



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V22 N27

July 19, 2020

KING JESUS

"A New Way for a New Day"

Mark 2:18-22

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Joy

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

John 15:11



Why didn't Jesus' disciples fast?

The author of Ecclesiastes writes: "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance" (3:1, 4), and in the same vein, we might add "a time for fasting and a time for feasting."

Fasting generally connotes *mourning*. In the Old Testament, the Israelites fasted and mourned in connection with the Day of Atonement when a sacrifice was offered to cleanse them from their sins. Scripture reads: "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must *deny yourselves* and not do any work—whether native born or foreigner residing among you—because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. It is a day of sabbath rest, and you must *deny yourselves*; it is a lasting ordinance" (Lev 16:29-31). The Hebrew words translated "deny yourself" can also be translated "humble yourselves" (NET) or "afflict yourselves" (ESV), and later came to refer to fasting (Ps 35:13).

After the exile, there were four additional annual fasts (Zec 8:19): The fast in the *fourth* month lamented the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki 25:3-4; Jer 39:2); in the *fifth* month commemorated the burning of the temple and the other important buildings (2Ki 25:8-10); in the *seventh* month marked the anniversary of Gedaliah's assassination (2Ki 25:22-25; Jer 41:1-3); and in the *tenth* month mourned the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem (2Ki 25:1; Jer 39:1; Eze 24:1-2). All of them marked disasters in Jewish history, but the LORD promised to turn them into "joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah" (Zec 8:19) in the kingdom age (vv. 20-23). No wonder fasting is inappropriate at the time Jesus

is present with his disciples and he is preaching "the kingdom of God is near" (Mk 1:15).

Feasting generally connotes *celebration*. Weddings, for example, were festive affairs accompanied by feasting—perhaps involving an entire village and lasting for a week or more. A key part of the ceremony was the wedding feast, following the wedding procession. One writer explains: "In the evening of the day fixed for the marriage the bridegroom and his friends went in procession to the brides' house. The wedding supper could be held there . . . One would, however, expect that more usually the bridegroom escorted the bride back to his own or his parents' home for the supper . . . The procession might be accompanied by singing, music and dancing (Je. 7:34; 1 Macc. 9:39), and by lamps if at night (Mt. 25:7). The marriage feast was usually held at the house of the groom (Mt. 22:1-10; Jn. 2:9) and often at night (Mt. 22:13; 25:6). Many relatives and friends attended; so the wine might well run out (Jn. 2:3). A steward or friend supervised the feast (Jn. 2:9-10). To refuse an invitation to the wedding feast was an insult (Mt. 22:7). The guests were expected to wear festive clothes (Mt. 22:11-12) . . . Festivities continued for a week (Gn. 29:27, Jacob and Leah) or sometimes 2 weeks (Tobit 8:20, Tobias and Sarah). These celebrations were marked by music Pss. 45; 78:63) and by joking like Samson's riddles (Jdg. 14:12-18)" (J. S. Wright and J. A. Thompson, "Marriage," in *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "marriage"). Guests at a wedding do not fast; indeed, they cannot because they are caught up in the *joy* of the occasion.

Fasting in the presence of the bridegroom would be totally inappropriate, which explains why neither Jesus nor his disciples fast. "They cannot," he says, "so long as they have him with them" (Mk 2:19).



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

18 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?"

19 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. 20 But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

21 "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. 22 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."

READ in another translation

18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. So they came to Jesus and said, "Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't fast?" 19 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 do not fast. 20 But the days are coming when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and at that time they will fast. 21 No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and the tear becomes worse. 22 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins will be destroyed. Instead new wine is poured into new wineskins." (NET)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "fasting" in v. 18.
- Circle "some people" in v. 18.
- Bracket "disciples of the Pharisees" in v. 18.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 18, 20.
- Bracket "guests of the bridegroom" in v. 19.
- Circle "the bridegroom" in v. 20.
- Circle "taken" in v. 20.
- Underline "that day" in v. 20.
- Highlight v. 22c.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What are Jesus' disciples doing (see 2:15-16) at the time John's disciples and the Pharisees are fasting?
2. Identify "some people" who came with a question for Jesus.
3. Their question is *accusatory*. How so?
4. What does *fasting* in general connote?
5. Identify "the *guests* of the bridegroom" and "the *bridegroom*" in Jesus' parabolic answer (v. 19).
6. Why can't the guests fast in the bridegroom's presence?
7. What *time* is Jesus talking about in verse 20?
8. Fasting is *inappropriate* as long as Jesus is with his disciples. Explain how Jesus' first parable illustrates that (v. 21).
9. Explain how Jesus' second parable illustrates that (v. 22).
10. **Discussion:** Jesus brings "new wine" incompatible with "old wineskins." Talk about what that means.

Commentary On The Text

Mark 2:18-22 contains the third of five episodes in this section (2:1-3:6) describing a number of controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees (cf., 2:16, 18, 24; 3:2, 6) that end with the Jewish leaders plotting to kill him (3:6). This episode is comprised of a question regarding fasting and Jesus' parabolic answer. The question is related contextually to what "some people" saw — "some people" being a general reference to people who compared the contrasting practices of two groups of disciples. On the one hand, they saw John's disciples and the Pharisees fasting, and on the other hand, they saw Jesus' disciples feasting (vv. 15-16) — perhaps on a fast day. Assuming that fasting is a good thing in line with Pharisaic traditions, they asked Jesus the accusatory question, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?" (v. 18). Their question, pertaining to the religious practices of the two different groups, reflects two contrasting attitudes, *mourning* (Mt 6:16) versus *celebration* (25:10), rooted in two contrasting eras — the *mosaic* versus the *messianic*. Jesus has come preaching "the kingdom of God is near" in anticipation of the end of the fasting-appropriate mosaic era and the beginning of the feasting-appropriate messianic era. One pastor writes: "Jesus had already made it clear that He came to convert the sinners, not to compliment the self-righteous. Now He told them that he had come to bring gladness, not sadness. Thanks to the legalism imposed by the scribes and Pharisees, the Jewish religion had become a burdensome thing. The poor people were weighed down by rules and regulations that were impossible to obey (Matt. 23:4). 'Life is not supposed to be a funeral!' Jesus told them. 'God wants life to be a wedding feast! I am the Bridegroom and these people are My wedding guests. Are not wedding guests supposed to have a good time?'" (Warren W. Wiersbe, "Mark," in *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:117).

Jesus answers, telling his questioners now is not the right time for fasting. The meaning of his rhetorical question, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?" amounts to the statement, "Guests of the bridegroom cannot fast while he is with them!" It would be totally inappropriate for them to do so, because it goes without saying that weddings are a time of joy and celebration accompanied by feasting, not by fasting. As one commentator says: "The kingdom of

God, which has drawn near in Jesus' preaching and merciful activity, is not a funeral wake but a wedding party. No one wants grim-visaged fasters casting a pall on the joyous celebration. In the presence of such joy, it is not only inappropriate to fast, it is impossible. Jesus does allude, however, to a time when mourning will be more fitting, when the bridegroom is 'taken from them,' an oblique reference to his passion and death. But even that is not to be a permanent state. The joy of the resurrection will transform all grief and sorrow" (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 105).

To confirm that fasting is inappropriate in the presence of the bridegroom, Jesus goes on to tell his questioners two parables. Since a wedding feast was an occasion for wearing special clothes (Mt 22:11-14) and drinking wine (Jn 2:1-11), both fit the context and serve as perfect illustrations of similarly inappropriate actions. If a piece of new cloth is used to patch an old garment, when the garment is washed, the new cloth will shrink, making the tear in the garment worse. Furthermore, if new wine is poured into old wineskins, as the wine continues to ferment, the inelastic goat skins will burst, ruining both the wine and the skins. Everyone knows this, so no one in his right mind does either of these obviously inappropriate things!

Jesus' final statement, "No, they pour new wine into new wineskins" points to the disparity of the old era and the new. Jesus has come to introduce something new, not to improve something old. His message concerning nearness of the kingdom of God is new, as is his exemplary interpretation of the Old Testament. His message of forgiveness is new, as is his exemplary obedience to the law. The pastor above writes: "Jesus came to usher in the new, not to unite with the old. The Mosaic economy was decaying, getting old, and ready to vanish away (Heb. 8:13). Jesus would establish a New Covenant in His blood (Luke 22:19-20). The Law would be written on human hearts, not on stones (2 Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 10:15-18); and the indwelling Holy Spirit would enable God's people to fulfill the righteousness of the Law (Rom. 8:1-4)" (Wiersbe, 117).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 18 **fasting** “The Old Testament mandated a day of fasting on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29, 31)” — cf., “deny yourselves” (NIV); “afflict yourselves” (ESV); “fast” (GNT); “humble yourselves” (NET). “In the post-exilic period there were four additional annual fasts (Zech. 8:19), and Esther 9:31 adds another annual fast. Other references to fasting are a matter of individual choice: fasting accompanies mourning and grief (1 Sam. 31:13), petitions for aid (2 Sam. 12:16; Ezra 8:21), repentance and acts of piety (Neh. 9:1-3; Joel 1:14; Luke 2:37) and the pursuit of wisdom (2 Chr. 20:3). The prophets criticized fasting when done with an undevoted heart (Zech. 7:5), with pride (Isa. 58:4-6) or while acting with injustice towards the weak (Isa. 1:13-17) . . . The Pharisees fasted twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays (Luke 18:12; *Did.* 81; *b. Ta’an.* 12a)” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 74).

v. 18 **some people** Lit., “they” (NET). “The subject of the sentence *they came* (NASB; NIV has ‘some people came’) is observers who noticed the difference in personal practice compared with John’s disciples and the Pharisees. The ‘why not’ question implies an element of challenge, perhaps even reproach, but not necessarily hostility” (Schnabel, 74).

v. 18 **disciples of the** “The Pharisees as such did not have disciples (although individual scribes among them did). The designation indicates that larger group of people who were influenced by Pharisaic ideals and practice. This may be the proper nuance of ‘the disciples of John’ as well” (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT, 108).

v. 19 **guests of the** Lit., “sons of the wedding hall,” can refer to either the “groom’s attendants” or the “wedding guests” (see Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 136). “Jesus compared his disciples with the guests of a bridegroom. A Jewish wedding was a particularly joyous occasion, and the celebration associated with it often lasted a week. It was unthinkable to fast during such festivities, because fasting was associated with sorrow” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Mk 2:19).

v. 20 **the bridegroom** “Although the term ‘bridegroom’ was not used in Judaism as a technical term for the Messiah, it was used in descrip-

tions of the coming age of salvation (Isa. 54:4-8; 61:10; 62:5; Ezek. 16:7ff.). For people awaiting the Messiah and/or the kingdom of God, the metaphor Jesus used *would have been readily understood*. As a result, whereas before Jesus’s coming the expression was not a technical term for the Messiah, in the early church it became one, and such parables as Matt. 25:1-13 were interpreted accordingly” (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 137).

v. 20 **taken** The term *aparthē* (*apairō*) implies violent removal by force rather than natural causes (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 114).

v. 20 **that day** I.e., referring to “the time will come” earlier in the verse. This likely refers to the time between the crucifixion and resurrection. “The early church did not think of Jesus as being away. They lived not in the sorrow of their Lord’s absence but in the joy of his abiding presence. They believed not only that he was present but also that he would never leave or forsake them (Heb. 13:5). And in John the absence of Jesus is seen as being more advantageous than his earthly presence due to the gift of the Spirit (16:7). As a result, the attempt to see in Mark 2:19b-20 a hypothetical fasting practice in the early church is unconvincing” (Stein, 139).

Other Texts to Consider

Hebrews 8:13

“By calling this covenant ‘new,’ he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.”



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Now is a time for feasting — not fasting, for celebrating — not mourning, for Jesus has brought with him a new way for a new day.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

When my daughter was three, I came to a startling discovery; I had forgotten to teach her how to spell her name. I remember sitting in the carpool line waiting for her older brothers panic teaching, "E-L-L-A, say it with me, E-L-L-A!" She knew how to put together puzzles, use her manners, even sing hymns, but I failed in this one thing. Stephen Covey says, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." Sometimes I feel like the main thing in parenting is all the things, and honestly, it's overwhelming. How can I instill all the major character points in my kids, as well as make sure they eat only nutritious foods, help them master milestones early (because you're a bad parent if you don't), and still make sure that somehow I carve out time to care for my spouse, exercise, eat right, serve missionally and work with integrity? The answer - keep the main thing the main thing. My husband always says if you make everything a priority, then you have no priorities. Make your time with the Lord your main priority. It is essential that I start my day in the Word. There's a chance I won't cover all the important things in my life, but rest assured, when my day doesn't begin in communion with the Lord, it spirals down fast. What is your priority for the day? Do your schedule, to do list, and activities reflect this? Do your kids know spending time with God is the most important thing for you? We are praying you keep the main thing the main thing!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Mark 2:18-22.

1. What question did some people have for Jesus and how did He answer it?
2. What day is Jesus talking about in verse 20?
3. What happens to new cloth sewn on an old garment?

What Do You Think?

What are some old rituals/traditions that are no longer practiced since Jesus came to fulfill the Law?

What Do You Do?

Consider fasting for a few days this week. What will you fast from? What will you replace it with?

CORE COMPETENCY: Joy

I am happy on the inside no matter what's happening on the outside.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 34:4

I sought the Lord and He answered me, He delivered me from all my fears.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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