

Sunday Sermon Guide

Central Baptist Church – Crockett, Texas

January 11, 2026 – Miracle Moments: Power Over Religion

Main Passage: Matthew 9:14-17

Main Idea:

Jesus did not come to improve religion or add new rules. He came to bring new life that cannot be contained by man-made systems built on performance, tradition, or self-righteousness.

I. The Question (v. 14)

“Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?”

- The question of fasting reveals a deeper issue: **How is a person made right with God?**

What looks like a question about fasting is really a question about:

- Religious **compliance**
- Visible **devotion**
- Man-made **standards of righteousness**

Both John’s disciples and the Pharisees believed righteousness was proven through **religious activity**.

II. Jesus’ Answer to John’s Disciples (v. 15)

The Bridegroom Illustration

- Jesus identifies Himself as the **Bridegroom**
- Weddings are times of **joy**, not mourning
- Fasting will come later—after His departure

Key Truth:

- The presence of the Messiah changes everything.
- Joy, not ritual, is the proper response when Christ is present.

III. Jesus’ Answer to the Pharisees (vv. 16–17)

Two Parables – One Message

A. Parable #1: The Old Garment (v. 16)

- New cloth + old garment = greater damage
- You cannot repair an old system by adding something new

Truth:

Jesus did not come to patch religion—He came to replace it.

B. Parable #2: The Wineskins (v. 17)

- New wine expands during fermentation
- Old wineskins have no flexibility left
- The result: both the wine and the skin are ruined

Truth:

The problem is not the wine—it's the container.

The Kingdom Jesus brings cannot survive inside rigid, performance-based systems.

IV. What Went Wrong with the Pharisees

- They loved Scripture—but trusted **systems**
- They valued devotion—but measured **appearance**
- Their obedience hardened into **self-righteousness**
- Righteousness became something you could **see**, measure, and enforce.

V. Application

We drift into religion when:

- Faithfulness is measured by **action** instead of affection for Christ
- Failure is met with **shame** instead of repentance
- Traditions are defended more fiercely than **truth**
- Grace is preached, but performance is practiced

Ask yourself:

- What am I trusting to make me right before God?
- Am I resting in Christ—or managing my spiritual résumé?
- Is my faith producing joy, or pressure?

New wine requires new hearts, not modified habits.

Man-made religion rarely denies Jesus—it simply adds requirements He never gave.