Introduction: Jesus’ response to questions varied, depending on the question and audience. Often he answered with a question or indirectly so as to make people think. This text is one of those type questions and answers. The problem is we might miss the point Jesus is making, **Mark 2:18 The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" 19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. 20 "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. 21 "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. 22 "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."**

**I) The Context**

**A) Before**

**Mark 2:14 As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. 15 Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi's house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. 16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" 17 When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."**

1. Jesus is a religious teacher but He is with a tax collector and “sinners”.

2. The scribes and Pharisees appeared to be confused with this because Jesus was not fitting into their idea of being a religious teacher.

**B) After**

**Mark 2:23 Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. 24 And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" 25 But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: 26 "how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat, except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?" 27 And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 "Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."**

1. Jesus’ disciples were doing something they, the religious leaders, thought to be against the law.

2. This was actually their interpretation of the law.

3. We might miss Jesus’ answer, their interpretation was wrong!

**II) Mark 2.18-22**

**A) Religious confusion.**

1. The Scribes and Pharisees were confused because Jesus was different than what they thought He would be.

2. Why do your disciples not fast?

a. Their practice of fasting was largely rooted in their traditions. How a person should dress, look, and act while fasting.

b. Only on the Day of Atonement was fasting commanded .

c. The Pharisees fasted numerous times.

**Luke 18:12 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'**

d. The Scribes and Pharisees noticed Jesus’ disciples were not fasting like they were.

3. The disciples of John.

**Matthew 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"**

4. Both groups were confused by this not fasting business.

**Luke 5:33 Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, *but Yours eat and drink*?"**

5. Really, they were asking “Why aren’t you like us?”

**B) Jesus’ answer**

**Mark 2:19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. 20 "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. 21 "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. 22 "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."**

1. Not appropriate to fast at a wedding feast, a time of celebration.

2. Jesus is with His people, the time of mourning and fast will come when He leaves.

3. Don’t put new patch on old clothes, likewise, don’t put new wine in old wineskins.

**C) Go back to the question “Why aren’t you like us?”**

1. His teaching was not compatible with current teachings and practices.

2. Jesus came to bring and institute something different.

a. Can not simply add Jesus to the teaching of John the Baptist.

b. Cannot reconcile Him to the teachings of the Pharisees.

c. Cannot make Him an appendix to the Law of Moses.

d. Cannot incorporate Him into that of idolatry

**D) He came to establish a new covenant.**

**Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah- 32 "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."**

1. New is not like the Old.

2. Written on our hearts, not on tablets of stone; circumcision of the heart, not of the flesh.

**Ezekiel 11:19-20 NKJV 19 "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, 20 "that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.**

**E) Cannot mix the old with the new.**

1. Christianity does not “mix” with Judaism.

**Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. 2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.**

2. Circumcision, dietary requirements, observance of days, all make the Law of Christ nothing,

**III) Application**

**A) As Christians we have to put to death the old.**

1. In baptism we die to sin so as to walk in newness of life.

**Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

2. We have to crucify the old man to become new in Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

**B) Hard to let go of the old.**

**Luke 5:39 "And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'"**

1. Hard to adjust to new things.

2. Some want to keep the old and mix it with the new.

**C) Jesus does not come as a patch; cannot take just a little bit of Jesus.**

**Revelation 3:15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.**

1. Lukewarm is a mixture of hot and cold.

a. In our families

b. In our entertainment and recreation

c. In our free time.

2. We must be all in, total committed to Christ.

a. Cannot have two masters.

b. Apply this in our marriages, in our parenting.

Conclusion: C.S. Lewis “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.”