

Mark 2:18-22

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 November 2013

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] Go ahead and with me take out your copy of God's Word and turn to the Gospel according to Mark chapter 2. Uncomfortable moments for the Pharisees as Jesus makes great affronts to the religious culture of His day.

We started there at the beginning of chapter 2 as He heals a paralytic and establishes authority to forgive sin which flew in the face of their religious culture.

It was a blasphemy to them and it was indeed if He wasn't in fact God in flesh. And see that He spent time with sinners.

That He reclined with them. That He came to heal those who were sick. Who needed spiritual renewal. And then we come here to verse 18.

And we speak today about fasting which struck me just before in the service is rather hilarious considering what this week tends to be all about with Thanksgiving and a great gorging of food.

[1 : 27] We're going to talk at length today about fasting. But join me in reading Mark chapter 2 beginning in verse 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? And Jesus said to them, Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?

And as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them and then they will fast in that day. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment.

If he does, the patch tears away from it. The new from the old and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins and the wine is destroyed.

And so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins. Join me in praying. Father God, we thank you for the blessing of the Word and the privilege to come together and to learn from it.

[2 : 32] And I pray God, for all of us here, by a great work of your Spirit, you will plant the truth of your Word deep in our hearts that we might become more like Christ to the praise of your name and for our good.

Father, we recognize this morning in great humility that we have no good thing in and of ourselves, but only those things that you have worked and are working in us by your Spirit.

So I pray that he will move and be powerful in us this day. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

So, as he's confronting this religious culture, we have a very specific group of people that were constantly standing in opposition to the ministry of Jesus.

And there was particularly these Pharisees. We see some broadening groups of people. We see the Sadducees. We've got the scribes, which some were Pharisees, some were not. But there's this particular group of about 6,000 people in this day.

Their founding happened way back in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. And it was this particularly pious group of people that practiced an apostate form of Judaism.

[3 : 44] And they thought they practiced it very well. This is exactly what Jesus is saying at the very end of verse 17. He says, Those who are well have no need of a physician. They were righteous in their own minds.

They trusted in themselves. And it's these people that we see once again fasting, but in an improper way.

Interestingly, in the beginning of verse 18, we also see them collectively put in with John's disciples, referring to John the Baptist. And just as an aside, note here that they're still being referred to as John's disciples.

We see in chapter 1 a great multitude, all Judea is coming out to John to be baptized in the Jordan. But look here how few of them have followed Christ.

Have had faith worked in their lives that they might follow Him in obedience. And you still have many who are John's disciples, even though John was saying, not me, but Him.

[4 : 50] They were missing the point. And here we find them fasting right along with the Pharisees. And a question is asked. And it's a question of accusation.

Not so much an honest question, as we might propose, but a question of accusation. There was constantly a case being built against Jesus for the claims that He was making. And here they are, once again, trying to say, look at the pious nature of John's disciples and of the Pharisees.

Why are your disciples not this way? Why is it that you're supporting an unholy living while these are so holy? These are righteous and your disciples are not.

How dare you make the claims that you're making? That is what is loaded into this question here. You see, the Pharisees, the religious culture of the day, recognized that the teaching of Jesus Christ was completely opposite of their teaching.

It was diametrically opposed. It was distinct in every way. And they knew that they had to shut Him down if they were going to continue to serve in the way that they served.

[6 : 01] This is the case for all world religions today. Apart from Christianity. Apart from those who believe that grace comes by faith in Christ alone.

That is the way of salvation. All other religions are merely a creating of law. A work to change the exterior and the morality of that.

It's Christianity. It's this message of the Gospel that seeks to change our hearts. Change who we actually are. All world religions recognize that there's a great symptom, a great issue with humanity.

This problem of sin. And yet they treat symptoms. It reminds me of Western medicine. Always treating symptoms, but never treating root cause. It's Christianity that comes and treats the heart.

And so they had to shut Him down. If they were going to remain right, Jesus had to be wrong. And so they approach Him on this question of fasting and why it was that His disciples were not fasting.

[7 : 03] Now to really understand the question they're asking, we have to understand first fasting. What it was meant to be and the way in which they were practicing it in this day.

And so let's kind of step over just for a moment and let's talk a bit about fasting this morning. And this is the hilarious part coming into this week. First, Matthew 6, the Sermon on the Mount.

Fasting there is assumed of Jesus' disciples. He brings about correction. He tells them not to be like the hypocrites who practice fasting in this way, but to rather practice fasting in this way.

It's an assumption that is made. And I would ask you then, as a follower of Christ, do you, have you ever fasted?

It's an assumption that you will, in fact, fast. And as we look a little bit more about what fasting is meant to be, I think you'll understand why it should be the case that we do fast.

[8 : 07] Maybe not the way you've seen it done, but that we ought to be fasting. It's an assumption that is made on our part. We find a multitude of examples of fasting in the Scripture.

Very little expressed prescription for how it ought to take place. But we see it happening all over the place. More places than I could possibly present to you this morning.

We see it in varying amounts. Fasting always being the not eating of food. It's not, I'm going to avoid chocolate for a week. Right? It's the abstinence from food altogether.

No eating of any food is what fasting is always referred to in the Scriptures. We see one day fasts. We see three day fasts. We see seven day fasts. Fourteen day fasts.

We see forty day fasts. Right? Note, here in our chapter, Jesus has fasted. Right? Mark 1, 12 and 13 states that He was sent out into the wilderness, driven out into the wilderness by the Spirit of God, when He was there for forty days.

[9 : 09] And both the Gospel of Matthew and Luke add that He was fasting. He was there for a forty day fast. And it's important, I think, that we understand here why it is that He was fasting.

Right? Why did Jesus go into the wilderness? And why was it while He was in the wilderness He was fasting? Right? I believe, and I think that the scriptural evidence of why fasting took place derives at this, and again, we're going to step into that in a moment here, but that He went as a preparation for the work that He was about to do.

Right? He had just begun His ministry. He had just gone down to the Jordan and was baptized.

Right? It was continuing this process of completed perfection. He was baptized. He comes up, and

then immediately, in verse 12, chapter 1, it says, the Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness.

He went out to be alone with God. Right? To set His face before Him and to prepare for the work that He was to do. He knew full well what He was sent to accomplish.

What would happen to Him some three years later on the cross and the ministry that was to take place between this time and that. I believe that's why He went out there, taking the example of Elijah in 1 Kings chapter 19, who fasted for 40 days.

[10:30] He was actually given a special meal by the angels. And He fasts for 40 days on Mount Horeb where He gets to preach, I mean speak, with God Himself.

So I believe that Jesus goes out to do this very thing. I've often heard it proposed that He did this so that He was very weak in the flesh, that it actually exalted the temptations that were given to Him, made it more difficult for Him to stand up.

It was a way in which He showed forth His perfection and that He was very weak and therefore it was harder for Him to resist the temptation that was given to Him.

But I think that while He was weak in the flesh, having fasted properly, He was strong in spirit. He was actually more prepared. He had been close with the Father and was ready to stand against the temptation of Satan.

So what does it look like? When fasting is done rightly, what should it look like? And this is brief at best, but firstly, done rightly, it is a response to God's providence.

[11:39] It's a response to God's providence, not a means of obtaining God's favor. It's not some sort of equation that we put into play. If I want God to speak to me clearly, I am going to fast.

I am going to stop eating food because that's what happens when you stop eating food. God speaks to you. It's not an equation in that way. In fact, it should be a response to God's providence, the fact that He is, in fact, in control.

Turn with me to Isaiah chapter 58. Let's look at an example of fasting done improperly and then God's prescription for what fasting should look like. This will just give you some clue as to what I'm trying to say to you here.

Isaiah chapter 58. God says to Isaiah, cry aloud, verse 1, cry aloud, do not hold back, lift up your voice like a trumpet, declare to my people their transgression, their sin, to the house of Jacob, their sins.

Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God. They ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

[12:58] Now, those of you who hate sarcasm, this is sarcasm, right, in the Scriptures, right? God's being very sarcastic. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God.

Verse 3, the response of the people. Why have we fasted and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves and you take no knowledge of it?

There's their question. We've been doing this thing. We've been carrying out this equation that we think we've done this thing. We should be receiving God's favor because of our action. Last part of verse 3.

He gets at the very heart of the issue.

Without spending all the time of explaining all these things, what God is saying is you're doing something on the exterior, but yet in the inside you are still wicked. You are evil. Verse 6, Is not this the fast that I choose?

[14:19] To loose the bonds of wickedness? To undo the straps of the yoke? To let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house when you see the naked to cover him and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Then shall your light break forth like the dawn and your healing shall spring up speedily. Your righteousness shall go before you. The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call and the Lord will answer.

You shall cry and He will say, Here I am. So it's a response here of the goodness of God on their heart. It's their heart that matters in this process.

And so it should be a response in this way, not a prescription, not a means of obtaining God's favor. Secondly, done rightly, it avoids the praise of men.

Turn to Matthew 6, which I referenced just a moment ago. Again, remembering that Jesus assumes that His followers will in fact fast.

[15:28] He assumes some other things as well, that they'll give to the needy, that they'll be philanthropic in that way, that they will pray. And He brings some correction here.

We can see in the final place, verse 1, verse 5, and verse 16. Beware of practicing your righteousness for the people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Verse 5, And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward.

Verse 16, And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disguise their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. In fact, they put makeup on to look sadder than they really were.

Right? They disguise their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. So done rightly, it avoids, it tries to get around the praise of men.

[16:35] It's intention is not to show people how holy and how pious and how set aside you are. Right? It avoids this very thing. Right?

That you might have a reward in heaven. This is the instruction given to us by our Lord on fasting. Done rightly, it avoids the praise of men. Thirdly, done rightly, it is the sorrowful, prayerful rejection of food.

It is the sorrowful, prayerful rejection of food. It's characterized by a hunger for God that drives out a hunger for food.

A desire to see Him move and work both in your life and in the lives of the people and in the world. That it drives out the desire for food. I say to you that this is often a voluntary type of fasting.

Not something that I prescribe to you. We as a church are going to go through a time of fasting. Right? But it's something you do out of a compulsion. Out of a sorrow for your sin and the sins of others.

[17:45] Out of a desire to see God repair such things. To bring reconciliation to such situations. Almost every Sunday I get up very early to prepare for Sunday morning.

Sometimes that's because I'm just really not prepared for Sunday morning. I just don't feel like my notes are together. They're a scramble. They're just a big mess. I've got to get them in the right order so I can speak in some fashion that you'll be able to follow.

Sometimes I'm entirely prepared. Sometimes I've got all my notes ready to go. I can sleep another couple of hours. But I always have this great desire to get up and to start preparing my own soul to stand before you each day.

And I don't do this as an intentional effort. I don't wake up on Sunday mornings and say, man, this is a big day. It's important what we're going to do today. I'm going to fast so that I can call down the favor of God on what's going on.

But I feel the weight of Sunday morning. And I feel the weight of preaching the Word of God. And I'm so aware of my frailty and my incapability of doing a good job of it apart from God working.

[18:52] And I find that often I don't eat on Sunday mornings. Not as a choice. I don't go, I'm not going to eat. I'm not really that hungry. I just don't think about it. I so want to see God move and work on our Sunday mornings that I just don't think about it.

It doesn't cross my mind. I'm not hungry. It's often right before the service that I start to get hungry. Like right now, I'm pretty darn hungry right now. And totally unintentionally, I love that we do the Lord's Supper every Sunday because I get a snack that reminds me that Christ is my nourishment. Isn't that good? That I very often remember as I get that little bit that hits your stomach and you go, okay, I can get through to lunch. Right? But that Christ Himself is my sustenance.

So in that way, I fast just about every week but not as dogma. If I were hungry at 9 a.m., I would eat something. I don't think of it in those terms. I'm just not hungry.

So some examples of voluntary fasting in the Scriptures. Esser chapter 4. Proceeding this in chapter 3, we have the king of Persia, Ahasuerus, has, we've got Mordecai not bowing down or paying homage to Haman who's been put in charge of a region by the king.

[20 : 10] So Haman receives the king's blessing to have all the Jews destroyed. Right? In order to destroy Mordecai, he receives the king's blessing to have all the Jews destroyed. And then chapter 4, verse 3, it says, And in every province, wherever the king's commands and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews with fasting and weeping and lamenting and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

They had this outward expression of their mourning for what was going to happen. And you know why? They knew this was a judgment of God. They knew it was because of their sin. They were in captivity to begin with.

They knew this was a judgment of God. And therefore, wherever the decree reached, the decree was not that they should fast. The decree was that they would be destroyed by Haman.

They fasted. Joel chapter 1. Joel brings a word from the Lord calling for a fast to lament the loss of grain and wine at the hands of a plague of locusts.

Again, as a judgment from God. They became aware in this plague that they were sinful and God was bringing a judgment against them. And so a fast is called for.

[21 : 17] Daniel 9. Daniel's outpour of prayer for his people. Again, they're in captivity. This outpour of prayer is done while fasting. Right?

He's mourning. He's sorrowful for the state of his nation. And so he fasts and prays the beautiful prayer of Daniel 9. I'll encourage you to read at a later time. There's only one time in all of the Old Testament.

Right? This would have been what the Jews would have had to help them guide the practice of their own fasting. There's only one time that it's commanded for them to fast. There's one time a year for one day, the day known as Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

One day of the entire year that they were commanded as the nation of Israel to fast. That was it. Leviticus 16, 29-31 is where you can read about that if you'd like to.

This fast was meant to express their sorrow for their sins on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies and made atonement for the sins of Israel for that year. Right? It was meant to express the condition of their hearts.

[22 : 22] A real sorrow. A real humility. Right? Not just some religious rite and practice. That's what it was meant for. So we see it both being voluntary and commanded, but just the same, it was always meant to be done in sorrow and prayer and that's why you reject the food.

You're just not hungry. You so desire to see God move and work. That is what you hunger for. That the desires of your flesh fade away.

Now the practice of fasting in this day was quite different. Right? This fasting that was being done by the Pharisees was quite different. They in fact had elevated fasting to a really high degree.

So much so that they fasted twice a week on Monday and Thursday. If you were going to be part of the in crowd, if you were part of God's crew in this day, these Pharisees, this is the way in which you fasted.

You didn't eat sun up to sun down on Monday and on Thursday. You recall Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector found in Luke chapter 18.

[23 : 32] Beginning of verse 9 we see recorded, He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. Hear the wording there. Who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt.

Those who didn't carry out this new religious fast. Verse 10, Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get. This is the evidence of his righteousness before God. I fast twice a week. This man-made law that had been put in place which was merely external. Something they had done to look more pious than others. John MacArthur said in a sermon on this text, Empty ritual is the enemy of true godliness.

Empty ritual is the enemy of true godliness. Joel 2, verses 12 and 13 says, Yet even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments.

[24 : 54] It's an issue of the heart. This is the condition that needs to be fixed. This is the condition that the gospel of Jesus Christ fixes.

It's distinct in that way. No other religious system accomplishes this. If you practice religion for that reason, and if you're here just because you're going through those motions, I would encourage you to stop.

There are better, more fun things to do. If your end is destruction one day, you better get it in now. It's a beautiful day. Go hiking.

It's a waste of your time to be here. If your heart's not regenerate, if you're not coming and seeking to worship God in spirit and in truth, and you're merely going through the exterior motions, what a waste of your time.

I can think of all kinds of things I could do with two hours of my day. If it's merely exterior. If I'm trusting in this to put righteousness on myself, even the preaching of the Word.

[26 : 01] If I say, I'm glad I'm not like other men. I preach the Word of God on Sunday mornings. That is not my righteousness. Christ is my righteousness. The Gospel is distinct in this way.

This is what the religions of the world need to hear. This is how Christianity, a devotion to our Lord, is different than all of them. And he gives us two little examples.

These are really kind of the first parables that we see recorded in Mark. Little examples that are really fairly simple to make the point. Would have been very familiar to them in their cultural context. He says to them, can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and they will fast in that day.

Weddings, we get this, weddings are a time for joy. We come together to celebrate. It was more so in this day. Some wedding festivities went on for a week. Much joy was taking place.

[27 : 05] Big parties were going on. You remember what Jesus did in one of His early miracles? He turned water into wine. Jesus was into big parties and celebrating at weddings.

That's what it was for. There's actually an old rabbinic document called the Megalot Ta'anit. You don't have to remember that. I just wanted to say it out loud. In English, the scroll of fasting gave rules to the way in which this should take place.

And it forbid fasting at a wedding. You know why? Because no one wanted these bummers to show up. Right? To come in all self-righteous and pious with their makeup on their face looking sad and ruining the buzz of a wedding.

It was meant for celebration. And that's the point that Jesus is making here now. He predicts His death. There's going to come a day when the bridegroom is going to be removed from them.

And in that day, they will fast. They will. It's going to happen that they'll fast in those days. But now, I am with them. And they have reason for much joy.

[28 : 08] This is why my disciples don't fast. Right? And I love that Jesus is telling you why, in fact, His disciples aren't fasting. I wonder if that's really even the case for them personally. Counted amongst that number, I'd go, that's a great reason, Jesus.

That is why I'm eating and enjoying this food. Right? But this is what He tells us. This is why they're fasting because they're experiencing the joy of the bridegroom, the one Jesus Christ.

Two more examples here. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it. The new from the old. And a worse tear is made.

This is probably a little bit removed from a lot of your thinking because most of you probably don't patch your own clothing. Most cloth we buy is probably in some way fabricated so that it's pre-shrunk or something like that.

But, any of you ever had a horrible, I've got some clothes that have just been shrunk horribly on me. And it happens still these days that you put something in the dryer in the wrong way and it ends up a whole lot smaller than it was intended to be.

[29 : 07] And you have to get rid of it because you can't wear it any longer because it would be obnoxious. What's going on here is when they patched clothing they had to pre-shrink the patches before they put it on to the clothing. So that when that patch shrunk in the wash from the fabric that had already been shrunk it didn't cause a greater problem.

You don't do this. This was a very simple analogy for them. They'd all go, of course not. No, you wouldn't do that. Of course you've got to shrink the patch before you sew the patch on. It says that no one puts new wine into old wineskins.

If he does, the wine will burst the skins and the wine is destroyed and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins. He didn't come with a message to patch the old system.

He didn't come to bring in a little fix to this form of Judaism. And remember, this is the apostate Judaism. They weren't practicing it the way it had been prescribed to them in the Old Testament, which was still a message of faith.

So this is not Jesus coming and replacing the Old Testament. The Old Testament is still gospel saturated. But this is the apostate form of Judaism that was being practiced today.

[30 : 18] It's the modern form of Judaism. It's apostate in all manner. He didn't come just to fix that. He came to replace that. He gave us another parable, Matthew 13, verses 44-46.

He said, The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Put away everything else for the value of this treasure. Jesus came to replace not to patch. Now in this day, if you don't understand, I'm going to teach you today everything I know about wine, which is going to take just a few moments.

But in this day, they used goat skins to store wine in in the process of it fermenting and they simply, when they skinned the goats, they stitched them back up. They stitched the leg holes and the neck hole shut and that's how they stored wine.

And the process of wine fermenting, it expands. It produces carbon dioxide and it expands and new goat skin does the same. It also can stretch because it's still pliable.

[31 : 34] Old boots, you've got to condition the leather to keep it soft so it doesn't get all dry and brittle. So they would do this and as the wine fermented, as it was forming, it would separate.

There'd be less beneficial parts of it, often called dregs. I don't know why. I didn't take the time to figure it out. But that would settle to the bottom and they would pour off the better portion of the wine into another new goat skin and they would continue that process until the wine was where they wanted it to be and then it would be consumed.

So these sediments would settle and they would do this. Once that portion was poured out, if the wine skin was just thrown to the side, it would get dry, it would get brittle, it would crack.

What he's saying is you can't pour the gospel into old, dry, cracked wineskins of religion. That's not where it belongs. It'll burst out of it.

That's the point that he's trying to make here. That you need new, a new thing. Throw away the old. This apostate Judaism. You need the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[32 : 39] You cannot place the gospel of grace into any system of law. That is not the gospel that we celebrate. Now to be clear, a response to the gospel of grace, the changing of our hearts, definitely yields fruit.

It has to be genuine faith. We will live a certain way in light of the truth. But we don't earn our salvation because of the work.

We get it caught before the horse all of the time this happens. The rest of the world's religions seek to find grace with God because of their action and not the other way around.

He gives us grace and therefore we act. I love the story of John Bunyan, the man who wrote Pilgrim's Progress when he was thrown into prison because he was preaching the gospel without a license from the state.

He was in prison. He would actually preach in the courtyard and people would gather around the prison in the thousands so they threw him into a dark dungeon. That's where he wrote Pilgrim's Progress. So if you read that book, if you haven't read it, you should read that book.

[33 : 50] That's where he was at. He had a copy of his scriptures. He had a copy of Fox's Book of Martyrs and he wrote Pilgrim's Progress there in this dark, dark dungeon. There were another group of men who were also thrown into the darker part of the dungeon to their commendation.

They were also preaching the gospel without a license. Good job, men. Right? Also, evangelical believers. But they were very concerned with his message and they said, you must stop teaching people how much God loves them by grace in Christ.

If you keep doing that, they're going to do whatever they want to. Right? They saw he was giving a license to them. God loves you immensely and that will never change and he pours out grace on you in Christ.

This was his message. And they said, stop. They're going to live however they want to. They're going to take that grace for advantage. They're just going to live in whatever way they want to. And

he said, no, if I teach God's people about God's love for them, they'll do whatever he wants. Right? So it's a natural response to the gospel of grace that we live rightly, but we don't live rightly that we might receive grace. Now, interestingly, to drive this home, turn to Luke chapter 5.

[35 : 04] Luke adds a little bit to the story here under the inspiration of the Spirit.

He records after the same phrase we see here in Mark chapter 2. It says, and then Jesus went on to say, so it says, and no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, the old is good. And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, the old is good. Does that get your wheels turning? I hope so. I hope on Sunday mornings you don't just go, explain please, but you actually start thinking.

Get your mind engaged in this process this morning. It's an interesting way to end his little parable, this little journey that he's been on, because when you're looking through it, you think, well, wait, isn't the new wine the thing that we've just understood to be the gospel?

Isn't that what we've understood? And yes, it is. When he's talking about new wine, old wineskins, the new wine, he's referring to the gospel. I just drove that point for a little bit. So then it seems to say that old wine is preferable to new wine.

[36 : 22] What is he talking about? So it's been suggested by some scholars that this phrase, the old is good, is people who are content. They like the old apostate Judaism.

Right? And so therefore, it's just the reality, the truth of things that Jesus is saying to them. And those of you who think you have old wine, who have drunk of the old wine, you're just content and satisfied with that.

You don't want new wine. But that's troubling because new wine was not as good as old wine. That's true today. Now that's all the information I have.

I don't know anything else about wine. Old wine was less tannic, was less severe in its flavor, more mellow. It was more nourishing than new wine.

It was the much preferred, much preferred wine over new wine. So, I think that what Jesus is saying here is that these people who say the old is good are people who have drunk of the old wine of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[37 : 26] I think what he's doing is he's flipping his analogy back on them as they are coming thinking that they have the old religion. Right? This apostate Judaism. They're coming and saying, whoa, whoa, what is this new teaching?

Right? Jesus expresses it as a new thing and then he flips it around to say, actually, it's an ancient thing. Right? That began before the foundation of the world. The gospel of Jesus Christ is old wine. And those who have tasted of it never drink new wine. Never care for this apostate version of Judaism or any other world religion or ours for that matter.

The trappings that we tend to stack on our faith as well. It's the old wine. Those who've been saved by faith through grace Noah, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, to name a few.

These were drinkers of the old wine. The wine that the apostles drank of. These that were now not fasting because they understood the gospel of grace.

[38 : 31] But they were rather rejoicing while the bridegroom was with them. I believe that's what he's saying to these. That have created a religious system and have replaced the old good message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We see the first proclamation of it in Genesis chapter 3. I hope and pray that Adam drank deeply of that. One day we might rejoice in heaven with him.

And so today, you have to ask yourself the question, if you're here, are you here because you have genuine saving faith in Christ? Is it because you believed the gospel of grace?

Are you here because you merely find this an external thing in the hopes that you might earn favor? If you have fasted or are considering fasting, is that why you would do that?

Because you think in some way you can work your way to God. You can't. Our righteousness is found in Christ. Christ. That is where it's from.

[39 : 37] When God sees us, He sees Christ because of what Christ has accomplished on our behalf. And if you haven't, I pray this morning that you will drink of the old wine of the gospel of grace.

That you will repent and believe, which is the call that Jesus has given to us in chapter 1, verse 15. And those of you who have drunk of the old wine, why do we trade what is good for what is of lesser value?

We do this so often. Right? Having begun by the Spirit, Paul says in Galatians, are we now being perfected by our flesh? In this rhetorical, again, sarcasm.

No, of course we're not. We've begun by the Spirit and we're being perfected by the Spirit. Why do we so often march off on our own thinking that in some way we can get it right?

We can't. In our flesh, we get it wrong every time without a doubt. This whole analogy ought to draw us into desperation for God to continue to move and to work in our living.

[40 : 51] I want to exalt Christ with all of my life. I want to lift Him up. This life is so fleeting and this is the highest aim of any man's life. This is what I want to do. And I know, at least here, day by day, that I cannot accomplish that apart from His work in me.

Why do I so often try to do it on my own? And every time I fail, those of us who have drunk of the old wine need to continue to do that and to live by the grace that's been given us.

And the Lord's Supper, again, is this display. It's old wine. It's actually grape juice, but it represents that, doesn't it? The symbols of the Gospel of Christ.

His body broken and His blood spilt on our behalf. And so as I'm praying, men who have volunteered this morning to hold those elements, I'll ask you to go ahead and make your way back there.

Reflect upon this. Have you drunk of the old wine of the Gospel of Christ? Let's pray. Amen.