Text: Acts 2:1-21

**Text**

But others mocking said, “they are filled with new wine.”

The Bible has these occasions that are absolutely drenched in divine irony The speakers are saying something. Like Caiaphas saying, “it is better for one man to die for the people, than the whole nation perish.” Caiaphas meant it that the death of Jesus would prevent Rome from destroying the priesthood and the temple. Of course as it turns out that is exactly what Rome would do because of the death of Jesus. But Caiaphas’ words were prophecy none-the-less, as that is exactly what God was doing. Through the death of Jesus, saving the people of God. Haman’s Gallows, put up to kill Mordecai and the Jews, end up swinging with Haman himself. Or the entire story of Joseph, his brothers selling him into slavery to kill him without actually killing him. Yet God ends up saving the world through their terrible action.

“New Wine” feels to me like another of those instances. The people that invoke it against the disciples mean it in the way Peter addresses – “they are drunk.” But they are also correct. They are filled with new wine.

The Old Testament goes back and forth on the use of the phrase “new wine.” Job’s late coming friend Elihu invokes it saying his belly is full of words – “like a new wineskin ready to burst.” Of course if you have read all of Job – or at least a few of the middle chapters – you know that the words Elihu spills forth, God silences as “clouding his judgement with words without understanding.” None of Job’s friends would shut up. All of them condemning Job is various ways. When Job’s case is much more complicated. The only fault in Job is his demanding that God explain himself. The secret things of God remain his forever.

In Isaiah the “new wine is found in the cluster”. Which of course our scientific age confirms. What starts the fermentation process is already on the grapes. To get “grape juice” as our Baptist friends might demand, takes pasteurization. You naturally get wine. And God is asked “do not destroy it, for there is blessing in it.” And God agrees. He will not destroy all the Jews who have returned from exile, even though they have taken up their father’s idolatry, because of the new wine in the cluster. Salvation comes from the Jews.

“New wine” gets bounced through the prophets both as something abused that takes away understanding, but also a blessing that makes men flourish. And I think that all of these things are recognizable. You don’t guzzle the old wine; it is too valuable. You sip it. You also bring it out a bottle at a time that you’ve been holding onto for a special occasion. The new wine can be taken in jugs right after the harvest. Like the Alan Jackson song – we’ve got a hundred gallon of sweet red wine. (Yeah that was Watermelons, but if he was French it would be Beaujolais.) And if you are too far in your cups, who knows what you might say. You might not even remember. But not many of us are teetotalers. There is blessing in it. Even the apostle Paul tells Timothy to have a glass every now and then.

Which is all just prologue for want Jesus says about New Wine. And how Luke captures that saying is a bit unique. Luke captures what Matthew and Mark says. “No one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.” Then Luke also adds, “And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good (Luke 5:37-39).'"

Within the life of Jesus and the early disciples that point is obvious enough. Jesus – the new wine – has come, yet the proclamation of Jesus doesn’t quite fit into the understanding of the old covenant. He changes sabbath rules. He eats with tax collectors and sinners. All the way to speaking with Samaritans and Gentiles. Most of the Jews are good with the old. But the blessings of the new will rip apart the old at the seams. But still, this Jesus is the blessing in the cluster.

**Christology**

So the mockers in the crowd aren’t wrong. The Disciples are filled with “new wine”. They just don’t know that that means, taking it literally. Peter straightens them out. The “new wine” being the Spirit of Christ.

And what does that Spirit of Christ do? How does it rip apart the old skins?

First, this Spirit is for all flesh. When God scrambled the languages – our Old Testament lesson for the day. That is the last thing he does to all mankind with immediate effect. After Babel, God calls and makes his covenant with Abraham. And the Old Testament is the narrowing down of the who that covenant is about – until you get to the seed in the stump. Christ. And the announcement that the New Wine is here is the reversal of Babel. The Spirit is for all flesh.

Prophecy, and let’s be very tight about our definition of this. The Old Testament prophets were those filled with the Spirit who could interpret and understand the Word of God. And in the Old Testament this understanding of the Word was a dramatic and limited things. God took some from Moses and placed it on the 70 Elders. He would call judges and then prophets. Elisha ask for a double portion of Elijah’s Spirit. But they could go long spells without such “new wine.” Part of the reaction to John the Baptist was how long it had been. And the voice shows up in the desert. Prophecy of this sort – of being able to understand the Word of God – in the New Wine is poured out. Young and old, male and female. “We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” The things that were hidden have now been revealed.

And the last thing is the apocalyptic nature of the Spirit’s testimony. “The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood.” The resurrection of Christ is the beginning of the new creation. The Spriit dwelling in you is the beginning of the new creation. In baptism, in belief, in living the faith, you are not who you used to be. The old has passed away, the new has come.

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Everyone. This New Wine is for all flesh. And all flesh shall now know the name of the Lord. They shall know the name they must call upon. And those who do, shall be saved. They shall be changed. We shall be changed now as we live the faith. And we shall be changed on “the great and magnificent day.”

**Moral**

So it is worth asking ourselves what are the results of the “new wine” living in us? And I want to be careful here. Because I believe this gets abused in many ways, that all reduce to one. Like the Old Testament prophets recognizing that too much can take away understanding. It can be demanded that proof show up in tongues. Instead of recognizing the tongues as one of those “signs on the earth below”, a sign testifying to Christ, it gets turned into the old law. “You must do this.” And this type of thing shows up again and again. “You must do this new thing to prove that you have the Spirit.” “If you do this new thing, we will receive the new wine.” And these are all ways of trying to put the New Wine of Christ back into the old wineskins of the law.

Instead, the Spirit blows when and where He wills. The exact nature of that “New Wine” is different. But you see it in how it moves and grows the trees. This forgiveness of sins is for everyone. If you hear the Spirit today and are not mocking, know that your sins are forgiven. This proclamation is not hidden or secret. There is no secret knowledge that is not also available for you. The church functions in the daylight. The Word is open to you. And that Word does amazing things in our lives. We leave behind the ways of sin, we put the old Adam to death, and rise to live before God. We forgive as we have been forgiven. Now you could try and do all these things under your own power. But they don’t work. You can try and put the new wine into the old wineskins of the law. But they just burst. When you see these things. Sanctified lives, people seeking the Word, you’ve seen the work of the Spirit. These things are not the demands, but the signs of the new wine being present.

**Eschatology**

And the greatest sign is the hope by which we live. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. If there is one line that probably sounds like being drunk to those without the Spirit it is that one. The world seems to be as it has always been. And probably always will be. But our hope, our faith, is both that it was not always like this. That it was made very good. But more importantly, that what has already been started in you – in that work of sanctification. Will be brought to completion in the day of the Lord. We live not by bread and wine, but by the Word. And that Word is that God is making all things new. And that we who call upon his name will be there.

Today we have the New Wine. The faith and hope of Christ. Tomorrow that new wine becomes the wedding feast when the bridegroom appears.