

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for August 7, 2016

In With the New
Mark 2:18-22

I. The issue (2:18)

Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" (2:18)

- Last we heard, John the Baptist was arrested (1:14)
- John the Baptist's disciples and Pharisees were two major groups of spiritual leaders at the time
 - Disciples of John the Baptist reached all the way to Ephesus in Acts 19
- Who were the people that came and spoke to Jesus?
 - Matthew 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"
- What is fasting?
 - Fasting could indicate a variety of things, including sorrow, grief, repentance, or devotion to God
 - It is often associated with prayer
 - Sorrow over death of a loved one (David and others for Saul)
 - Grief over sin (Nineveh)
 - Make a request/petition to God (Ezra, Esther)
 - OT only commanded fasting at one point (Day of Atonement)
 - Leviticus 16:29, 31; 23:27-32
 - Zechariah 8:19 mentions 4 fasts (4th, 5th, 7th and 10th months)
 - Esther 9:31 adds another annual fast
- Were they fasting regularly or for a one time purpose?
 - Luke 5:33 And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink."
 - Fasting seems like a regular thing
 - Luke 18:12 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'
 - Pharisees were fasting twice a week!
- Why were these two groups fasting?
 - Pharisees fasted for the show
 - Matthew 6:16-18 "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. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 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.”

- John the Baptist’s disciples fasted to hasten the coming of the time of redemption
 - Mark 1:7-8 And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."
- This fasting scenario seems connected to Jesus and His disciples dining with Levi and the tax collectors/sinners (Immediate context)
 - Controversy regarding authority (2:1-12)
 - Controversy regarding association (2:13-17)
 - Controversy regarding actions (2:18-22)

II. The instruction (2:19-20)

A. The presence of the bridegroom (2:19)

And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. (2:19)

- Again Jesus responds with an illustration like Mark 2:17
- “Wedding guests” could mean groomsmen or guests to the wedding
- Wedding is a time of celebration and feasting with the bridegroom
 - Weddings were the largest social events of village life lasting a week or more (Judges 14:17)
 - Weddings are a time of celebration in our culture still
- Jesus offers the question and then immediately answers the obvious, “they cannot fast”
- Bridegroom is an image for God (Isa 50:1; 54:5-8; 62:4-5; Jer 2:2, 32-33; 3:1, 14; 31:32; Ezek 16:8)
 - Jesus is identifying Himself as the bridegroom
 - This is another bold statement by Jesus claiming to be God
- John the Baptist alluded to this imagery in John 3:22-36
 - John 3:28-30 “You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.”
- Since Jesus (the bridegroom) is there, why would His disciples fast?

B. The absence of the bridegroom (2:20)

The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. (2:20)

- In illustration, Jesus says the bridegroom will be taken away from the guests
 - He will return to His Father in heaven
 - Jesus is hinting at His earthly mission to suffer and die
 - Jesus will repeat this statement many times and disciples will still fail to understand
- The wedding guests will appropriately fast in that future removal of the bridegroom
 - The time after his ascension, which for his disciples will be characterized by trials, testing, spiritual discipline, and preparation for his return (Mark 13:9-13, 33-37)
 - Mark 13:9 "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them."
 - Mark 13:12-13 "And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."
 - Luke 17:22 And he said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it."
 - John 16:20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy."
- Jesus addresses the problem and danger in their thinking/expectations

III. The illustrations (2:21-22)

No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. (2:21)

- Jesus will not fit into the box of Jewish expectations
- The first of two more illustrations used by Jesus
- New unshrunk cloth cannot be sewn to old garment to fix a previous tear/hole
- The unshrunk cloth will inevitably shrink upon washing
- This process will only cause a worse tear

- Luke 5:36 He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old."
- The new and the old don't go together (incompatible)

"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins--and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins." (2:22)

- Second illustration: New wine cannot be put into old wineskins
- Common for wine to be held in wineskins that came from animals like goats
- During fermentation, gas was released from wine causing leather wineskins to expand
- However, old wineskins lost their elasticity and could not stretch anymore
- New wine will burst the old wineskins--destroying both wine and wineskins
- Are these illustrations geared toward all Jews?
 - Nameless group of people had asked Him the initial question
 - Jesus was not only addressing the Pharisees but also the disciples of JB
- Instead, Jesus says "But new wine is for fresh wineskins"
 - There is a need for course correction and change
 - Pharisees have been relying on their own deeds for righteousness
 - John the Baptist's disciples have been anticipating the Messiah who will fulfill all OT promises
- Luke 5:39 "And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'"
 - For most, this would be the desire--the old
 - Ironically, this allowed Jesus to inaugurate the New Covenant