

Recap of 4/2/23 message by Pastor Chris (Mark 2:18-22):

- Jesus doesn't just modify the existing religious structures of Judaism; He makes a new way to live and be in relationship with God. When Jesus is asked why His disciples do not fast like the others it is actually a covert claim to superior religious fervor from those who see themselves as more spiritual. Jesus in defense declares that the newness of His movement supersedes traditional praxis. The change in lifestyle of the disciples, their abandonment of old patterns of conduct in light of their new membership in the kingdom of God, raises doubt and opposition. When asked about fasting practices, Jesus uses bridegroom/wedding imagery that is seen throughout scripture representing the relationship between God and His people. Here the case is made for the disciples being guests of "the bridegroom." Jesus is pointing to Himself as Messiah who is bringing the dawning of the New Covenant. Wrapped up in the New Covenant are blessings from God, joy, abundance, and celebration, thus it is not a time for fasting (sorrow), it is a time for great joy for the grace of God is being revealed and sin is being forgiven.
- The imagery of the new patch onto old garments or new wine being poured into old wineskins is tied to this idea of the old covenant moving into the new covenant. Jesus didn't come to just patch up the old way of doing things, He came to inaugurate a new way, a better way, THE WAY. The book of Hebrews (specifically Hebrews chapters 7-10) shows the ways in which the New Covenant is better, that Jesus is better than the old sacrificial system that Israel had been living under. The argument in the book of Hebrews can largely be summed up as an argument for the supremacy of Christ and appeals to Jewish believers to not go back to the law, back to the old covenant way of thinking and living, but to live in the grace and blessing of the New Covenant that Jesus Christ has brought through His death, burial, and resurrection.
- We as gentile (non-Jewish) believers can still apply these truths today. We first need to check our hearts, that we do not fall into the same trap as the pharisees who see themselves as more spiritual because they adhere to extra fasting and a bunch of rules. Rules aren't usually the problem; it is usually the heart and how we view and approach rules. It's important that we understand the ways in which our hearts move toward patterns of legalism or false views of spiritual pride and remind ourselves that it is only by the grace of God that any of us can be in the presence of God and made holy by the power of the Holy Spirit. Another application for us is to know the core principles of the faith that has been handed down to us and what areas are "grey" areas that we should minister to on the basis of grace. We can do this by studying the word of God, being in community with believers, and even reading through things like the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Chalcedonian Creed.