

LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 5, 2017

The Rev. Dr. John Welch '02, Vice President for Student Services and Community Engagement and Dean of Students, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

SCRIPTURE

MARK 2:18-22

18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" 19 Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day. 21 "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

DEVOTIONAL

Living a perfect life is not easy, and for anyone to claim that he or she does fools no one. However, living a holy life is possible, but also not easy. To live holy is to be holy; but to be holy requires an acknowledgment of the tension caused by sin. Being holy is to be sanctified, to be set apart by the Spirit of God, marked as a child of God and destined for the eternal reward in glory. But sin won't let us forget that glory is not yet here. And so, the tension between who we should be and who we are persists. We are new creatures in sinful bodies, new wine in old wineskins, stressing the weakest parts of our very being. It's this type of suffering we openly confess, and it's this type of suffering we remember during the 40 days of Lent. We fast in a sense of self-denial; our parched souls seek spiritual refreshment. One day, we will be in our new wineskins.

PRAYER

Most Holy God, continue to walk with us in the midst of our tension and show us your grace. You reminded us that our suffering is not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall later be revealed, but the journey is nonetheless difficult. Thank you for Calvary, and the cross, the symbol of our freedom.

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