

The *Kainos* Experience

A few years ago, my family asked if they could get me something special for Mother's Day. I enjoy the community of our family, eating around our dinner table, and sharing discussions about life and God. Since I had been given the opportunity to choose my own gift, I wanted a new dining room set that would seat my entire family and a few guests so that we could more comfortably enjoy one another.

One day, John surprised me and took me to a furniture store and told me to pick out what I liked. Enthusiastically, I did, and John blessed me with a dining set. A few months later, one of our children put a hot item directly onto the table and damaged its finish. As sad as I was that the table was damaged, I had no intention of replacing it. It's obvious, upon looking, that the table is damaged. But it didn't mean it no longer held value or was no longer worth keeping. It simply meant it needed to be restored.

So, instead of replacing the table, I asked God for wisdom regarding what to do to restore the finish. I've got a process and plan in mind, and I believe that restoration for my table is soon to come.

There is a passage found in the ninth chapter of Matthew that bears out a wonderful account of restoration. *"No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."* Matthew 9: 16-17.

When I first read this account, I believed that the new wineskin being described here was in fact brand new wineskin. But upon further study, I learned that this was not the case. In the Greek language, there are two words, both of which may be translated into the English word "new". *Neos* can mean new, referring to something that has been created, or never been used before; however, *kainos* can also be translated new, denoting something that has been renewed or made over. In Matthew 9:17, it is *kainos* that is used, indicating that what is implied in the text is the *new* that means renewed or restored. With this in mind, let's take another look at this account.

It appears that God never intended to replace the wineskin. He was not looking to purchase a brand new wineskin in the way we purchase something that has never been used before. He was looking for a wineskin that had undergone a *kainos experience*; the new that is created through the process of renewal and restoration.

And, if we are like the wineskin, then God has no intention of replacing us either. But rather, God's heart is to remake and restore us. He wants to renew us, making us better in quality and usefulness. And as it is with the wineskin, so it is with us; we too must go through a restorative process in order to be made *kainos*.

To make a wineskin new, an old wineskin is placed in water and then rubbed in oil. The water is part of the purification process and as the wineskin is dipped into it, it is washed and made clean. Rubbing the wineskin with oil is the part of the process that makes the wineskin flexible. As oil is rubbed into the wineskin, the material becomes more supple, more pliable, and workable. As new wine is poured into the wineskin, the wineskin is now able to expand, fully holding the new wine.

And so it is with us. We are the wineskins that need to be restored and remade. We are the wineskins that need the *kainos experience* so that we can hold the new wine that God has intended for our lives.

The Holy Spirit is the One who prepares us, and takes us through our process of restoration. He washes us, purifies us, and makes us clean. He wants to make us holy, sanctified and useful for the Master. (II Timothy 2: 20-21). The process of becoming useful begins with deep cleansing.

He then brings the oil of His anointing and begins the rubbing process. First He strokes us, almost as if preparing us for what's ahead. Then He rubs us. Every challenge of faith we face, every trial we endure, every victory, every pain, every heart ache, every shame, the Holy Spirit is with us, oil in hand, rubbing.

The process of rubbing can be, and is often, quite painful. It's not quite like a relaxing massage, where you exhale when the tension is released from your shoulders. But rather, it can feel more like a deep throbbing pain, as it is a working out of issues, and a working in of godly character, greater faith, and an in-pouring of God's love. It's that pattern of rubbing, over and over and over again, that is intended to bring us to a place of flexibility and submission. The rubbing of the oil on our lives produces elasticity in us, so that we can more easily deal with the issues of life and the challenges we face without falling apart and quitting. The rubbing process so stretches us that we change! And as that change produces restoration, we are made new!

It is absolutely necessary for us to go through the process of restoration. Our wineskins must be broken, washed and worked through with the oil of humility until we become a new container, suitable for the Master's use. Then, when the new wine, (His purposes and promises), is poured into our *kainos* wineskins, we'll have the capacity to expand and to hold the new things that God now wants to reveal to us. We'll be better equipped to do what He has enabled and empowered us to do.

So, when you examine your life, and that of those you love, remember that we are all in need of renewal. Believe God and ask Him for a *kainos experience*. God desires to make us over again, renewing and restoring us. His desire is to fill us with new wine and to generously pour us out for the Kingdom of God!