

LifeGroup

Leader Guide



BEING THE CHURCH IN THIS NEW SEASON

BIG IDEA: God often leads His people into new seasons that require renewed faith, fresh vision, and willing hearts.

DATE: Sunday, August 9, 2026

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:21-22 and Isaiah 43:18-19

Today's lesson is shortened to allow time to enjoy your breakfast and fellowship together.

OPENING QUESTION

What is something "old" that is "new" again?

This summer Costco caused a frenzy among GenX women – they sold ESPRIT sweatshirts. Women were flocking to Costco to grab a piece of nostalgia. Back in the 80's a sweatshirt with the letters ESPRIT across the front was something of a status symbol. Just looking at those letters brought back memories of teenage years and women wanted to capture that feeling. Costco stores sold out quickly, while some stores did not offer them, so women were buying for other women and shipping them at cost across the country and into Canada! Women were posting pictures wearing the shirt back in the 80's next to their current picture. And some were calling on SWATCH to create a smart watch wrist band to complete the look! Something old was new again.

SETTING THE STAGE

Every church experiences seasons of change. Some seasons are marked by growth, others by challenge, and still others by new leadership. The arrival of a new lead pastor is more than a staffing change—it is an opportunity for the church to seek God together and ask, "What new thing does God desire to do among us?"

As we enter this new chapter, Jesus' words in Mark 2 and God's promise in Isaiah remind us that God often works in fresh ways. While His truth never changes, He frequently calls His people to embrace new opportunities with hearts that are willing to follow Him.

STUDY THE BIBLE

Mark 2:21-22 (CSB)

²¹ No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new patch pulls away from the old cloth, 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 as well as the skins. No, new wine is put into fresh wineskins."

Isaiah 43:18-19 (CSB)

¹⁸"Do not remember the past events; pay no attention to things of old. ¹⁹Look, I am about to do something new; even now it is coming. Do you not see it? Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**READ: MARK 2:21-22**

What was Jesus teaching through the illustrations of the new cloth and the new wineskins?

- Why couldn't you put old cloth onto new cloth?
- Why wouldn't new wine fit into old wineskins?
- What does this tell us about how God works?

See Commentary below for further explanation.

NOTE: In this context it is important to understand what Jesus is referring to: "The twin parables here teach the incompatibility of the old (scribal Judaism) and the new (Christianity). Judaism is the old garment and the old wineskin. Christianity is the new garment (implied), the new wineskin, and the new wine (on the last cf. John 2:1–11, especially v. 10). The point is not that the "old" is wrong or evil but that its time has passed. As Acts shows, the Twelve were slow to learn this truth." *James A. Brooks, Mark, vol. 23, The New American Commentary*

What are some "old wineskins" that can develop in a church? Consider attitudes more than traditions.

Examples might include:

- Fear of change
- Comparing every decision to the past
- Being unwilling to try new approaches
- Assuming that "the way we've always done it" is always the best way

How can we recognize these attitudes in ourselves?

What qualities make someone a "new wineskin"? (write them on the board as people share)

Examples might include:

- Readiness to learn
- Humility
- Flexibility
- Faith
- Trust

Which of these qualities is easiest for you? Which is the hardest? Why?

What if Jesus has something *new* for you that you didn't even know you were ready for? Would you find it easier or harder to trust Him with that? Why or why not?

READ: ISAIAH 43:18-19

God tells Israel not to dwell on the former things. What do you think He meant?

How is remembering God's faithfulness different from "living in the past"? How can we honor the past but look forward with faith that God is doing a new thing, and we get to be part of it?

In what ways do we resist the change required for the new we're praying for? Where is God stretching you personally? Where is He preparing you?

Isaiah says, "See, I am doing a new thing!"

Where have you already seen God working in our church?

What are healthy ways to honor previous pastors and leaders while welcoming a new pastor? Why is it important to do both?

What responsibilities belong to the congregation during a pastoral transition? How can we move forward with flexibility and support in this new season?

Discuss practical ideas such as:

- Praying faithfully
- Speaking encouraging words
- Extending grace
- Supporting new initiatives
- Avoiding unhealthy comparisons
- Serving where needed

If God truly wants to do "a new thing" in our church, what changes might He first want to make in us personally?

In this new season we will see new faces. Are we ready to welcome and embrace new visitors? What might that look like for our LifeGroup in particular?

"Lord, help us recognize what You are doing and joyfully join You."

Guide your group to reflect quietly on these questions.

- What attitude do I need God to change in me?
- Where is He asking me to trust Him more?
- How can I encourage our new pastor and church family this week?

SHARE: anything from the Commentary section below before sharing the closing challenge.

RESPONSE

Group Challenge. This week, commit to three actions:

1. Pray every day for our new lead pastor and family.
2. Encourage at least one church leader or volunteer.
3. Ask God each day, "Show me how I can be part of the new thing You are doing."

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Ask God to create a willingness in us to be shaped by Him in a new way. Spend time in prayer for each other and for our new Lead Pastor, his family and the leadership of Chets.

COMMENTARY

SCRIPTURE 1: MARK 2:21-22

Understanding the Passage

Jesus used two illustrations to teach that the new covenant He was bringing could not simply be added onto old ways of thinking and living. Jesus came to introduce the new, not patch up the old. In this context perhaps the religious leaders would have been happy to make *some* of Jesus's ideas part of their own religious tradition. They were hoping for some kind of compromise that would retain the best of pharisaic Judaism and the best of what Christ had to offer. But Jesus exposed the folly of that approach. It would be like tearing patches from a new unshrunk garment and sewing them on an old garment. You would ruin the new garment; and when the old garment was washed the patch would shrink, rip away, and ruin that garment too.

New wine required new wineskins because fermentation would stretch the container. An old, brittle wineskin would burst under the pressure. You would lose both the wine and the skins.

The issue was not that the old was bad; it simply was not designed to contain what God was doing through Christ.

Application for Our Church

As we welcome a new lead pastor, it can be tempting to compare everything to the past.

- "That's not how we've always done it."
- "The previous pastor did it this way."
- "We've never tried that before."

These reactions are understandable, but Jesus invites us to ask a different question:

Are our hearts flexible enough to receive what God wants to do now?

The "new wineskin" is not about abandoning biblical truth. It is about cultivating hearts that are humble, teachable, and open to God's leading.

SCRIPTURE 2: ISAIAH 43:18–19

Understanding the Passage

God spoke these words to Israel while reminding them of His faithfulness. He had delivered them before, but He wanted them to recognize that He was not limited to repeating yesterday's miracles.

God's future work would require fresh faith.

Application for Our Church

Every church has a history worth celebrating. We should honor those who have served faithfully, including previous pastors and leaders. Their ministry has helped shape who we are today. Yet honoring the past does not mean living in it. God asks His people to recognize when He is opening new doors, creating new opportunities, and leading them into new ministry. The question becomes: *Can we celebrate where we've been while joyfully embracing where God is taking us?*

Connecting Both Passages

Both passages teach a powerful truth: **God often does new things, and His people must be spiritually prepared to receive them.** A new pastor does not replace God's mission. A new pastor joins God's ongoing work. Likewise, the church's responsibility is not merely to evaluate change but to discern God's direction together. Healthy churches maintain unchanging biblical truth while remaining flexible in methods, ministry approaches, and opportunities to reach people.