

DISCIPLES FELLOWSHIP

"NEW WINE IS FOR FRESH WINESKINS"

MARK 2:18-22

The disciples of John: an overlooked group;

MATTHEW 9:14

¹⁴ Then *the disciples of John* came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

MATTHEW 11:2

² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word *by his disciples*

MATTHEW 14:12

¹² And *his disciples* came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.

LUKE 11:1

¹ Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as *John taught his disciples.*"

The missing of the sign: the tragic failure from teacher to disciple;

JOHN 1:35-36

³⁵ The next day again John was standing *with two of his disciples*, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "*Behold, the Lamb of God!*"

JOHN 3:25-30

²⁵ Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. ²⁶ And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him." ²⁷ John answered...²⁸ *You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.'* ²⁹ *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.* ³⁰ *He must increase, but I must decrease.*"

MATTHEW 9:36

³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, *like sheep without a shepherd.*

Finishing poorly: the unfortunate, lasting influence of John;

ACTS 19:1-4 (SEE ALSO ACTS 18:25)

[Paul] and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. ² And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³ And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "*Into John's baptism.*" ⁴ And Paul said, "*John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.*"

Another claim to divinity: Nowhere in the Old Testament is the Messiah compared to a Bridegroom. But God the Father is described repeatedly as Husband to Israel (*Isaiah 5:1; 54:5-6; 62:4-5; Ezekiel 16:6-8; Hosea 2:19*)

'Taken away,' and the connection to Mark's readers;

ISAIAH 53:8

⁸ By oppression and judgment *he was taken away*...who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

The Day of Atonement: the only regulated and perpetual fast;

LEVITICUS 16:29-30

²⁹ "And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, *you shall afflict yourselves* and shall do no work...

The pharisaical fasting;

LUKE 18:12

¹² "*I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.*"

Beware of becoming more righteous than God.

A sparse doctrine: the entirety of the New Testament's teaching on fasting;

ACTS 9:9

⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and *neither ate nor drank*.

ACTS 13:2-3

² While they were worshiping the Lord *and fasting*, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ *Then after fasting and praying* they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

ACTS 14:23

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.

The central expressions of religion for the Pharisee: public prayer, giving alms, fasting. Jesus attacks the motives behind all of these expressions of religion.

Giving alms;

MATTHEW 6:1-4

¹ "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ² "Thus, *when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you*, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward...

Public Prayer;

MATTHEW 6:5-9

⁵ "And *when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites*. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward...And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷ "And *when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do*, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him...

Fasting;

MATTHEW 6:16-18

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.

The "old" that is to be replaced is not the Old Testament. Mark's context makes it clear: the opposition that Jesus challenges is the opposition of *man-made misunderstanding* of the Law, not the Law itself.

The heart of the issue: mistaking the sign for the reality. The "old" to be replaced is the legalistic misuse of the Old Covenant, as represented both by the Pharisees and the disciples of John;

ACTS 15:10

¹⁰ Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

Jesus was not a reformer: Jesus did not come to "reform" Judaism, but to complete it;

HEBREWS 8:13

¹³ In speaking of a new covenant, *he makes the first one obsolete*. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The Reality is greater than the sign: The power of the new;

MATTHEW 13:32

³² "[The mustard seed] is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and *becomes a tree*, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 (See also: John 14:12)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, *he is a new creation*. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Fasting is a matter of Christian conscience. *Fasting is always associated with; lack, need, loss, desperation, sorrow, grief, and/or repentance, making it wholly inappropriate as a characteristic way of life for new creations in Christ.*

The kingdom of God is not characterized by brokenness over sin, but by a brokenness over sin that has been atoned for—constantly giving way to a unique type of kingdom joy;

2 CORINTHIANS 6:10

¹⁰ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

ROMANS 14:17

¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The central characteristic of the New Covenant: The fast is over;

LUKE 24:30-31, 35

³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him...³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how *he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

LUKE 24:41-43

⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴² *They gave him a piece of broiled fish,* ⁴³ *and he took it and ate before them.*

JOHN 16:16-22

¹⁶ "A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me" ...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...* 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."*

A sad reality: The one steeped in legalism is averse to grace.

LUKE 5:39

³⁹ "And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'"

LUKE 15:29

²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.

Take measures to not confuse the sign with the reality. In our marriage to our Master, all the attention is on the Bridegroom.

Creation

PSALM 19:1

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Rules/Doctrine

HEBREWS 10:1

¹ *For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities,* it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Beautiful Expressions of Love for God

ACTS 16:25

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and *singing hymns to God...*