

I. Religious leaders offended by Jesus.

- A. In this section of Luke 5, the Pharisees take offense toward Jesus over the issue of “separation.” Firstly that He did not seem to separate Himself from sinners. Secondly that He did not prompt His disciples toward observing certain days of fasting (separation from food and pleasures).
- B. This section begins with Jesus calling Matthew as a disciple (who was a tax collector) and then goes right into a brief recording of Jesus and His disciples’ association with “tax collectors and sinners” and how this was an offense to the Pharisees.
 - 1. Jesus’ response to this is direct and revealing: **“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”** ([Luke 5:31-32](#))
 - 2. In verse 33 we see the offense of the Pharisees that Jesus’ does not prompt His disciples to fast. First the Pharisees were mad that Jesus ate with sinners, now they were just mad that He ate! We see the Pharisees even trying to pit the practices of John the Baptist on their side!

II. Friends of the Bridegroom

- A. Jesus responds in laying out two crucial things that must be understood in order to grasp the current context: 1. Identity or purpose (what am I here for?) and 2. How mourning relates to purpose.

B. Purpose: [John 3:29](#) **“He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.”**

C. Friend of the Bridegroom ministry paradigm

1. In personally receiving God’s affections for me I stand as in the Bride of Christ. Jesus loves me in my weakness, yet He is committed to fill up all of the empty spaces where my heart is withheld from Him and to war in His jealousy to cross over any distance between us.
2. In ministry (service) I stand primarily as a Friend of the Bridegroom (a friend who partners in what the Bridegroom desires). and not primarily as whatever else describes my service. And therefore what matters most is not success, performance, or whatever niche I find myself doing; but the fundamental desire that Jesus would have His bride.
 - a. I must not compete for the Bride’s attention for myself. It would be like flirting with the Bride on the wedding day.
 - b. Before we dismiss that let us not underestimate how powerfully and how deeply the “need to be liked” is at work within us.
 - c. To the friend of the bridegroom platform, influence, and success can come and go and it won’t touch my dream. My dream is that Jesus receive the wholehearted love of His bride - starting with my heart.
3. The Friend of the Bridegroom is after purpose!

- a. What am I hear for?
- b. What vindicated John's years in the wilderness? What made life worth it? It wasn't the crowds, it wasn't baptizing Messiah, it wasn't being called the greatest man,... It was to **stand and hear** the bridegroom's voice.
- c. This is where his joy was made full! This was it! This was everything!
- d. You were made to long after this holy exchange of affection with God, and no matter how you try to suppress it and find pleasure somewhere else it will run out. And get this, whatever niche you find in service, whatever "your thing" is, whatever you do to try to find purpose in "doing," it won't make your joy full.
- e. For me, in ministry, I'm ruined for anything else but going a "friend of the bridegroom" way into partnership with Jesus.

III. Mourning for the Bridegroom

- A. [Matt 9:15](#) **"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.**
- B. Jesus is saying, "I'm going to spend the next 3 1/2 years addicting them to my presence, even through their disfunction, so that when I'm gone they're going to mourn."
- C. Fasting and Prayer are ultimately about longing for nearness to Jesus, though fasting is certainly also about voluntary restraint, and voluntary weakness, it is ultimately.

D. Jesus is saying, “they’ll embrace whatever restraint and weakness it takes. They’ll say no to as many lesser pleasures as it takes and draw back from as many unnecessary things as it takes to reconnect often to their purpose.”

1. In the fasted lifestyle we remind ourselves often of what matters most. Of what makes our joy full!
2. I’m jealous to see, by the grace of God, a praying and fasting community and therefore a friend of the bridegroom community that won’t sell our inheritance (our purpose and our joy) for a bowl of soup. That we won’t abandon our purpose on the altar of productivity. I want to go as many different places in ministry together as we have grace for, but I don’t want to go there without a vibrant heart.

IV. Longing for Jesus’ Return

- A. Because this mourning is for nearness to Jesus, and because fasting in prayer is for nearness to Jesus, it is ultimately for His Coming (Gk: Parousia- coming, physical presence).
- B. Corporate revival and personal encounter are ultimately to wound us with His presence so that we’re not content, not satisfied without the touch of His presence. To wound us over and over again until [Rev 22:17](#) is the cry of our souls!
 - i. **And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**

- ii. Holy Spirit is the ultimate friend of the bridegroom and everything that He does is to make us long for Jesus. He is using global pressure and global shaking to produce a global prayer: “come Lord Jesus!”

C. Until the wrong things are made right

- i. Mourning is about letting ourselves feel the burden “things are not okay” in the earth and things are not okay in my heart until He comes!