

Mark 2: 18-22.

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?' <sup>19</sup>Jesus said to them, 'The wedding-guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup>The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.

21 'No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. <sup>22</sup>And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.'

**Commentary:** Jesus is a real threat to the existing order because he does things differently, in his own way. He is his own authority. It is no surprise, therefore, that those most opposed to Jesus are those who have a stake in maintaining the status quo, while those who are most open to Jesus are those who are thirsty for a deeper freedom and change from the way things are. If Jesus was not the Son of God, his statement would be quite arrogant. He is saying, in effect, that he is the new cloak and the new wine. We cannot understand or appreciate what he has to offer if we think of him with our existing notions of what we want or expect from the messiah. We need to be open to the newness he brings and trust that we will be transformed in positive ways in the process.

The change Jesus is challenging us to is not the same as the change we are confronted with by Covid-19. The question, though, is the same: what will it take to wake us up to the change we must make in our own lives as a conscious and intentional response to the change being thrust upon us? How will we live this time and how will we live beyond this time when, externally, things go back to the way they were more or less?

**Questions:** Are you afraid of change, of letting go the well-worn and familiar? Do you need a greater openness to change in ways God may be challenging you?

**Prayer:** Lord God, I must confess my fear of change. It is safer to keep things as they are, even if they are not as they should be. Give me a greater freedom to be open to your leading and the courage to trust that you will hold my hand through whatever changes I need to make, Jesus being my courage and my light; Amen.