

“New Wine Is for Fresh Wineskins”; Mark 2:18-22

0309-0312

I trust that everybody in the room has had the delightful experience of traveling up and down the I95 corridor, and experiencing, just that, perpetual billboards for South of the Border. You guys know I'm talking about? The millions of billboards—it seems like—for South of the border that have been there since 1950, when it opened in 1950. So, this place, South of the Border, is, if you've ever traveled on I95, you just know just how relentless the advertisement is for this place called South of the Border. At its heyday, we read that there were some 250 billboards between Florida and New Jersey, all for South of the Border—250 billboards.

That's been kind of scaled back in recent years, because as you know, Pedro, who is the subject of all the billboards, Pedro has, alas, fallen subject to political correctness. And Pedro is no longer politically correct, because Pedro always spoke, you know, in broken English. And his signs were always some sort-of mixture of, bad dad jokes spoken in broken English kind of thing, sometimes a little bit humorous, but usually not.

The one that stands out, in my mind was the one that read something like—"You never sausage, a place like this," and had a big 3D Sausage on it, that kind of thing. Or the most annoying one of all was, "Pedro says, kids don't stop yelling, they will eventually stop," you know, something like—these annoying, incredibly annoying billboards for South of the Border, and there are so, many of them.

Well, all these billboards that were telling you to stop at South of the Border, they're going to be an illustration for us this morning of something that I would just think of, in terms of a disparity between the signs and the reality. Because if you've ever had the pleasure of stopping at South of the Border, then you know that it does not measure up to all the hundreds of signs that I've been telling you for 150 miles that you just cannot possibly pass by there without stopping. Because South of the Border consists of basically an RV campground, a miniature golf course, a golf course, and a go kart track, and a couple of restaurants and a liquor store, and that's South of the Border.

And so, all these signs would lead one to believe that this place is some sort-of grandiose mansion of a facility, with state-of-the-art, entertainment and top of the line five-star food, when in actuality it's nothing of the sort.

So, this disparity between what the signs lead you to believe is there, and what's actually there is actually what our passage is about this morning. This disparity between the signs and the reality. Or more specifically, in our passage, what we'll see this morning is we will see two groups of people who misunderstand the signs and what the signs are pointing to and they in fact, begin to forget about the reality that the signs were intended to point to, and instead focus intently and solely upon the signs themselves. It would be tantamount to a family taking a vacation to drive up and down the I95 corridor from Florida to New Jersey and back taking pictures of every billboard, and never stopping at South of the Border. Something to this effect, where these two groups of people in the passage this morning are going to intently focus upon the signs which were intended to point to a greater reality, and they never got to the greater reality.

So, that's our passage this morning, again for Mark chapter two, verses 18 through verse 22, your handout, your notes, say, verse eight through verse 22, if you want, we can back up and start again back at

verse eight, if you like. We'll be here a little bit longer if you do that. So, instead, we'll just start with verse 18, through verse 22. So, we'll begin this morning by reading our passage.

But before we do that, let me just remind us real quickly of where we're at in the story. This is the third conflict that Mark is relating to us. This series of conflicts, five conflicts, all of them follow the same pattern. In each conflict, there is a group of people, religious leader type people who have issue, they take issue with Jesus, through their understanding of how Jesus has violated the ritual law, the ceremonial law. And so, they take issue with Jesus, sometimes it's spoken—in the second, third, and fourth episode, they're spoken. But in the first episode in the final episode, they're unspoken.

Nevertheless, Jesus knows their thoughts. So, we began back at the story of the paralytic in the home there with Jesus teaching the paralytic, they can't get him in so, they lower him through the roof. Jesus pronounces his sins to be forgiven, in their hearts start thinking; Who does this guy think he is? Only God can forgive sins. To which Jesus answers; That you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—which one is the easier for me to say; Your sins are forgiven or for me to prove it to you by telling him to get up and walk. But just so, that you know that I have authority to forgive sins on earth—he turns to the paralytic; Stand up, take up your bed and go home. Which he does.

Then after that, for last week, we looked at the episode of the calling of Levi to be His disciple, and eventually an apostle. Levi, who is the most hated tax collector, he calls him to follow him. He does and then afterwards there's this big party at Levi's house in which Jesus is reclining a table with all these tax collectors and sinner-types. And they take exception to the company that Jesus is teaching. Why is your master they come to the disciples, why is your master eating with tax collectors and sinners? Doesn't he know that that's not proper company?

To which Jesus then answers, of course, the answer that we looked at from last week; that the Son of Man didn't come for those who have no need of a doctor, just as physicians go to the unwell, so, also the Son of Man came not to the righteous, but to the sinners.

Sort of tongue in cheek there from Jesus to say, of course, nobody's righteous, nobody is without need of the Atonement of sin. But those who have an awareness, those who have this sensitivity, this awareness of their need for forgiveness, those are the ones to whom Jesus came.

And so, the episode that we turned to this morning is the third in the series of conflict stories. This is going to be a conflict over fasting. So, last week, the conflict revolved around Jesus' eating and who he was eating with. This week, the conflict will revolve around the fact that Jesus is not refraining from eating, or at least his disciples are not refraining from eating, as others feel that they should.

So, let's read our passage from verse 18, through verse 22. Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him; Why did John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast? And Jesus said to them; Can the wedding guest fast while the Bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the Bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the Bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. No one sews a piece of unshrink cloth on an old garment. If he does the patch tears away from it, the new from the old and the worse tear is made. And no one puts a new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is destroyed. So, also, are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins.

So, as we pick up the story here in verse 18, we are transitioning from the previous conflict over the company that Jesus was keeping, the tax collectors in the sinners, and the feast they were having with them. Now it transitions to the feast that they should not be having, with this question about fasting.

From verse 18; Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, and people came and said to him; Why did John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples did not fast?

So, we begin here by looking at these two groups of people that are going to take center stage and the story. The two groups are the Pharisees. We're well familiar with the Pharisees. The other group is this group known as the disciples of John. Now the disciples of John are a group of people in Scripture that I would imagine that most of us are probably not spent a whole lot of time thinking about who the disciples of John were, and why they're important in the Scriptures, I would imagine that to the average student of the Bible, the disciples of John are just sort-of this group of people that we just kind of pass over. But we need to think about the disciples of John this morning, because the disciples of John are going to take center stage as the primary, premium example, that the Scriptures are holding up for us for the truth this passage contains for us.

So, the disciples of John are the ones who come and ask this question of Jesus. The way Mark phrases it here—he says; The people came and asked them, why the disciples of John were fasting, and the Pharisees were fasting, but his disciples were not fasting. Matthew, when he relates this same incident, gives us a little bit more preciseness, or a little bit more detail in his relation of the same incident. And Matthew tells us that it's the disciples of John, who come and ask this question of Jesus.

So, of course, there's no contradiction here. What's going to happen is there's going to be a group of people, and some of the people are Pharisees. Some of the people are the disciples of John, and then some of the people are others. And this group of people sort-of collectively—they're, they're talking with each other maybe, and they're all saying; You know, Jesus's disciples are not fasting. Why is that?

And among this group of people, the disciples of John are going to sort-of take the initiative, and they're going to say; We're going to go ask them. And so, there's this group of people, which contains the disciples of John, the Pharisees, and some others are going to go and the spokespeople of this group are going to be the disciples of John. So, that's why Matthew says that the disciples of John come to Jesus with this question; Why your disciples not fasting when all these others people are fast?

So, what's confronting Jesus here is this question that they have the basically goes like this—If you want to be taken seriously as a religious leader, then you need to get with our program, the program of fasting, as the disciples of John do. And as the Pharisees. Do they come to Jesus with this question.

So, now back to the disciples of John, who were they? And why are they important for us in the passage. The disciples of John—you know, when we read through our Scriptures, we have a tendency, and this is a good tendency, but we have a tendency, as we read through the Scriptures, particularly the narratives, to think of the characters in the story, and sort-of make this imaginary line that divides the characters between good and bad. And we always do that. And it's natural. We watch a movie, we do the same thing, read a book, we do, same thing.

When we read our Scriptures, we have this imaginary line, and we're sort-of—we're always putting people on one side or the other, or do they fall into the bad guy category? Or do they fall into the good guy category?

And so, when we come across the disciples of John in Scripture, we tend to think of them as ones who fit into the good guy category, because we know John was a good guy. He was the Herald, he was the one to proclaim Messiah is here. And so, his disciples must have fallen into the same category of the good guys.

Not so, fast. So, let's think about the disciples of John. And as we think about them, we're going to ask ourselves the question; Are these people really ones who are—should we use the phrase—with the program that Jesus is here to proclaim?

So, the disciples of John are a group of people that, we may not have realized just how often they show up in the pages of New Testament. But they do show up quite frequently, we've already seen them, we've encountered them on the banks of the Jordan, because they were there with John, assisting with all those thousands of baptisms that were taking place in the wilderness.

But then we also are going to see these same disciples of John show up many more times throughout the pages of the New Testament. For example, in Matthew chapter 11, they show up again, when that famous message is sent by their master, their teacher, who's in prison, and it sends that message to Jesus by way of his disciples; Are you the one that we're waiting for? Or not? Are you the one that we've been looking for or not? They, the disciples of John, bring the message, Jesus gives the answer to the disciples of John, they take it back to John in prison.

Then we come across some again, a few chapters later, Matthew, chapter 14, verse 12, this is after John, the Baptizer, has been executed. And they're going to come to Jesus with both of the news that he has been executed. But then they're also going to be the ones who collect the body and bury the body. And then they're thoughtful enough and considerate enough to come and tell Jesus, who is biologically related to John, that his cousin, has been beheaded.

So, if they show up again, then they show up again, in places like Luke chapter 11, verse one, in which they're referenced. This is the passage in which Jesus's disciples come to him and they say; Listen, John's disciples taught him, taught them how to pray, why don't you teach us how to pray, like John taught his disciples how to pray. So, they show up a few times in that way.

But now let's get back to that dividing line, good guy or bad guy? The disciples of John are going to, in a sense, fall into both categories, depending on when we think about them. The disciples of John—up to a certain point, and that point would be the baptism of Jesus in the wilderness—up until that point, the disciples of John we would think of them as those who are following the leader that they should follow. Those who, whose hearts have been pricked by the Holy Spirit. They are following John, they're disciples of John. And they are there in the wilderness. In fact, we said this a while back, when we were in chapter one, we said that the most likely Peter and his brother Andrew, as well as James and John, were probably disciples of John before they became disciples of Jesus—as were many others.

However, upon the baptism of Jesus in the wilderness, starting at that point, the disciples of John should have ceased to exist. Because John's role, his entire reason for being here, his anointing, his position, so, to speak, was to point to Messiah. That's what we're told, over and over. I am here to proclaim Messiah is coming, to make straight the path, to bring down the mountains, to bring up the valleys, to make straight the path for Messiah to come, to point Messiah out when he arrives.

And John, in fact, did this. We see from John chapter one, verse 35, and verse 36. John is here, we're told with two of his disciples, and he looked at he saw Jesus as Jesus walked by, and he turned to his disciples and said; Behold, the Lamb of God, that's him. We see just a couple chapters later in John chapter three,

verse 25, we see that there's this discussion that arises between some of John's disciples and some of the Jews over some of the ritual laws, the purification laws. Verse 26; And they came to John and they said to John, Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan—meaning Jesus—Jesus, that guy who was with you, across the Jordan, whom you bore witness to remember, you told us he was the one.

Look, look at what he's doing. He's baptizing and everybody's going to him. Obviously thinking that John is going to be upset about this. But John answers verse 27; You yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been seen before him. The one who has the Bride is the Bridegroom.

So, here, John turns to the same analogy that we're going to see in our passage this morning, the analogy of the Bride groom, and the friend of the Bridegroom. So, John even uses this analogy. He says, The one who has the Bride, well, that's the Bridegroom. I don't have the Bride. The Bride is the church. The Bride is God's people. I don't have God's people, he does, because He's the Bridegroom. He's the one. The friend of the Bridegroom—who I am—the friend of the Bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the Bridegroom's voice. Remember, His sheep hear His voice, and his sheep recognize his voice.

Therefore, this joy of mine is now complete, He must increase, and I must decrease. So, John made it plain, that there was absolutely no reason to remain a disciple of John after the arrival of Jesus on the scene, after John had pointed him out. And after John had said, this was why I came, to point him out—there he is. Behold, the Lamb of God, I must decrease, He must increase.

Yet we still find many chapters later that there's still this group of people called the disciples of John. So, John seems to have, I don't know, maybe we could see in this some sort-of maybe an aspect of starting well, but ending poorly. Because John himself, either right now he's in prison, or he has already been executed. But in either case, remember what happens as he's in prison. And even he himself says, to his followers, to His disciples, He says, Go and ask him if he's the one that we're really waiting for not.

So, perhaps John himself, in his final days, as he's sitting there in prison, maybe his doubts begin to get the best of him. And perhaps he himself did not point his followers sufficiently clearly enough to Jesus to say to them; Look, there's no reason to continue following me.

But he at least started out well, at the very least, he started out well, and there was no reason for anyone to continue being a follower of g of John, a disciple of John at this point.

So, the disciples of John stand for us at this point in Scripture as the example of those who were given the sign, but didn't see it. So, in all of Scripture, we're going to see the Pharisees do the same thing, we're going to see other people do the same thing in Scripture, that signs are given, pointers are given to Messiah, and people miss it. That's all over the place. Yet, the disciples of John stand as the example, because they were the disciples of the one who was himself the sign, the one who himself was the one that says, that's him. His very disciples are the ones who failed to recognize. So, they're going to stand is just this example of what we're here to see in the passage this morning.

And so, here they come to Jesus asking Jesus, you know, why are your disciples not fasting? We're fasting? Why are you not fasting? They are just as Jesus were described, he talks about the people, and he says, they're like sheep without a shepherd. They are like sheep without a shepherd, now, their leader who was to point them to Jesus, either he's in prison, or he's been killed, they're still known of as John's disciples, and they still seem to be just clueless—like sheep without a shepherd.

So, he says; John's disciples and the Pharisees, they were fasting, and people came to him and asked him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast? So, John's disciples, they're wrapped up with the same question that the Pharisees seem to be wrapped up in. And then here's this man, Jesus and his disciples, the One who John pointed us out, as that's the Bridegroom. He is the Lamb of God, yet, we're sort, of we don't know quite what to think about this idea that he's not fasting. That his disciples are not fasting. So, that's the that's the occasion for the episode before us.

But as we think about the disciples of John, of course, now, Jesus, he's performing His earthly ministry here, and they come to him with this question. But what we're going to see, is that this group known as the disciples of John, are going to continue on past the crucifixion, resurrection, the ascension of Jesus, and we're going to see all the way into the book of Acts, that there's still going to be a group of people known of as the disciples of John—all the way to Acts chapter 18. Remember in Acts chapter 18, we're in a place called Corinth. And Paul runs into that guy by the name of—Apollo's who's described as a powerful preacher of the Scriptures. who only knows the baptism of John.

That's all the way in Acts chapter 18. And then even further in Acts chapter 19, Paul goes to Ephesus, and he encounters at Ephesus, a group of people, a group of disciples that are described to us as those whom who Paul asked him, he says, Do you have the Holy Spirit? And they say; Holy Spirit, what's that? We never heard of such a thing as the Holy Spirit.

That's Acts chapter 19. That is most likely something like three or four decades after Acts chapter one, with the ascension of Christ into heaven, and then the coming of the Spirit in Acts chapter two, something like three or four decades later, there are still a group of people who don't even know that there's a Holy Spirit. But they're known off as disciples of John, followers of John, those who were baptized into the baptism of John.

So, unfortunately, this man John had a very long-lasting effect on people. And as we see, it wasn't entirely positive. So, they come and they ask Jesus this claim that or there's this question, why are these other people fasting and you're not fasting? And then Jesus is going to answer, we'll get to the fasting in just a moment. But here's Jesus's answer, verse 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 him, they cannot fast. .

So, here we see once again, Mark is bringing to us a very clear pronouncement of the deity of Jesus. Remember, this is the point of the whole book. The main point of Mark is; to show that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And we've seen many claims to divinity so, far. We see yet another one here. Because Jesus is going to answer their question, the question is directed to him; Why do you and your disciples not fast? And Jesus' answer begins with, his answer is twofold, but it begins with—can the Friends of the Bridegroom fast while the Bridegroom is here?

Clearly comparing himself to the Bridegroom, nowhere in the entirety of the Old Testament, was Messiah ever compared to the Bridegroom. But instead, the Father God, the Father is said to be, multiple times, he is said to be the Husband of Israel. And he said to be the Husband of adulterous Israel. So, in both instances, God is frequently compared to a husband in the Old Testament. Never is Messiah compared to a husband or a Bridegroom in the Old Testament.

And here, Jesus' answer begins with this sort-of parable, this sort-of pithy statement that clearly is comparing him to the Bridegroom. So, Jesus once again gives this plain, and clear claim to divinity. He says, Can—verse 19—can the wedding guests fast while the Bridegroom was with him? As long as they have the Bridegroom with them? They cannot fast.

Then verse 20, the days will come when the Bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. So, just a word about that about the Bridegroom being taken from them. That might seem a little bit out of place, because it might seem to us—and we'd be right in saying this might seem to us that Jesus could have given the answer without that part, and it would have made just as much sense. How can the wedding guests fast when the Bridegroom is here? And then move on to the two parables that he's going to tell, it would have made just as much sense. But instead, inserts this little statement about—oh, and the time will come when they will fast, don't worry about that. They will fast when the Bridegroom was taken from them.

So, what's going on there? That is, of course, the first allusion to the crucifixion of Jesus, the first allusion in Mark's gospel, in fact, the first one that occurs in any of the Gospels. The first reference to the coming crucifixion of Jesus. But in addition to this, we see something of this tearing away because he's going to tell this parable—immediately after this—he's going to tell this parable about a patch, and the patch tearing away from the original garment.

And if we look closely, we would see that the same word is used here, to not just being taken away but literally what Jesus says is the Bridegroom will be torn away. So, literally what Jesus says here is; Can the wedding guest fast while the Bridegroom was with them? But the day is coming when the Bridegroom will be torn from them. But nobody so, is a new patch on to an old garment because the new patch will tear away from the old garment, making a worse tear.

You see the flow of thought there? tearing away the Bridegroom. Tearing away the patch from the old cloth. And the analogy in fact is going to continue on beyond that, because we're going to see a couple more 'tearings.'

I like seeing these connections in Mark's thoughts, because here we have the tearing away of the Bridegroom, then we have the tearing away of the old patch, or the new patch from the old garment. The next tear we're going to see in Mark's gospel is the tearing of the priest's clothes. When Jesus says to him; The next time you see me, I'll be coming on clouds of power. And then after that, the next tearing will be the tearing of the temple veil. So, four 'tearings'; the tearing away of the Bridegroom, the tearing away the patch, the tearing of the priest's clothes, with the declaration—you will see me coming on the clouds of power, and then the tearing of the curtain.

And then he goes from this, which by the way, another reason to make note of this is, once again, let's remember who Mark is writing to. Mark is writing to one of the most persecuted groups of Christians in the New Testament, if not, in the New Testament Church. It's these Roman Christians during the period of intense persecution under Nero. So, he's saying to them, it's almost like Jesus wants more to just insert this little statement—there will be fasting, but that period of fasting will be short, and it will have an end to it, because Mark's readers, right now, are in a point at which they probably feel like fasting. Because they probably feel like their back is against the wall. Like they've got no way out. Like this persecution has broken out and is so, intense, and my friends are being killed, being put in prison, we're losing our jobs, we're losing our homes. The world is on fire right now. And so, here's comes the words of Jesus to say; Not to worry, there will be a time of fasting, but that time of fasting will have an end to it. And after that there will be rejoicing.

So, then the parable comes to us, verse 20, again; The days will come when the Bridegroom is torn from them. And then they will fast and that day. Now verse 21; No one says a piece of unshrink cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, the worse tear is made. 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 skins.

So, this idea that Jesus is going to follow up this—there will come this time of fasting, there will come the tearing away of the Bridegroom, and he's going to follow that out with these two parables. Both of the parables are a parable about it's about an insufficient container, if you will. Or an old thing that's insufficient, and a new thing comes, and the new thing and the old thing are not compatible. And so, both of these things together—the Bridegroom, and the tearing away of the Bridegroom, but the feasting and the festival of the Bridegroom, and the wedding festival, together with these two parables of a new thing that's incompatible with the old thing—both of these things come together to answer their question about fasting. Because that's the original question that brought all this about; Why are we fasting and your disciples are not fasting.

So, let's now talk a little bit about the fasting that they're doing, and why it is that they seem bothered that Jesus' disciples are not fasting.

So, fasting is something that, once again, kind of like the disciples of John—we may not have thought very often about the disciples of John, sort-of in the same way with fasting. I think if we were to ask the person who was maybe just a casual student of the Bible, maybe if we've not looked closely into our Scriptures, if we would just ask something like this, I don't know, pose a question like this; How important is fasting in the Scriptures?

I think that most people will be inclined to say, well, that's really important. The Scriptures talk about fasting, and yea, we are to be people that fast. That might be sort-of a standard, generic answer.

But let's look a little closer into what the Scriptures actually say to us about fasting. So, if we begin in the Old Testament, and we asked ourselves, what do we see, what's fasting about in the Old Testament? We would see that fasting occurs quite frequently in the Old Testament. But we also see that the fasting that we see in the Old Testament is almost exclusively a type of fasting that is a fasting for a particular occasion, or some sort-of event that is a difficulty, or some sort-of trauma. And so, there'll be times in which a fast is declared, for example, Esther, chapter four. Before Esther—Esther is preparing to go in boldly go into King Ahasuerus. And she asks the people to fast for her. Or Nehemiah chapter one, who fasts before he goes in and talks to the king. Or Moses on the mountain, fasting for 40 days.

So, we see occasions in which there are fastings that take place. But if we look closely, we will see that there is only—in all the pages of the Old Testament—there is only one perpetual fast that's regulated. And that is the fast of Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. So, one time a year, God's people were told to fast. And that fasting was to be in connection with the Day of Atonement, the day in which Israel collectively gathered together, in broken-heartedness over their sin and repentance over their sin. And this Day of Atonement was to take away the people's sin for another year.

That was the only prescribed fast in all the Old Testament, it was the only perpetual fast. Again, there will be times in which God's people would will be told; We need to fast over this thing, or we need to fast over this question right here. But in all the times that fasting is mentioned, it's only one time in which a perpetual, regulated fast is commanded of God's people.

And yet, somehow, by this point, now, the Pharisees are fasting, not just for the Day of Atonement, but we're told that they're actually fasting twice a week. Remember, in Luke chapter 18, when Jesus tells the parable of the Pharisee, and the tax collector that go into the temple courtyard to pray. And the tax

collector is standing way off. And the Pharisee says, I'm just glad I'm not like that guy way over there, for I fast twice a week.

And that's what the Pharisees did. They fasted twice a week; Mondays and Thursdays were fast days. So, every Monday, every Thursday, if you lived in Israel, during Jesus' lifetime, every Monday, and every Thursday, you would see Pharisees fasting, and you know, that they were fasting, because they made a big show of it. They displayed, they didn't comb their hair, they were messed-up clothes on that day. They disguised their faces in such a way as to look hungrier than they really were. And that was every Monday every Thursday.

So, somehow that's morphed from one time a year, to two times a week, which is, if you do the math, about 100 times more than God had prescribed the fast to be. Which brings to us a very relevant warning, this morning, which is to say; Beware of being more righteous than God. Beware of being more righteous than God. And I say that, obviously, sort-of tongue-in-cheek. But it's an easy thing to do. It's a thing that we see a lot of in the Scriptures, don't we? For example, James and John, when they come across the Samaritans who won't believe Jesus' message, and what do they say? We can call down fire on these people. You see, more righteous than Jesus Himself.

And in fact, that's really the root behind virtually all of the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders, or at least between Jesus and the Pharisees, is this idea that they felt themselves more righteous than the Son of God Himself. And so, in this way, their fasts have gone 100 times beyond what God had prescribed for his people, so, that, in such a way that they are now, we're told, heaping a burden on the people which the people cannot bear.

So, that's what we see, in the Old Testament, the Old Testament prescribes that one day of fasting, but we do see that God's people sort-of had from time to time they were told to fast. And in addition to that, they of course, had the freedom that when they felt that a fast was appropriate, they could then fast when they felt it needful.

So, in the Old Testament, as well as the New, when we think about fasting, we think about an activity that's connected—we of course know what fasting is, it's in the Bible, it is the intentional, depriving oneself of food, perhaps food and water, depending on what kind of fast it was, but at least food for a period of time. And that that deprivation came from a sense of—well, a number of things—repentance over sin, brokenness, over sin, grief, despair, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, need, lack loss, you get the idea. Fasting always was something that came out of a heart of desperation, a heart that had a felt-need, whether that felt need was the need for repentance and forgiveness, or the need for divine guidance, or divine assistance, or divine deliverance. It was always a response that came from lack, or need, or despair, or some type of situation in which the person was placed into or the nation was placed into, in which they were desperate for God to hear and for God to respond.

So, that's the Old Testament picture of fasting. Now we come to the New Testament. And again, we ask ourself the question; What's the deal with Christians and fasting? Is fasting really important to Christians? We might tend to say; Well, yeah, the Bible says that fasting is pretty important for Christians.

But let's look to the scriptural evidence. And let's just see what the Bible teaches us, what the New Testament teaches us, about the Christian and fasting. And so, we have, in just the next few moments, I'm going to give you the totality of everything the New Testament says about fasting. It's not going to take that long. So, we've already talked about the question that's brought to Jesus here in this episode. There's going to be one other occasion in Matthew six, we'll talk about that in a little bit in Matthew six, where

Jesus rebukes the—he calls them hypocrites—for making a big show out of their fasting. And so, Jesus is going to say there when you fast, don't do it, like they do it.

Outside of that, in your handout, here's what we have. Acts chapter nine, verse nine, and for three days, Paul (Saul), after the Damascus Road experience, was without sight, and he neither eat nor drink. Acts 13, verses two and three, while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I've called them. Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 14, verse 23; And when they had appointed elders, for them in every church with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord, in whom they had believed.

And there you've just now heard the totality of what the New Testament says about fasting. Nowhere is the Christian commanded to fast. And in fact, I would say nowhere is it implied that the Christian is expected to fast. Now some would say; Well, what about Matthew six, when Jesus says; When you fast, don't do it like this? Isn't Jesus saying that he's expecting us to fast? I would say that's a stretch for Jesus to say, when you do this, don't do it that way. I'd say it's a little bit of a stretch to go from that to say; Well, clearly, that means Jesus is expecting you to do that.

So, what I would say to us is that the New Testament presents us with fasting as something that is completely a Christian liberty, a matter of the Christian conscience, a matter of something that is never regulated for the Christian, never required for the Christian, but is nevertheless something that the Christian may from time to time, feel the need to engage in. And we'll talk about that a little bit later.

So, that's what the New Testament presents to us about this question of fasting. For the Jew, the fasting was mostly a matter of freedom, except for that one occasion per year. For the Christian, it's a matter of complete freedom, of complete conscience. For the Pharisee, and for the disciple of John, apparently, it had become a matter of necessity. Twice a week. Can you imagine the burden? Can you imagine the burden of twice a week, performing this fast, and the expectations that would be heaped upon you, that the two times a week, you're expected to be fasting?

So, this is what we see now in terms of the New Testament's teaching on fasting. So, now, let's now turn back to the passage, and once again from verse 19. Jesus said, (I'm sorry), verse 18; And the people came and said to him; Why did John's disciples and disciples of the Pharisees fast, your disciples don't? Jesus answered them by saying; Well, can the wedding guest fast while the Bridegroom is with them?

So, this idea of fasting is what they have latched upon, as one of the central expressions of what they consider to be the expression of their Jewish faith. There were three expressions of the Jewish faith that were central to the Jew, three public expressions upon which rested the entire, we could say almost the entire public outward expression of the Jewish faith. And those three public expressions of faith were: fasting, public prayer, and giving alms. Those three things were the public expression of the Jewish faith.

And what's interesting is when we come to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is going to address each one of those things in sequence. All three of these public expressions of the Jewish faith, Jesus is going to pick each one of them apart. In Matthew chapter six, first, he's going to say, as far as his practice of giving alms to the poor, Jesus is going to say, you know, when you give to the needy, don't do like the hypocrites do, who blow this trumpet and say; Hey, everybody, look! I'm getting ready to give to the poor, watch me! You know, kind of like the, the form of first century social media, with all the selfies, when you know we do something for the poor, there's got to be a selfie and a social media post about it. In a similar sort-of way,

that same attitude existed in the first century. Hey, everybody, look! I'm getting ready to give to the poor! Jesus says, don't do it like that.

He immediately goes from that to the second public expression of Jewish faith, which is public prayer. And Jesus says, you know, when you pray in public, because that's what the Jew did. If you lived in particularly if you lived in Jerusalem, that's what you did daily. There were two prayer services daily, in which you gathered in the temple courtyard, and you pray publicly. And so, Jesus said; When you do that, don't do it like the hypocrites, who want to be seen for all their words, and all their flowing long prayers. Jesus, don't do it like that. Instead, go and get alone with your Father.

And then Jesus after that gives what we know of as the Lord's Prayer. And then right after that, he then addresses the third and the final public expression of the Jewish faith, which is what we're talking about today, fasting. And he says there, he says; You know, when you fast, don't do it, like these hypocrites. Don't do it like they do. Because what they do is they intentionally disguise themselves, they intentionally put on this sad, hungry sort-of face, and wear old, messed-up clothes and don't comb the hair, because they want to look as destitute, they want to look as like they are going through as much trouble and pain as possible for God. We want everybody to see just how much trouble we're going through for God, because we're so, faithful. And we love God so, much that this is what we're doing. You see it, you see what we're doing for God. So, Jesus says, don't do it like that.

So, they come to Jesus; Why don't you guys fast? And his answer, once again, is this twofold answer of the Bridegroom and the two parables. So, let's now look at Jesus's answer. And let's now look at the second part of his answer first, and then we'll come back and we'll look at the Bridegroom aspect of his answer.

So, he gives these two parables, these two pithy, memorable sorts of proverb type of statements that are very easily remembered because they are so, poignant for us. And the first one from verse 21. He says this; Nobody sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, nobody does that. This is common knowledge, says Jesus. Kind of like a physician going to people that aren't sick. Everybody knows that's not what physicians do. In a similar sort-of way, Jesus says, everybody knows, you don't sew unshrunk cloth onto an old garment. Because what will happen is the patch, the unshrunk part, will shrink and tear away from the original garment.

So, in Jesus's day, of course, this is a time in which the clothing was mostly wool, probably all wool, I would imagine. So, wool clothing, and it wouldn't have been this time of preshrunk clothing and preshrunk cloth, it wouldn't have been a time of synthetic fibers, and everything. This would have been a time in which a garment that was made from wool, one would expect that when that garment gets wet, and is washed is going to do a great deal of shrinking. And so, Jesus says; You know, when you have to patch, a garment, everybody knows that you can't do it with a brand-new piece of wool, because that patch itself is going to shrink. And as it shrinks, it's going to tear away from the original garment. And here's the point, both of them are going to be lost. Jesus' says plainly, the new tear is going to be worse than the old tear.

So, both the patch and the original garment will be lost. There is this incompatibility with the new thing. The new thing comes, and it's absolutely incompatible with the old thing. And when you try to force the new together with the old, you lose both.

And so, then, from there, Jesus goes on to the next parable, we already talked about sort-of the connections between the tearing there. He goes on to the next parable, which is the parable of the wine and the wine skins. 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.

So, here once again, it's the same sort-of parable. It's a parable of a new thing, coming together with an old thing—a new thing that's incompatible with the old thing. And in trying to put the new together with the old you lose both. Because Jesus says once again plainly that you lose not only the skins, but you also lose the wine.

Now what's interesting here, again, we talked about the parallels between the tear: the tearing away of the Bridegroom, the tearing away the patch, the tearing of the priest's clothing, the tearing of the temple veil. So, also with this parable of the wine. Because let's just think of some of the threads that the New Testament uses to teach us of wine. We think of Jesus' first miracle, which is this miracle of purification, this miracle turning water into wine, and it wasn't just any wine, but we're told it was the best wine.

So, we have that. Then we're told things like; the vine—Jesus is the true vine, we are the branches. And then we come to places in which, for example, Jesus is offered the wine on the cross, and he refuses it, and he says, I won't partake of that until I'm with my people in glory.

Or we think of, of course, what we just observed, in the Communion, in the Upper Room as Jesus says; This cup is the New Covenant in my blood. And we could go on.

So, the threads that are connecting together this idea, not just of wine, but of the best wine, of new one. These threads are numerous, and rich for us, just like the threads of the—no pun intended—the threads of the tear.

So, let's now look at this parable; And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, the wine is destroyed, and so, are skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins. So, the way that people would often contain liquids in Jesus' day, is through the use of skins. Typically, it was a goat skin, and what would the way it would come about, they would take a goat, obviously, the goat had passed away, and they would skillfully make just a few incisions: one incision around the neck, four incisions around each leg—one incision around each leg—another incision around the tail, and then one right down the middle.

And then they would peel the skin off the goat with no further incisions. And then they would take that skin, sew back up the main incision, and then each of those holes, they could tie it up. And then after, of course, it was treated and cured, they could then put liquid in that skin, tie it off. And that's how they would carry liquids.

We can think of, remember back in the story of Joshua, where Joshua was fooled by the Gibeonites, who had the old dried-out skins. Because they were pretending to be from far, far away.

So, that's how people would often carry liquids. And now we think of these skins, but not just skins, but wineskins. And so, when they would carry wine, or put wine in these skins, and they would call it wineskins, then there was also another element involved with that. And that would be the expansion of the wine, as the wine fermented.

So, when wine ferments, of course, you add yeast in, and as that ferments, then it emits a lot of gas. So, kind of like, maybe a bottle of Pepsi. Take a bottle of Pepsi and shake it up, and what's inside then, now that plastic bottle is a lot stronger than a wineskin, but what's now inside that is something that has expanded greatly in volume. And so, there's a great deal of pressure on the inside. Similar to a wine, a new

wine, that goes through the process of fermentation, and the gases are emitted. And so, inside that wineskin, the pressure is increased and built up.

And so, Jesus similarly here says, kind of like the new patch; Nobody does that. In the same way, nobody puts new wine into an old, dried-up inflexible, hard, old skin. Nobody does that. Because everybody knows what's going to happen when you do that, the new wine is going to expand, it's going to burst. Okay. So, there's some important parallels to see here. We've already noticed a parallel between the new thing, which is incompatible with the old thing. But notice, also, in each parable, it's the power of the new thing. It's the new patch shrinking, that pulls away. It's the new wine expanding that the old wineskin can't accommodate. It's the new thing, growing, moving, expressing power, that the old cannot accommodate.

So, the point here is, there's a new thing, the old thing is absolutely incompatible with the new thing. So, what Jesus is saying here, he's addressing the question of fasting, why aren't they fasting? And his answer, it has to do with the fact that this new thing is incompatible with the old thing. So, Jesus is saying that the reason we're not fasting is because there's a new thing that's not compatible with the old thing.

Here's what we need to be really careful to not misunderstand, and it's this. The old thing that Jesus is saying is not compatible with the new thing. Clearly, we already know he's the new thing, right? He's the new wine. He's the new patch. The old thing that he's not compatible with—please be very careful and understand Jesus is not saying that the old thing is the Old Testament. Jesus is not saying that the old thing is the law. Jesus is not saying that the old thing is the Old Covenant. But the context of Mark's section right here tells us clearly that what Jesus is addressing is not the Old Covenant Law, but the misunderstanding of the Old Covenant Law. The misapplication of the Old Covenant law.

This is why last Sunday, we spent a lot of time just making sure that we understood the purpose of the law. And we said this, for those who are unregenerate, the purpose of the law is to drive people to Christ, is to drive from us our pride, our self-righteousness, to push that from us, and to drive us to the cross.

And so, that is what the law was supposed to accomplish. And those who lived, even prior to the cross, or after the cross, the law is supposed to take the unregenerate person and drive them to Christ to drive them to the cross.

Now, the Pharisee, and now in this passage, here, we see clearly the disciples of John clearly misunderstood what the law was supposed to accomplish. And they got confused between the sign and the Reality the sign was supposed to point to. Because the sign—or the Law—was supposed to point to the One who would fulfill the law for us.

But in their self-righteousness, in their misunderstanding of the sign, they saw the sign as an end unto itself. Or in other words, the law as an end unto itself. Or let me put this another way. They saw the law as what they do to please God. When the law was really saying to them, for the unregenerate person; This is how you know that you need the mercy of God, because you know that you can't keep this law.

And so, the sign that was supposed to point them to the mercy of God's forgiveness, to the Messiah, who would keep this law on their behalf, the sign was what they became fixated upon, like the family, who takes the vacation and just goes back and forth up I95. Just looking at billboards, never stopping it, what the billboards were pointing you to.

In the same way, the Pharisees and the disciples of John, come to Jesus, and they say; What gives? We are fasting like crazy, and we're hungry. Maybe this was a fast day. Maybe this was the same day that Jesus

was feasting with Levi. And maybe that's what really ticked him off. They see Jesus feasting with tax collectors and sinners, while they're having a fast day. They're just working as hard as they can work, because their work is pleasing God. God likes them because they work so, hard at fasting. They're God's favorite people, because they work so, hard at fasting.

And here's this guy, Jesus. Not only is he not fasting, not only are His disciples not fasting, they're having a feast. And not only are they having a feast, they're doing it with tax collectors and sinners.

And so, Jesus' point in telling these two parables is; Listen, the New is here. And not only is the New not compatible with that old. that seeing the law as if I keep all these laws, and do all these things, right, God's happy with me. Not only am I incompatible with that, if you try to fit me into that, I destroy it. I tear it apart, like the garment, I burst apart like the old wineskin. Because grace cannot fit into a man-made system of works. You can't take the grace of Messiah and squeeze it into an old wineskin, because it will burst it. You can't take the grace of a Messiah who dies for his people, and squeeze it, sew it onto an old garment, it'll rip it apart.

The new is absolutely incompatible with the old. So, the heart of this issue is their mistaking of the sign for the Reality that the sign was to point them to. The old that needs to be replaced, the old that needs to be done away with, is not God's Law—we've talked about that before. It is this misunderstanding that the law is how I can make myself one of God's people. And so, Jesus is here to say this will never do. You come to me with this question, your implication is: unless you fast two times a week, God is not going to be happy with you. How can you be from God? How can your disciples be pleasing to God if they're not fasting like we are? And Jesus says, hang on one minute. If you try to force me, and what I'm here to do, into your system of works-righteousness, I'm here to tell you this is not going to work. It's just not going to fit. Because the Reality is infinitely greater than the signs that pointed to it. Completely unlike the South of the Border billboards, the Reality is infinitely greater than the signs that were intended to point people to that Reality.

You see, Jesus didn't come to reform Judaism. Jesus didn't come as a reformer. He didn't come as some sort-of mechanic to tinker with Judaism, and sort-of fix some things that had gone wrong. So, to correct some people's misunderstandings. Jesus didn't come to reform a system of man-made works righteousness. Jesus came to blow it out of the water, and to replace it with his grace.

Hebrews chapter eight and verse 13; And speaking of the New Covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. Not in the sense that the law didn't accomplish God's purpose, because God tells us His purpose for the law was never to save mankind. His purpose for the law was never to save His people. His purpose for the law was, first of all, to point his people to their need of a Messiah.

So, the Reality here is far greater than the sign. We've also mentioned the power of the new thing. Each of the new things has a greater power than the old. The new patch overcomes the old garment, the new wine overcomes the old wineskin—that speaks to us of the power of the kingdom of God. This kingdom of God, which comes and has the supernatural power. We see this so, many times in the New Testament. I thought of where can we illustrate this from the New Testament? It's all over the place.

So, I thought, of course, the mustard seed. Jesus says; Think of the mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it grows into a bush. And then Jesus says this, and it becomes a tree. Wait a minute. No, it doesn't. Unless it's a supernatural tree. Unless it's a supernatural kingdom. And then you see the power of supernatural growth, supernatural expansion of new wine bursting old wineskins.

Or I thought, a second Corinthians five and verse 17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away, the new has come. The incompatibility of the new of the new with the old. So, Jesus teaches this incompatibility of the new with the old, he teaches it through these two parables. But then the first thing he says before he teaches the parables, is this teaching about the Bridegroom

He says, Well, nobody can fast. Your question is why are we not fasting? Well, let me answer your question. Because nobody fasts at a wedding. The Bridegroom is here. And Jesus, notice carefully, he says; Not only should they not fast when the Bridegroom is here, he says they cannot fast.

So, what's Jesus getting at here? This, this analogy of the Bridegroom, and the Bridegroom is here. So, we said earlier, that fasting is a matter of Christian conscience, it's a matter of Christian freedom. The New Testament believer, the New Covenant believer is never commanded to fast. It's not required of us to fast. Nevertheless, there may be times in our spiritual journey, and probably there should be times and all of our spiritual journeys, in which we feel compelled to fast. Maybe a desperate need is pressing upon us. Maybe we feel overwhelmed with a sense of sinfulness. Maybe we feel some type of a desperate need. Maybe we feel just what our culture is pressing down upon us now. And from a cultural standpoint, we just feel like that we just need to be fasting right now. Maybe that's the case. But that is a matter of Christian liberty.

But what Jesus is saying here, is that fasting, because it is, fasting is always associated with lack, with need, with desperation, with a loss, with a crying out to God to say I am in desperate need of something. Jesus is saying; The Bridegroom is here. The wedding guests not only should not fast, they cannot fast. Why can the wedding guests not fast when the Bridegroom is here?

Because the wedding guests can deprive themselves of food. But they cannot fast in such an environment of euphoric joy. And that's what fasting is. Fasting is not just depriving yourself of food. Fasting is doing so, accompanied together with this sense of lack, need, desperation. And Jesus's point is the Bridegroom is here. And it is not characteristic of my people to be characterized as a people of need and lack and want, because we are new creations in Christ.

The kingdom of God is not characterized by brokenness over sin—listen carefully to this. Because this is easy to get wrong if you only listen to part of what I say. The Kingdom of God is not characterized by brokenness over sin, but by a brokenness over sin that has been atoned for, giving way to kingdom joy. That is the characterization of the New Covenant, of the New Kingdom in Christ—is a brokenness over sin, but that brokenness over sin is a brokenness that knows the sin has been taken away. It has been atoned for. And so, that knowledge, not only the knowledge of my sinfulness, but the knowledge that my sinfulness has been taken away, it's been atoned for, that gives way to a certain type of kingdom joy. And that's what Jesus is saying, My kingdom is characterized by that, not by your old grumpy fasting. Your old grumpy fasting that sees no joy, no happiness, you're walking around, your old disheveled faces and everything. Jesus didn't come to call people into this state of morose fasting. Again, there's times where God's people—it's appropriate to fast—but that is not the characterization of the kingdom of God.

We are called into a kingdom of joyfulness, as Paul will say to the Romans, the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the spirit. Or is he says to the Corinthians in Second Corinthians six, verse 10, this paradox that he mentions—always sorrowful, yet continually rejoicing, always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.

So, there is this truth, this reality of the sinfulness from which we've been delivered. But there's also the reality of the deliverance from that. And Jesus says, because of that, the wedding guests can't fast.

Imagine put yourself into that picture. You're at a wedding. And we know how joyful weddings, are most of them anyway. So, you're here at this wedding, and you're not just a guest, but you are a friend of the Bridegroom. So, you'd be one of the Bridegroom's party, groomsmen I guess they call them today.

Now, weddings in Jesus's day, were not like wedding today. I know weddings today, most of them, many of them, go so, far overboard. Ours did. I mean so, much money spent on weddings.

In Jesus day, however, a wedding was not a 20-minute ceremony, followed by a two hour reception. In Jesus's day, a wedding was seven days. Unless, of course, it was a second marriage, of maybe a widower, or a widow was remarrying after the death of a spouse. In that case, it was reduced to three days.

But normally a wedding was seven days. Seven days of festivities, seven days of drinking, and eating, and dancing, and celebrating. And Jesus says, you're going to come into that context, as a party to the Bridegroom. And you're going to say, when we come to you with the feast, and the food and the wine, you're going to say; No, I'm fasting?

What an insult. What an out-of-place picture, just like new wine in old wineskins. Just like new patch on all garment, what an unfitting picture for someone to be at a wedding feast, a seven-day wedding feast, and say; Oh, you just happened to hit me on my fasting week. That looks really good. Smells really good. I hope you enjoy it. I'm abstaining. Because you know what? I'm making God happy.

And Jesus says, the Bridegroom is here. And so, the friends of the Bridegroom, not only is it not appropriate to fast, you can't. Because the fact that the groom is here, the Bridegroom is here means that this is a joyful time. And even if you denied yourself of the food, you still can't deny yourself of the joy of the wedding feast. That's Jesus's point.

So, Jesus says, my kingdom is not a Kingdom that's characterized by just down heartedness. moroseness over sinfulness. My kingdom is a kingdom of people who are well aware of their sinfulness. Yet, they're also equally aware that that sinfulness has been dealt with, and it's been taken away forever. And that lends itself to this type of Kingdom joy, that is the characterization of my people.

So, the central characterization, the central description, according to this story here, of the New Covenant is that the fast is over. So, from Luke's Gospel, think with me of chapter 24. You remember chapter 24, Jesus has been dead now three days. The disciples are on the way to Emmaus, on the road to Emmaus. And here comes the Risen Christ beside them, and he comes up beside them, they don't recognize him. Jesus talks with him. He opens their mind to the Scriptures. He says to them from the Scriptures, he says, was not necessary that the Christ should suffer?

And they're beginning to get this. They're beginning to piece it together. They get to where they're going, they ask Jesus to stay with us, stay with us, Jesus. And they compel Jesus to stay with them. And then Jesus stays with them. And then we find that phrase that in Luke chapter 24, where it says that he was made known to them in the breaking of bread—now that's interesting. He was made known to them in the breaking of bread. What does that mean?

I think perhaps one thing it means, is that they were fasting. Because remember, their Master's gone.

Yeah, they've heard stories. The women told him some stories about the tomb being empty, the stone rolled away, but we couldn't find evidence of that. We're not sure we believe that. And so, imagine their state of mind. We don't imagine it, they tell us what their state was, they were so, downhearted.

So, I think it's very likely that they were fasting. And then Jesus makes Himself known to them as he—breaks their fast. Jesus is saying to them; You're fast is over. I'm here. I'm back. I told you, you would have sorrow. I told you I will be torn from you. And I told you that your sorrow will be turned to joy, for I would come back. Now your fast is over.

Now, if it's not clear there, I think it becomes a little bit clearer in the following episode, a few verses later, when then the disciples rush back to Jerusalem, they come to the Upper Room and they tell their news—we saw Jesus on the road. And they say to them; We saw him too.

And then Jesus is there. And do you remember that account in Luke chapter 24? While Jesus is there in the Upper Room; While they were still disbelieving for joy, and were marveling, he said to them; Have you anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it before them.

Now I think that perhaps, they too, were fasting. I mean, what more appropriate time to fast? The one who we thought was going to deliver Israel turned out to be a fraud. Turned out to be a sham. We believed him, we believed his words, we thought he was different. What better time to fast?

And could it be that now the risen Savior comes and says to them; Your fast is over? Because I'm back, give me some fish. Let's break this fast right now. I think that that is likely. But again, if that's not a connection that seems to be valid for you, the point still remains. The fast is over. Jesus says the Bridegroom will be torn away. But he will return. John chapter 16, your sorrow will turn to joy, you will have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

So, that's one of the things that I want to see Luke's gospel. But here's really where I want to kind of get to in Luke's gospel. When Luke relates this same account. The same instance, he adds one detail at the very end. From Luke chapter five and verse 39. And no one after drinking old one desires new, for he says; the old is good.

So, Jesus tells the same parable. You can't put new wine, nobody puts new wine in old wineskins. Nobody does that. Everybody knows that it burst the wine skins. And then you lose both the wine and the skins. And then Jesus finishes that by saying, and no one who drinks the old wants the new.

Now, I don't know about you, but for a long time, I thought that was kind of backwards, sort-of counterintuitive. Why would Jesus say that? Why wouldn't he say kind of like the turning the water into the wine, that the new wine is better? Sort of like the parable that we just looked at—the new wine is the wine that represents Jesus? Why would Jesus not say everybody who's had the new doesn't want to go back to the old? He says the opposite. Everyone who has the old doesn't want the new? What's Jesus's meaning?

What Jesus is saying is; to those who have come to him to say why you're not fasting, we're fasting twice a week. You need to get with the program. If you want to be respected, you need to get with the program. Jesus is saying, those who invest themselves in the righteousness of their own works, become increasingly averse to grace. For those who take of the old wine, those who avail themselves, those who invest themselves into the works of their hands, as means of acquiring God's favor, the more you do that, the more distasteful Grace becomes to you. That's what Jesus is saying.

The more you partake of that old wine, the more sour the new wine seems to become to you. Because you say in your heart; No, no, no, I prefer the old. I prefer the old because the old is good. So, many places that show us this in Scripture, but the one I thought of was the parable of the prodigal son. We remember the parable of the prodigal son. After the son comes home, he's welcomed in they're having a party inside. Chapter 15, verse 29, of Luke's gospel, we read this, but the other the older brother answered his father, the father says, come on in with us come on into the party. He answered his father, no, look, these many years I've served you. And I've never disobeyed your command. Yet, you never gave me a young goat that I might celebrate with my friends.

You see his answer? Come on into the party. No. Because I've worked all these years. I'm not coming into that party of grace, because I've worked all these years, I'm not giving up what I've worked for, to come in and partake of a party of grace.

Because those who drink of the old wine, those who invest themselves in righteousness before God, based upon how well you keep the rules, the more you invest in that, the more distasteful the new wine of grace becomes to you.

It's kind of like the—remember the parable that Jesus tells the treasure of the Pearl of Great Price? You find this pearl of great price in the field, you go, you sell everything, you've got to buy that field, because the treasure is so, valuable. And of course, that's a parable teaching us of the treasure of grace that's found in our Lord. But it's kind of like if you, maybe retell that parable this way. That there was a once a man who found in a field of treasure, a pearl of great price. And he went to sell everything that he had to buy that field.

And when the owner of the field told him the price, the man said; That's too high. What's the price? The price is everything you've got.

I've got quite a lot. Because I've worked a long time. And I've saved up quite a lot. You're telling me that field is going to cost everything? I think that might just be a price too high.

The disciples of John and the Pharisees are the rich young ruler to whom Jesus is the price of my kingdom is everything you've got. And their answer is, we've got a lot. Because we've been investing for a long time, in our twice weekly fasts, in our public prayers, in our giving of alms to the poor, in our attending of church every week, in our giving to the church, in our doing of this good deed, of our being nice to people that we don't like. We've really invested ourselves a long time. And so, Jesus, you're telling me, this is going to cost everything I've got? Well, that's really a lot. And I'm not sure that the treasure in that field is really worth all that I've got.

That's what Luke is saying here, everyone who invest himself in the old, there will come a point in which you say, the new is not worth it. I like my old I prefer my old.