe financial difficulties. Please keep us in your prayers.—Idaho*

*Please pray for my mom who is dealing with various health and many other challenges at age 94.—Illinois*

*Please pray for my healing as I am struggling with a virus of some kind. Thank you so much!—Georgia*

*Please pray for all the homeless and migrants—they need shelter and food just like all the rest of us.—Texas*

*I sprained my right leg several months ago and it still hasn't healed. I'm 85 years old and I would like to remain somewhat independent.—Virginia*

*Please pray that my niece's seizures will stop and pray for our family's various health issues.—Massachusetts*

*Please pray for my daughter's and my husband's health concerns. Thank you for all your inspiring and encouraging messages and for making them plain, simple and understandable.—North Carolina*

*Please pray for my daughter's healing and comfort—she was recently in a bad car accident.—West Virginia*

*Please pray for our livestock and pastures and pray for continued health for our family.—Utah*

*Please pray for my friend who's been struggling with vertigo and recently had a heart attack.—California*

*Please pray for my son-in-law who is having a knee replacement surgery. Thank you for your prayers and for all the resources and encouragement you provide.—New York*

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.