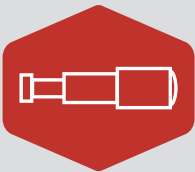




Lesson 11: Mark 2:18–22 Good News about the Good News

Main Idea: This lesson looks at the difference between what Jesus offers and what the Pharisees offered.

Scripture: Mark 2:18–22



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

Controversy arises in this portion of Scripture because the disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees are observing a time of fasting, but the disciples of Jesus are not. The biblical Jewish calendar had only one day per year of required fasting, the Day of Atonement. But Pharisees had created a tradition of fasting on Mondays and Thursdays every week. Their fast was from 6:00AM to 6:00PM. Possible reasons the Pharisees fasted may have been to display their piety and to fulfill ritual handed down to them. It is also possible that their fasting was tied into their expectancy of the coming Messiah. The Pharisees' disciples were probably observing one of the bi-weekly fasts. In both instances fasting was a sign of true piety. This being the case, "some people" (Mark does not identify them specifically) were asking why Jesus' disciples were not evidencing true religious piety by fasting.¹ A rabbi or teacher was usually responsible for the behavior of his disciples.

¹ Walter W. Wessel, "Mark," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 636.

The Pharisees are trying to force Christ to follow their traditions. They cannot accept Jesus unless He conforms to their ways. Jesus uses the example of a wedding party to counter their argument. During a couple's wedding week, they would not fast. Instead, the wedding party would celebrate with family and friends. Craig Keener provides some insight when he says, "Wedding feasts ideally involved seven days of festivity; one was not permitted to fast or engage in other acts of mourning or difficult labor during a wedding feast."² Jesus clearly warns that a time for fasting would come for His followers when their Bridegroom would be taken away. A wedding, new wine, and a new garment are all symbols of the New Age. The main teaching of the parable seems to be that the newness the coming of Jesus brings cannot be confined to the old forms.³

² Kenner, Craig. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary 2nd Edition*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2014), pg. 134.

³ Walter W. Wessel, "Mark," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 637.



My Lens (Eyeglasses)

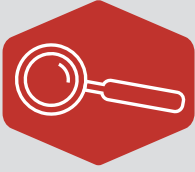
What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

Traditions have value. Through traditions, we hand down a set of beliefs and practices that form structure for our lives. Traditions provide continuity for our society and a sense of righteousness. Traditions are what make a church feel like home. They give us a standard by which to judge our own experiences in worship. By tradition, we know what to expect.

However, a thin line separates worship of God from worship of tradition. As believers, we are to touch Jesus and have Him touch us. We have to be careful to always keep this purpose in view. There is always tension between walking with Jesus and religion.

The people in our text live during a unique time—Jesus is walking among them. But their traditions keep them from the blessing Jesus wants to give them. Consider a few of the lessons from this section of Scripture:

- Jesus brings celebration; religion brings condemnation.
- Jesus brings new life; religion offers inadequate patches.
- Jesus brings an even bigger life; religion offers a brittle life.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

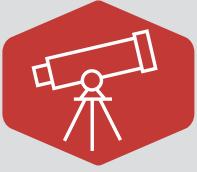
- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
 - » Where is this passage taking place?
 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any recurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- What are some of your favorite traditions in your personal life? Church life?

- Read Colossians 2:6-8. What can you glean from these verses about traditions?



Upward and Outward Focus (Telescope)

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God’s Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love for God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?