

THE PARABLE THIS WEEK:

Matthew 9:14-17 (ESV) ¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. ¹⁶ No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. ¹⁷ Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”

CONTEXT:

- Jesus is taking on something that was and still is central to the Jewish religion—“**The Old Covenant.**”
- **What is “The Old Covenant”**—It was an agreement between God and His people...

Exodus 19:5-6 (ESV) ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Exodus 20-23—God outlines in detail, “*This is how I want my people to live...*”

The purpose of the law that God gave to the people wasn’t to make them miserable, it was to give them guidelines and a roadmap to have fruitful relationship with God and with others. But God’s plan was never that the Old Covenant would be the ultimate savior of the world.

Jeremiah 31:31 (ESV) “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.”

- **So What Happened?**
 - **Over time instead of the law being a means by which people could be in right relationship with God, the law became their god. Righteousness was determined by how closely you could follow the law. This was the “religion” of those that were questioning Jesus about fasting.**

Matthew 9:14-15 (ESV) ¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

1. Jesus Exposes Their Hearts.

- **They had totally missed the point of “Fasting” ...it became more about Tradition and Rules rather than a relationship with God!**

Matt 6:16-18 (ESV) ¹⁶ “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Even Jesus fasted...Matt 4:1-2 (ESV) ¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.”

Matt 9:15 (ESV) And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

- **Jesus was essentially saying that the point of fasting is to connect with God, yet He was right in front of them in the flesh! They cared more about their own rules and laws.**

2. Jesus teaches about “The New Covenant.”

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New wine creates gasses and stretches the wine skin holding it. If you put new wine in an old wineskin it will burst because the old wineskin has already been stretched as far as it was designed to go.

What is the “New Wine” that Jesus is talking about?

- The New Covenant between God and man through Jesus.
- His death on the cross.
- His blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins.
- His resurrection.

What does this mean for us?

- No more condemnation.

Romans 8:1-2 (ESV) “¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”

- We are made **NEW** in Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **NEW** creation. The old has passed away; behold, the **NEW** has come.”

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR FAMILY OR FRIENDS:

Passages to consider: Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39

1. What about the sermon and the parable was significant to you?
2. Read **Mark 2:18-22** (read it 2-4 times). Who is Jesus talking to? What is He responding to?
3. How would wineskins be impacted by the wine aging process? **A)** What would Jesus be helping His hearers understand through this story? (*Think about the picture that He painted in their minds through it.*)
4. How has knowing and following Jesus changed how you view God, yourself and others, even what is important and valuable? **A)** How has it challenged what you think life is about and how life should be lived?
5. Read **Ephesians 4:20-24 (25-5:1)** What ‘Old’ are you putting off? **A)** What ‘New’ are you putting on?
6. What is your response to what Jesus is saying in this week’s parable? With whom can you share the story or your response?

Passage to prepare for next week: Matthew 13:24-30