

Mark 2:18-28

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- Last week – Jesus has a feast with sinners and tax collectors.
- Luke 5:13 makes it look like today's passage happens with last week's passage.
(After Jesus states it's the sick who need a doctor, they pipe up)

Vs 18 – *18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"*

- Pharisees & John's disciples were fasting. But Jesus & Disciples are feasting
- Ritual fasting – twice a week, Monday and Thursday
- Only day specified in scripture was day of atonement (Lev 16:29)
- Rabbinic law like false line of scrimmage.
- **Who are these disciples of John?** Some of John the Baptist's old disciples.

John 4:1-2 *Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.*

- It looks like the **Pharisees were looking for ways to pit John's disciples against Jesus.** Used Jesus success against John's diminishing success.
- Jesus response is to leave town rather than fuel this.

John 3:25-30 *²⁵ An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. ²⁶ They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." ²⁷ To this John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.' ²⁹ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰ He must become greater; I must become less."*

- Even though John the Baptist wants Jesus to become greater and his own ministry to become less, it appears **not all John's disciples were on board with transferring to team Jesus.**
- John taught repentance, denial of self, he ate locusts, wore camel hair clothes.
- **And John describes his relationship with Jesus as a "friend of the bridegroom"** *"Full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice"* he says, *"That joy is mine, and is now complete"*
- **So, the Pharisees & some followers of John who went team Pharisee rather than team Jesus ask Jesus about fasting since Jesus seems to be ignoring the law and feasting with sinners on a fasting day.**
- **More righteous?** Pharisees (fasting), or Jesus (feasting with the ill repute?)
- **QUESTION-** Why aren't your disciples fasting when John's disciples and those who follow the Pharisees are? Inquiring minds want to know? Give us a reason.
- **Jesus answers the question with 3 examples, but they all mean the same thing: Jesus' new way of grace and relationship with God is incompatible with your old way of self-righteousness via religious rule observance.**
- The Pharisees were practicing a religion of ritual, (externals, based on law, works).
- Jesus brought relationship (with God), of internals (heart change), of grace (not law), imputed righteousness. The two are incompatible.

- The acorn is fulfilled when the oak tree is full grown.
- The acorn and the oak are not working together anymore.
- The acorn is obsolete – Hebrews 8:13- *By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.*
- **You are offended because you are trying to somehow make the law and grace compatible with each other.** This BIG GOSPEL OF GRACE to fit in your LITTLE RELIGION OF LAW.
- So Jesus uses three analogies and he starts with what John had told his disciples in **John 3:29-** *The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.*
- **John said Jesus is a groom and John is the friend and the groom (Jesus) is here now and so he is filled with joy.**

- **Jesus is asked why his disciples aren't fasting?**

Vs 19-20- *¹⁹ Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. ²⁰ But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.*

- Rabbis in Jesus's day declared that if the observance of any law came in the way of having a good time (Joy) during a wedding, you didn't have to keep the law.
- The joy of having the groom (Jesus) with you is completely incompatible with fasting. It is compatible with feasting.
- **Enjoying the presence of Jesus (relationship) is better than religious ritual (religion)**
- Fasting is based on conditions we find ourselves in rather than religious ritual.
- *²⁰ But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.* – The groom is violently taken from them. The situation calls for being upset.
- **With Jesus comes relationship rather than religion & the two are incompatible.** Jesus explains another way in verse 21.

Vs 21- *²¹ "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse.*

- A new patch on and old garment destroys the old garment. They are incompatible
- Jesus came to introduce something new, not to patch up something old.

Vs. 22 - *²² And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."*

- Wineskin – Remove goatskin without cutting it and closing feet and tail. Leave neck and mouth open. **New Wine Ferments, creates gas, expands.**
- Ritualistic Law = Old Wineskin Gospel of Grace= New Wine
- **New wine in an old wineskin ruins both.** Wine on the ground (useless)
- Can't combine works righteousness (obeying fasting laws) with grace of Jesus.
- **We try to mix God's gigantic & complete grace with our own contribution of good works.** Why? It's easier, more tangible, measurable.

Is your fasting like that which Jesus taught or of the Pharisees? Not a self-righteous act, but a true response to Christ's presence in our real circumstances.

Are you sewing Jesus' grace on your own self-righteous garment?

How are we putting new wine in old wineskins?