

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Jul 6th 2013

“People do not put new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. Rather, they pour new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.”

Was Jesus really telling us that if we let our hearts grow old and hard we will be no longer willing or able as Christians to face new, difficult problems and issues? Are new “wineskins” critical so that we can continue to accept the love of Christ? It could be.

But old is so comfortable. The down at the heels shoes we wear when we walk to the mailbox on Saturday to pick up the mail or the old sweater that we put on when we come home from work to ward off the evening chill are often too dear to part with. Add to that the ingrained idea that we should get by with what we have so why should we even consider buying new.

This is the challenge we face. If we refuse to allow our hearts to be filled with new ways to love others, be it those who have slighted us or new ways to reach out to those living on the margins of society, our wineskins will surely grow old and hard. Should that happen, then most assuredly the day will come when our hearts harden and we are no longer able to accept the call to love those who don’t love back and to forgive those who won’t forgive us.

By accepting the new challenges we face each day and letting them into our hearts is the best way for us to be assured that our faith will continue to grow. And, as we search for ways to love and to forgive those we once felt we never could, our hearts are no longer the dry old wineskins of Matthew’s reading, but rather the pliable one that can accept the tannic wine and with time, soften it so that it is ready to be enjoyed by all.

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