

Title: Incompatibility

Description: In this sermon from Mark 2:18-22 Pastor Kim teaches how Jesus answers a challenge about fasting with three vivid pictures: the bridegroom among wedding guests, new cloth on an old garment, and new wine in new wineskins. The message confronts cold legalism and man-made religious performance, presents Christ as the Messiah whose presence brings joy, and calls hearers to a renewed heart by the Holy Spirit rather than self-righteous patches. Grace is incompatible with adding human rules on top of God's finished work in Jesus.

Transcript:

To stand at this time out of respect for God's word. We're going to be in Mark chapter 2 verses 18-22. Mark chapter 2 verses 18-22.

And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast. And they came and said unto him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" And Jesus said unto them, "Can the children of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment, else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred, but new wine must be put into new bottles. This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. I want us to examine verse 18 with the very question that the Pharisees and John the Baptist disciples asked the Lord Jesus Christ. Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? This is a direct challenge to the religious leaders asking and confronting the Lord Jesus Christ. They're seeking to measure spiritual righteousness not with sincere devotion. That is not how they pose their question. Nor is it posed in a way that indirectly shows the love for God, but rather it is all about external conformity to their human traditions. And this is the core spiritual dilemma that is exposed in our passage this morning. It's subtle and deadly. It's subtle and deadly. The temptation to substitute a living heart level fellowship with God for what? External conformity, man-made religious performance. I want us to imagine the outcome of the latter. just all man-made religious performance. You see, the Pharisees exalted their own self righteousness, meaning their religious performance rules above God's law. I want you to

notice that when we get into the text because they have so far displaced themselves from actually God's law, what's actually written in God's law for their own man-made traditions. And this is again the deadly temptation. What they did is they thought that their man-made laws were above God's laws. that their spiritual discipline like they're fasting under the guise of self-righteousness and then they are so inept in understanding God's word that they begin to now judge others by that rule of theirs. You see when religious traditions replaces a true real relational intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ, worship then turns into cold duty. It turns into a joy that is suffocated. No life, no spiritual life and as a result leads to all sorts of human pride. all sorts of human pride that ultimately replaces the glory of God with the glory of man. So in today's passage in verses 18 and 22, we're going to examine how Jesus, the Lord Jesus, answers this religious confrontation by revealing himself as the bridegroom. We're going to look at that parable. We're going to look at he's a true fulfiller of God's law. And then third, he is the source of true and genuine spiritual transformation. We're going to unpack these three vivid parables under the wedding attendant, the unshrunk cloth, and the fresh wineskins. We're going to learn how to turn away from cold, rigid, self-righteous performance, self-reliant legalism and step into an abiding, satisfying joy of walking in the presence of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. So let us now examine verses 18 to 20. Again in Mark 2:18, Mark records that both John disciples and the Pharisees were actively fasting. Fasting was originally intended in God's word as a godly discipline forgoing what would be secondary good things like eating. That's a secondary thing to what to a humble soul-searching drawing near to the ultimate good. The primary thing was to neglect our secondary good for the ultimate good of having God himself as having God himself. You see however the underlying motives differ greatly. The John the Baptist was ascetic. That means that he denied himself to point men to God. So let's let's divide up these two groups. The followers of John the Baptist and then the Pharisees because you'll see that there are two different approaches to fasting. So let me start that again. John the Baptist was ascetic, meaning that he denied himself to point men to God. meaning the very thing that I just said, neglecting the secondary good for the primary ultimate good of having God himself. So they were doing fasting correctly. And so the disciples of John the Baptist fasted out of a sincere desire to draw near to God. On the other hand, the Pharisees by contrast fasted according to man-made traditions and it's recorded in their book which is called the Mishna. Often they would then fast twice a week and it was all for in order to receive public honor. They did it just for that again

man-made performance. Look at me. Glory me. And it demonstrated their assumption that they were pleasing God, that they were glorifying God. So they looked at themselves as morally superior for those that did not fast like them. You see, in God's book in Leviticus, it's mentioned that yes, you fast once, but they added twice a week. You see, they add it on top of God's law. That is the first danger of what we see here, contrasting both those that are doing it right, John the Baptist disciples and the Pharisees. But they're all come together, mixed up. John the Baptist disciples and the Pharisees asking this one question. Why Jesus and his disciples were not regularly fasting? And so the Pharisees aimed for their goal was to shame Jesus to sow doubt among his followers, his disciples and force him into their legal system. Can you believe that? The audacity to say Jesus come under our legal rules instead of him as the authority. Again, just notice the subtle deceptive temptation that is so deadly to the soul. The Lord Jesus then responds with the first parable. He says these words. This is his answer. Can the children of the bride chamber fast and the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. That's verse 19. By calling himself the bridegroom, Jesus explicitly claims himself as the Messiah. He identifies Himself as the Messiah. This is echoing the Old Testament imagery where God rejoices over his people like a bridegroom. You can look at Isaiah 62:5. This is what it says. For as a young man married a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee. And as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. And then we see the picture of after the wedding and depicted of the feast after this passage in Isaiah 25:6-9 and it's talking about this feast that all followers the attendees of the wedding will rejoice with the bridegroom with the bride in its marriage. And such a vivid picture, isn't it, of Christ and his church, the bride. And it's a wonderful picture of the feast that comes after the wedding, which is called the wedding, the great banquet. You see, fasting, let's go back to just fasting. It bridges the spiritual distance when God's visible presence is absent. You fast when he's not present. That's the way to understand. But because the Lord Jesus is God according to Isaiah and he is God incarnate who is physically present among them. His disciples do not need to fast to bridge that gap is already bridged in him. Right? In Mark 1:15, repent for the kingdom is at hand. He's speaking of himself representing the kingdom of God. He is here to reconcile sinners to God in Jesus. And so he's there. He's present. And so Jesus adds this prophetic note. And it's found in Mark 2:20. He says this, "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." So he's not saying that fasting is unnecessary. It's the timing. the

timing. You see, this anticipates his impending death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, after which fasting becomes an appropriate spiritual discipline as believers await his second return, for his second return. Under the law, God instituted solemn fasts for repentance. That's found in Leviticus 16:29. Yet scripture repeatedly associates the arrival of the Messiah with overflowing joy and feasting. Again, look at Isaiah 25:6 and then Matthew 9:15. But specifically, let's look at John 3:29 and where John the Baptist himself testified these very words. He said, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." He is saying, "You're hearing the bridegroom's voice, and his name is Jesus. Jesus Christ." So demand to demand that wedding guest fast while standing in the physical presence of the bridegroom is to misunderstand the very heart of God's messianic arrival. So Jesus confronts John the Baptist disciples and the Pharisees and how do they respond? You see it's not enough to just read the scriptures. It's not enough just to listen to the scriptures, but to understand the scriptures. And so Jesus will then apply this to those that are listening in front of them. But let me just include here as believers in Christ, we ought to not live as though Christ is absent. You see, we have, as Jesus said, he will send down the comforter, the helper to be with us. So, in many ways, Jesus lives with us in the presence of the Holy Spirit. And so, we should never feel like we are alone to fast in feeling absent of the Lord. Do you see that? You see, that's what the Pharisees and the John the Baptist disciples are bringing into. Is he absent or is he here? And Jesus is saying, "I'm here. I'm here." And he's going to go on explain two other parables to clarify that very truth that he is the Messiah and he is here. So, it is not time to fast. So we must be very careful to not add a bunch of rules like the Pharisees and add on top of what is originally God's word. So we're going to see that with the next two parables because we must realize that ultimately true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not defined by dry self-righteous performance. Amen. But by a living vibrant fellowship with the very presence of the savior. You see, we must always recognize within our own hearts. Are we living this cold performance type of life or are we living with the life in us that is an overflow that shows up in our lives? You see the difference? One is I must get myself right in this cold religious performance or my life will be determined by what people think. Whereas when the Holy Spirit lives in you, he is living in you and he is showing you how to live and you're not concerned about what people think ultimately but what God thinks. That is so very important to always repeat that and to recognize the Holy Spirit is trying to say that all the time. Must yield to him. He will show us. And Jesus said in

John 17:17 that we will be sanctified by truth, for He is truth. The Holy Spirit will always point us to the truth who is the Lord Jesus Christ and will always bring us in fellowship with him. That's what we need, isn't it? To not view our relationship with God as a burdensome checklist. I got to do this, this, this, this to please God. No, that's wrong. That's wrong. We're not living a bunch of rules like the Pharisees to earn God's favor. No, God favored us before we can do anything to do anything right. That is what the meaning of God's grace is. It's a gift. Always remember it's a gift to live as a Christian. So when you come to Jesus with the gladness of a wedding guest, do you imagine yourself coming to Jesus in the presence of the Holy Spirit as a wedding guest? You're invited. We are invited as wedding guests to enjoy him and we are born that in the fruit of the spirit all those nine characteristics that's what a wedding guest should come the presence of the lord Jesus Christ to delight in him to delight in his presence resting in his completed grace now this is a picture of that we're going to see you see Christ's presence does not merely invite us to rejoice. That is that's what I just shared. It also exposes the impossibility to patch up human legalism onto a perfect fulfilling truth. God's truth is enough. We don't need to add to it. We don't need to remove from it. And that's what we're going to see here in Mark 2:21. Let's look at that. Jesus delivers his second parable in verse 21. No man, I want to underline that. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment, else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old and the rent is made worse. In the ancient world, garments were valuable because it was not easy to make like today. They did everything handwoven one thing after the next and it was labor intensive to produce. So he uses analogy in that time to describe a spiritual truth. You see when a tear occurred in a piece of garment and mender needed to use an old pre-shrunk patch not a new garment that's not pre-shrunk. This is important to understand. You see, if an unwashed, unshrunk patch of a new cloth was used, the first wash would cause the new patch to shrink violently, tearing the seams from the surrounding area and leaving far worse than what it was before. Made the hole bigger. So the spiritual application here is that the Pharisees who are constantly inventing new legalistic rules and traditions to patch up God's law like they're doing a favor for God. What a subtle and very dangerous place to be. In doing so, their human regulations such as their Corban tradition, which you'll see in Mark 7:10-13, invalidates and actually tears apart God's original commandment to honor parents and love others. You see, if you look at the text, they would say, "You don't have to honor your parents if you do this." Again, usurping God's command. Did God really say? You see the subtlety

there? Did God really say to do that? It's all there and the deception of the Pharisees mixing again God's original commandments to their legalistic rules. And so Jesus did not come, this is the key here for this point is he did not come to add a bunch of new set of external rules or to patch up human systems. No, he came as the divine author and fulfiller of the law. He came to fulfill the law, not to add to the law. And you see that in Matthew 5:17. His teachings fulfill the eternal good intent of God's law to love God with all our heart and with all our mind with all of our strength and soul and to love our neighbors as ourselves. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus plainly declared these words, "Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." And then Mark 7:9, he rebuked those religious rulers. Full well you reject the commandment of God. Very clear, isn't it? And he goes on and says that ye may keep your own tradition. You're you think you're self-sufficient. You think that you're actually pleasing God when you're not. And so human legalism does not repair spiritual brokenness which they thought that to fix something inside they must to do something outside and that's the great danger isn't it to turn which is good evil and evil for good complete broken system that the Pharisees lived under because ultimately they're distorting and destroying the pure word of God. Jesus also says in another point to the resisters, you're making twofold of hell of those that are following you. And so search your heart this morning or are you trying to patch up your life with self-invented moral resolutions creating a to the public a silent 'look at how good I am, look at the glory of me, look at me' bunch of external habits when you know deep down you can't fix what is broken your broken spirit your sin that still remains. Nothing externally can ever fix the disease of sin or create your spirit to become alive. They're all dead. It's all dead. Trying to patch up a sinful heart with human legalism legalism only increases spiritual pride. You remember back in my previous sermon, it's not the vastness of your sins. It's your spiritual pride that stops you from having true forgiveness of your sins. And it makes your heart to be torn and your soul to be worse than the first. So here's the danger. You come into church, you're still lost. Every time you come, your heart gets harder, not softer. If you're still trying to fix up your own life instead of asking the Lord Jesus to fix your life, to give you a new heart, a new spirit as I found in Ezekiel 36, you need something new. Not changing what is old. Your old habits, your old performance, that's not enough. That's not enough because you have sin on your record. You dismiss sin, you miss everything. what Jesus came here to die on the cross for. So abandon then if God is speaking to you right now, if you are one that I've been speaking about and Jesus is making that emphasis

here in this parable, abandon the self-righteous patches of human effort altogether. That's what the Holy Spirit will tell you. Don't attempt to mend your spiritual condition through external rule following. cast yourself instead on the Lord Jesus Christ who has fulfilled the law and completely on your behalf. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus demonstrates that human legalism cannot contain the power of God's grace in your life of true spiritual renewal. We're going to see this in Mark 2:22. Look down with me. Jesus gives his third parable in verse 22. No man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine does burst the bottles and the wine is spilled and the bottles will be marred. But new wine must be put into new bottles. Don't think now bottles that are glass. Back then they were made out of animal skin and they were made of like a leathery material and that's what contained the wine. So fresh wineskins were soft and elastic to begin with stretching as unfermented wine expanded during fermentation. So you needed to have it elastic and soft so it can expand with the fermentation process. Everyone knew that in the ancient times using these wineskins. So old wineskins became stiff, dry, and brittle. So if you would pour new wine into old rigid wineskins, it caused the skins to burst out of its seams, destroying the wine and the container. So that's the illustration there. What is the spiritual application? And then the Pharisees offered the harsh expanding new wine of legalism. Their man-made rules was that new wine, man-made regulations that burst human hearts and bring spiritual destruction, not spiritual life. And so in contrast, Luke 5:39 reveals that the old wine representing God's true eternal law and covenant promises fulfilled in Christ is rich, satisfying, and good. The legalism of the Pharisees has no place in the hearts of God's people. God does not leave us in our brittle, rigid state. No, he gives us believers a new renewed heart through the Holy Spirit. Again, Ezekiel 36:26, enabling us to then walk in that spirit of love and of mercy and obedience unto Christ. You don't have to try to make up a checklist. No, the Holy Spirit is the one that's checking on your soul. You just need to yield to him. He's going to tell you exactly what to do. And that's when you know that you have the assurance of your salvation. That when people ask you, "Hey, why aren't you doing what God's word says?" And you get caught off like, "What do you mean?" That's a dangerous place to be. We don't want to ever act like your Holy Spirit. We want the Holy Spirit to reside in you so that he is the one validating his truth and sanctifying his truth. The truth in your heart. See the Holy Spirit, the way he works, it's described in scripture as he seals us with what? The truth. So that it doesn't as like the broken cisterns in Jeremiah where it comes in and it goes out. Comes in and goes out. The Holy Spirit seals the truth in our soul so that it retains and it

stays in us. What a wonderful thing to know he abides in us.

And that's a danger again if you're here this morning and it's just going in one ear out the other. is because the Holy Spirit has not become alive in you and resides in you and seals his word in you and he verifies the truth in your soul. So let's go to the text Luke 5:38-39 Jesus concludes but new wine must be put into new bottles. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new. For he said the old is better. I'm using this text because there's an emphasis here in Luke's gospel that is not found in Mark's gospel. Again, there's a harmony in the gospels. Each disciple Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, they're seeing the Lord Jesus Christ and in fullness of all four gospels, they can see it in full detail. Let me just take one verse before I explain Luke 5. Psalm 34:8 calls us to taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. So when you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will say these words. He is good. He is satisfying. We are blessed. We are blessed at the core of it when we experience him as good. Not the things that we most people call blessed as oh God gave me a new house or oh God gave me a new car oh or God gave me this new job. No it's just him himself is good. Can you say as a psalmist says the Holy Spirit writes God's law upon a transformed heart. It's written in our hearts so that we can come back to it again and again and again so that we can replace the old dead legalistic man-made performance with a living vibrant faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you can see that in Jeremiah 31:33 again he is Jesus is filling the word of God and the prophets. So legalism, another way of putting it, is self-focused. It is seeking human praise and manipulation and control. True faith is Christ focused, producing genuine love and mercy toward God and his neighbor. Didn't Jesus just spend time with sinners and tax collectors and publicans? love and mercy shown to the neighbors. You see, once you taste the rich, satisfying grace of God in Jesus Christ, you no longer desire the dead, nasty taste of legalism. That's what Jesus is saying. Because the expanding burdens of legalistic self-righteousness does not and no longer can satisfy you. The Holy Spirit will be your witness. No, that's the old that's passed away. Behold, all things become new as Jesus said. And you want to satisfy more of that newness, that new spirit that lives in you, the new heart that Christ gives you. It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian this morning. Turn away from the bursting destructive wine then of human performance. Ask God to give you a renewed heart by the Holy Spirit so that you can drink deeply of the satisfying enduring grace found only in Jesus Christ. And you don't need to add anything or subtract anything from him. He is all sufficient. He is all good. He is all loving. He is all merciful. He is all gracious. He is all longsuffering.

So we have seen then the true spiritual renewal found not in cold legalism or external rule following or receiving man's glory. No, Jesus is our divine bridegroom illustrated in the first parable whose presence fills our lives with true joy, true satisfaction as a wedding guest who has been invited. He then comes to the patch analogy in the second parable that we must never see ourselves where we have to patch up our lives with a bunch of human rules, a legalistic checklist to receive God's favor, ultimately being destructive in our spiritual state and making us worse than the first. But to fulfill God's holy covenant and give us a transformed heart, we must ask him to change us, not for us to change. So what is the whole premise of the first and second and the third parable? We must simply look to the Lord Jesus Christ and continue to look upon Jesus Christ if you're a believer in Christ here today. What have you, if you are, wherever you are right now in this room, where have you added things upon God's word? Where have you added upon what Jesus calls the great commandment that all things hold on to loving God and loving people? And the way he said it, what is on top of that? What is greater than love? What is greater than love? As the Apostle Paul said, faith, hope, and charity above all these charity above all is charity. It's what's going to carry us from this life and we're going to experience in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith and hope will cease to exist upon our departure from this world. Those are only things that will help us to remain faithful. But love is what all surpassing where joy and peace comes from. And then you'll notice also Paul always is in order and he always puts things in order. And that's why the fruit of spirits begins with love and then joy and peace and all the other six fruit of the spirit. Jesus then is the one we must look upon. Let's look upon the cross of Calvary. Jesus bore the full curse of our legalistic pride and our brokenness. Paying the complete debt of the law. The law has to be fulfilled and it's not going to be fulfilled by man-made traditions. It is only going to be fulfilled by Jesus because he said he fulfilled the law. Amen. by his resurrection. He invites us then into a living, vibrant, joyful, loving relationship where his Holy Spirit then indwells in us, writing God's love on our hearts so that we never then rest in performance because all he wants is our love. All he wants is a real true vibrant relationship. And when you're in that kind of dynamic, how can you turn away and think performance is better than love? Oh, may God open our eyes to these wonderful things that Jesus did for us. perform His work on the cross paying the full satisfaction of God's wrath for the punishment of sin, shedding his blood, showing the new covenant. The new covenant is his blood that marked the new covenant. The relationship that we must have is in Christ and him alone and upon his

finished work. I want you to remember those words. Jesus said, "It is finished." So when you think about adding or subtracting, remember his words. It is finished.

Then when you understand and you have experienced Christ, you will be disgusted by trying to patch up your performance, your old garments as it were, your human effort and drinking of wine that is self-righteousness. and instead I love the illustration because there's other passages in scripture where the virgins will wear a garment and there's a picture of those that are invited as guests and then the scene of the banquet the marriage of Cana picture of the wine and again it wasn't like alcohol today where it make you barbarous just it would just be to enjoy the celebration. And the idea is that we can experience both joy in Christ as the new as the real wine rather and we can have the gown of righteousness being invited in as a wedding guest into his feast. And imagine that this was just a foretaste of what we're going to experience forever and ever and ever in heaven. And we get a small picture of that when we are in the presence of God, experiencing his word and not adding or subtracting from it, but allowing the Holy Spirit to work upon our hearts to make these things true and living and real. Isn't that what we want? Isn't that what makes the bride of Christ pleasing to the bridegroom? May he bless this to our hearts and may we truly be satisfied all satisfied in the Lord Jesus Christ for now and forever more. Amen. Let us pray. Father, we thank you for inviting us as guests into the banquet of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we see the Lord Jesus Christ as the bridegroom. And we see the disciples picturing the guests. And father, some of us have already experienced the salvation. We've experienced these truths in our lives that he is the bridegroom. He is the Messiah. He is the savior and lord. And we thank and we so privileged to experience true joy, true love, true peace found in him who has done the thing that we could never do, which is pay for our sins and absorb your wrath. You want us to experience this joy that surpasses all understanding as your true child of God. And Lord, I pray that some here would experience that as well. Lord, only you, Lord, is the one that determines that. And father, I pray that something this morning would have spoken to them and that they would recognize that they have been invited, but they must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior and lord as well. Please bless to that end, Father. And we'll thank you for all that you do today and forever more. and we thank you just so much for what we have in Christ