

Part 2: New Wine, New Expectations – Rising to the Challenge

When God brings change, or “**new wine**” into a ministry, it often requires **new wineskins**, i.e. a **new mindset and approach**. Jesus taught that “*people do not pour new wine into old wineskins... If they do, the skins will burst... No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved*”. In our context, the arrival of new leadership in our music ministry is **the “new wine.”** It’s not any sort of judgement of wine from the past, or we could say the *status quo*. Rather, it highlights the route to gifts from God that lie in store for us – gifts of invigoration and expansion – if we can agree to be fitted with the attitude we need for this chapter. God is now and is calling us **now**.

Think of the *Parable of the Talents*: servants who were given more talents were expected to produce more, and the one who buried his talent was rebuked for doing nothing (Matthew 25:14–30). In the same way, it would be unfaithful for us not to set out in a fresh direction upon having come together.

Consider the early church figure **Apollos**: He was a passionate, gifted speaker, “*though he knew only the baptism of John.*” When Priscilla and Aquila taught him more fully, Apollos **humbly received correction and grew**, becoming even more effective (Acts 18:24–28). Apollos didn’t say, “I’m already doing fine, I don’t need help. I only preach thusly.” Instead, he adjusted to the new instruction God provided. This is a model for us. James 4:17 pointedly warns, “*If anyone... knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them*”.

Therefore, I am calling all of us – **myself included** – to **make a modest but consistent effort to improve each week**. This is not about suddenly becoming concert performers; it’s about faithfulness. Luke 16:10 teaches that **faithfulness with a small thing leads to greater trust**. If each week we strive for even a small step forward, God will honor that faithfulness. The difference between stagnation and growth is not the starting level of talent, but the **willingness to respond when God calls for “new wineskins.”** Let’s choose the fresh mindset. Let’s view the higher standards not as criticism of the past, but as **God’s next step for our church**. “*Forget what lies behind and strain toward what is ahead*” (Philippians 3:13) – He is doing a **new thing** among us (Isaiah 43:19)! Embracing that with a positive attitude is our act of obedience in this season.