

I. Intro

A. Text: **Matt. 9:14-15**

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. (Matt. 9:14-15)

B. Recap

C. Context

1. Disciples of John were upset.
 - a. We fast. Even Pharisees fast.
 - i. It's the lifestyle we live.
 - b. John the Baptist's very life was a fast.
 - i. Voluntarily embraced physical weakness, with invitation for the tangible grace of God provide strength for his life.
 - ii. Refused to indulge in what he had the right to enjoy.
 - iii. Refused to live in places where he had the right to live.
 - iv. Refused to wear what he had the full rights to wear.

¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'" ⁴ Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. (Matt. 3:1-4)

2. John's Disciples no doubt lived just as John did (a fasted lifestyle).

a. Meanwhile, Jesus' disciples were experiencing joy, delight, and fullness.

b. John's disciples were upset at the difference.

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" (Matt. 9:14)

3. Fair question: *Why do we fast (often) and your disciples are full of food, full of joy (more often than not)?*

a. Jesus used the scenario to teach perhaps the greatest teaching on fasting in all of the Bible.

II. Body

¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? (Matt. 9:15a)

A. Enjoy this Moment: I AM the Bridegroom

1. Not a very big Revelation to a Gentile in America who doesn't understand the context to this statement.

a. But to a Jewish man or woman this was a huge claim.

2. Scriptures probably flashed across their mind to bring clarification to this Bridegroom statement.

a. **Isaiah 54:5:** *"For your Maker is your Husband, The Lord of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of this earth".*

b. **Jer. 2:2:** *The LORD gave me another message. He said, ² "Go and shout this message to Jerusalem. This is what the LORD says: "I remember how eager you were to please me as a young bride long ago, how you loved me and followed me even through the barren wilderness.*

c. **Hosea 2:14-16:** *¹⁴ "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Will bring her into the wilderness, And speak comfort to*

*her... ¹⁶ “And it shall be, in that day,” Says the LORD,
“That you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ And no longer call
Me ‘My Master,’”*

3. With this one statement, this 66 book love story became remarkably clear: The Bridegroom God hinted about in types and shadows was now standing in their midst.
 - a. The Bible is a love story that is centered around a Bridegroom God and King who set aside for Himself a people (made of dirt) who had no intrinsic value in and of themselves.
 - i. Though this people possessed nothing to brag about (in and of themselves), God delighted in them (adored them, was jealous for them).
 - b. This story started in a Garden (**Gen. 1-2**), and was promised to culminate at the end of the age in a wedding banquet (Rev. 19).
 - i. Bridegroom Timeline #1
 - ii. The story became clear: That the God of the universe would call a people unto Himself and rescue her as a Groom rescues His lovesick Bride.
 - c. Jesus was stating emphatically that He was THAT King... That He was THAT God... That He was THAT Messiah... That Deliverer...

B. Enjoy Where This Is Going: I'll Be Back For You

*¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. (**Matt. 9:15**)*

1. The Bridegroom will be taken away.
 - a. Bridegroom Timeline #2.

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- b. But I will come again... for you.
 - i. It's a promise.
 - c. What was meant to be good news, sounded so much like bad news to Jesus' disciples.
 - i. Peter actually rebuked Jesus. (**Matt. 16:22**)
2. The Bridegroom is coming back to rescue His Bride forever. (**Jn. 14:1-3**)

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (**Jn. 14:1-3**)*

- a. All who are a part of this people (His Bride) look forward to that day, when Jesus returns for all those who love His appearing.
 - i. Anticipate His return.
 - ii. Yearn to be in His Presence forever.

C. The Bridegroom Perspective Connects Biblical Fasting To Holy and Healthy Dissatisfaction

*But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. (**Matt. 9:15**)*

- 1. Bridegroom Timeline #2.
- 2. Until the Bridegroom comes back for me... I refuse to settle for less.

*When we realize that there is a blessed life that we've been invited into but have yet to fully experience, we become utterly ruined.

- a. A Bridegroom-centered fasting is a cry that we refuse to settle for lesser pleasures than the pleasures found in Him.

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3. Fasting from the Bridegroom perspective says, *“I’m grateful... But the more I experience You the more I want You.”*
 - a. This type of fasting says that the Difference Between the Promise and the Present Situation is almost unbearable.
 - i. So we mourn... that things aren’t quite the way they will be in the end.
 - b. We mourn that there is still injustice in the land.
 4. Fasting is God’s method of producing and reproducing a Holy hunger for the Bridegroom God to show up again...
 - a. We were created by God with a hole that only He can fill.
 - b. In that place we ache for the God.

¹ How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! ² My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God... ¹⁰ For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. (Ps. 84:1-2, 10a)

- i. We were created to mourn when we don’t experience His complete deliverance.
 - ii. So we ache when we don’t experience Him (His justice, His protection, His peace, His holiness).
- c. Tragedy: Mankind tries to stifle this ache for God with a thousand other things, people, places.
 - i. We hate weakness, so we mask it with legitimate, but not God-enhancing pursuits.
 - ii. Fasting is a grace that God gives us to lead us back to hunger for Him.
- d. Fasting removes all the pretty props and unmask the true state of our natural weakness.

D. The Bridegroom Perspective Connects Biblical Fasting To Wholehearted Desire

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1. We serve a God of delight, a God of passion and a God of magnificent emotions.
 - a. God's love is NOT passive or distant.
 - b. His love is an all-consuming fire.
 2. The God of fiery passions and emotions, delights in us (even in our weakness).
 - a. He adores us. Loves us.
 - b. The God of fiery passions and emotions is jealous for us.
 - c. He is a God with a jealousy that burns stronger than the grave.
 - d. And He jealous for the entirety of our hearts.
 - i. That space in our hearts that we've given to other pleasures, God demands that space (as ugly as it is).
 - e. God wants to conquer the place in our hearts that we've given to other things, until we begin to love God with all the heart, soul and mind.

*Fasting is the gift God gave us to produce wholehearted love in us.

3. When we come to grips with how wholeheartedly God loves us, it fuels wholehearted love for Him.
 - a. Fasting is the place where God cultivates wholehearted desire for Him.
 - b. Before we know it, we're not fasting because of routine (or even to be more spiritual).
4. We actually fast because of Love.
 - a. When Jesus connected fasting to His Bridegroom identity, He connected fasting to LOVE.
 - b. And as we go deeper into the depths of this wholehearted love, we abandon love for anything else.

⁶Set me as a seal upon your heart, As a seal upon your arm; For love *is as* strong as death, Jealousy *as* cruel as the grave; Its flames *are* flames of fire, A most vehement flame. ⁷Many waters cannot quench love, Nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, It would be utterly despised. (**Songs 8:6-7**)