

**Bible Study #9**

**Mark 2:18-22**

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Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"

Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins."

**Teaching Points:**

1. Christianity is more than legalistic fasting.
2. Christianity is more than ritualistic Judaism.

**Practical Applications:**

1. Let's not lose the joy of the Lord through legalism.
2. Let's not go backwards in the faith through ritualism.

**Questions From The Text:**

1. Who fasted? Who didn't fast? Who fasted self-righteously? See also Luke 18:9-14.

John's disciples and the Pharisees fasted. Jesus' disciples didn't fast. In this account, a particular Pharisee fasted self-righteously.

2. Why couldn't a piece of new cloth be sewn into an old garment? Why couldn't new wine be put into old bottles? What do these parables represent?

There were no pre-shrunk garments in those days, so the new cloth would have torn the old garment by putting a strain on it. As for the wine, the new wine expanded as it fermented. The "bottles" were containers made of goatskins, which would become brittle and would break when fully filled. New goatskins would have more elasticity. The old garment and the old wineskins represent ritual and ceremonial forms of Judaism. The new garments and wineskins represent the new Christianity, which is alive.

3. What is the first hint of the cross in Mark's gospel?

The time would come when the bridegroom (Christ) was to be taken away (Mark 2:20).

4. The bridegroom was there and would soon be taken away. When would the joy

return?

At His resurrection (John 16:19-22).

5. Why was the law given?

God gave the law as a foundation or confirmation to prepare and lead the way to Christ.

6. Can law and grace be mixed?

No. You cannot put Christ into the wineskins of Judaism now that He has come. The new wineskin church is more elastic than Old Testament law and ceremony (as it had become).

7. How do we hinder the power of the Holy Spirit?

In the teaching of the two parables, we see that Christianity should not be boxed in by forms and rituals. Even when we move toward good forms of ritual, we can become rigid through traditions, suppressing the Spirit of God.

**Further Discussion:**

1. What happens when you start to live your life by a set of rules? What happens when you impose your list of rules on others?

2. Define "worldly." Should we judge others by our standards?

**Memorize:**

"Jesus said, 'No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins.'" (Mark 2:21-22)