

Jesus' parables could be confusing; challenging. But sometimes, His other direct statements are not easily understood either.

- Jesus would use an every day situation to explain a spiritual truth.
- But unless you seek out the truth ... led by H.S. ... you may miss it.

A Discussion about Fasting - Mark 2 NLT - ¹⁸Once when John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, some people came to Jesus and asked, "Why don't your disciples fast like John's disciples and the Pharisees do?"

¹⁹Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. They can't fast while the groom is with them. ²⁰But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

²¹"Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before.

²²"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both be lost. New wine calls for new wineskins."

Say what?? He talks about patches & wineskins when Q about fasting? Their Q provided an opportunity for Jesus to teach....

- **Remember patching?** Preserve it; don't get something new.
 - o Hold onto something . . . try to keep it usable. Make it work.

Jesus on mission from God – radical break w/ common religious practices

- His mission **set us free**. Stop trying to **make the old system work**.
 - o Jesus was **not sent as a patch** to repair people's lives. **Change** lives.
 - o "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!" – **2 Cor. 5:17**
 - **Patch** does **nothing** for the **whole** or the **tears** it covers.
 - The tears in old garment would keep getting bigger.
 - o Jesus came to **make us whole**. Righteous. "Right w/ God"
 - **Celebrate** Jesus in your life! **Coming to know Him** is not a time for fasting, but a **joyful celebration**.

Also told in Matthew 9:14-17 **Look at Luke 5 NLT – A Discussion about Fasting**

³³ One day some people said to Jesus, “John the Baptist’s disciples fast and pray regularly, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees. Why are your disciples always eating and drinking?”

³⁴ Jesus responded, “Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. ³⁵ But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

³⁶ Then Jesus gave them this illustration: “No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and uses it to patch an old garment. For then the new garment would be ruined, and the new patch wouldn’t even match the old garment.

³⁷ “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the new wine would burst the wineskins, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. ³⁸ New wine must be stored in new wineskins. ³⁹ But no one who drinks the old wine seems to want the new wine. ‘The old is just fine,’ they say.”

Wine illustration – Wineskins held wine. **Fermentation** – that’s when **yeast transforms the sugar from grape juice into ethanol & carbon dioxide**. Expands.

- **New wine** had to go into new wineskins that could also **expand**.
- Old wineskins would become brittle and break.
 - People are like old wineskins . . . old rigid systems, hardened in routine
 - **Religious routines** led to **empty Rote Worship**.

Jesus concludes by saying - **people w/ the old wine reject the new**.

Stick to routines . . . get comfortable . . . make laws for ourselves.

- **Leviticus** required only **1 Fast**: “*Day of Atonement*.” (Yom Kippur) But Jews have **6 annual** fasts – 2 major, 4 minor. **Pharisees** - 2x a week.
- **Fasting**: Humble oneself before God... repent for sin; forgiveness
- Jewish living meant following laws/rules. Legalism. Checkmarks.
 - 10 commandments became 613. Torah.
- Problem is: the law has no Grace. We’re going to fail.
 - As soon as you think you “have to do” something, flesh will flex, no.
- Purpose of the law – to show that we couldn’t keep it and we need Grace.

5 covenants: Moses, Noah, Abraham, David and new covenant w/ us: cross.

Noah – never destroy the earth; sign of rainbow.

Abraham – God would protect, they must obey; sign is circumcised.

David - make his name great & and raise up a descendant from David’s line, whose throne and kingdom will last forever. David – build temple.

Moses – take them to the Promised Land; 10 commandments which turned in it hundreds of rules.

Jesus ushers in the New Covenant. Jesus pays the price; grace. Forgiven.

We can now Follow the leadership of God, not a complex set of rules... legalistic.

- Jesus has been/will upset the establishment by not being “legal.”
 - Didn’t ceremoniously wash. Healed on the Sabbath.
 - Touched lepers, hung out w/tax collectors, sought out Gentiles.
 - Picked heads of grain on Sabbath. Unlawful. “Sabbath made for man”
 - Love trumps rules. Love transcends the law.
 - Trying to please God by obeying religious rules is ineffective.

Jesus said: **you keep the law, but neglect the more important things. Mt 23:23**

- **Jesus desires mercy, not legalism. All those rules were a burden.**
All those rules led to guilt/shame / judging Ex.: play cards, close curtains
Jesus came to take that away. Live free. Live whole. Live in Grace.

You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off. (Leviticus 17:14 ESV)

Yet Jesus said, *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.” (John 6:54 NIV)*

- Jesus was establishing **New Covenant**. Not doubt, disciples were shocked.

New Covenant – I will bear all of your sin b/c you can’t be perfect. Shed my blood, **one & done**. Grace that’s good for all. . . for all people, for all time.

- Nothing wrong w/ **10 commandments**. But **Jesus simplified it: 2**.
- If we love God & love others, we’re doing everything God requires . . . & **God is pleased with us**. Jesus made us righteous. We’re right w/God.
- It’s not what we do . . . it’s based on who we belong to.
 - Jesus paid the price for what we’ve done wrong.

Closing: Jesus had to experience sadness when He faced religious opposition.

- The ones who “looked for” the Messiah rejected Him. Pharisee led!
- They practiced religion, but it was empty – **religion w/o Jesus is empty**.
- **Religion is humanity’s attempt to reach God; Jesus is God’s attempt to reach humanity.**
 - Religion is works ... rituals // Jesus is grace.
 - Religion is a membership // Jesus is a relationship.