

Intro: recall Mark's purpose: Christology & discipleship. I.e. who is Jesus, and in light of this, how are His disciples to live. We need to keep this focus as we study the next couple of sections. Today's premise is that in the new covenant, Jesus' followers are not to be weighed down by the legalistic demands and the old structures of the Old Testament. We are to live in light of the coming & snatching away of the bridegroom – namely, we are to live by faith & w/ joyfulness.

Recount context (2:1-17): Jesus able & willing to save sinners. The response of the people: 2:12, cf. Luke 5:25 (rejoice & glorify God) & 2:15 (joyous feasting, Isa. 25). The long-awaited forgiveness of sins promised by the prophets (Isa. 40:1-2; Jer. 31:31) and anticipated by John's baptism, has now arrived. Jesus, the Son of Man, is authorized to bring forgiveness to the land. This is definitely a time for mourning!

Here again, we see the response to the gospel of those who are self-righteous in their own eyes. Not joyous celebration, but bitter criticism religious comparison. This shows us the ugliness of religion, wh/ replaces the heart of the gospel w/ rules (7:3)

Mark introduces the parable by anchoring it in a specific event [2:18a], which gave rise to a specific question [2:18b]. The attack was not much leveled at the disciples as the teacher, as they were considered responsible for the behavior of his disciples.

While some of **John's followers** joined Jesus (John 1:35-42), others continued to follow his teaching even after his imprisonment (6:29), and remained a distinct religious group for many years (Acts 18:25; 19:1-7). As a renewal group, it is not surprising that they, like the Pharisees, adopted a more demanding code of religious observance than was followed by most Jews at that time. For both fasting = piety. So, some people come & ask why they weren't evidencing true religious piety by f'g

Now in the Mosaic law only the fast of the Day of Atonement was required (Lev. 16:29-31; 23:27-32; Num. 29:7). After the Babylonian exile, 4 other yearly feasts were observed by the Jews (Zec. 7:5; 8:19). In Jesus' time, the Pharisees fasted twice a week, on Monday & Thursday (Luke 18:12).

⇒ Which of these fasts they were observing, Mark does not tell us.

At its core, fasting was associated with mourning (1 Sam. 31:13; 2 Sam. 1:12; Est. 4:3), often brought on by the death of another, or, by extension, one's sinfulness. (1 Sam. 7:6; 1 Kn. 21:27). Common to both types of fast is the idea of mourning.

To their query, Jesus responds w/ 3 parable word-pictures (all symbols of New Age):

The bridegroom

⇒ The emotional power of the parable of the bridegroom comes thru playing w/ the opposite emotions w/ weddings & funerals, w/ joy & w/ mourning.

⇒ Several times Jeremiah pictured the coming exile (judgment) in terms of the voice of the bridegroom & bride being heard no more (7:34; 16:9; 25:10).

⇒ 1 Macc. 9:37-42 recalls the actual event where Jonathan & Simon avenge the murder of John by attacking a wedding, v.41: 'the wedding was turned into

mourning & the voice of their musicians into a funeral dirge.' Metaphorically this was used to picture the Jews' loss of everything in the B. exile.

⇒ Those calling upon Jesus & His friends to fast are moving in the wrong direction, for, in fact, the coming of Jesus is more like a funeral that is turned into a wedding banquet.

⇒ Jeremiah spoke of the salvation beyond exile in terms of the bridegroom returning to Israel once again (33:7-11).

⇒ Isaiah pictures formerly desolate Jerusalem being adorned as a bride (61:10-62:5), & looked forward to the great feast at the end of the ages, when God would do away w/ death & mourning & tears & spread out a banquet for His people (25:6-9). On this day, God would remove the shroud of death that covers the nations & swallow up death forever. Mourning will be abolished, for resurrection life will have come (cf. 26:19).

So what does this all mean?

⇒ Jesus' disciples represent a vital new perspective that supersedes the traditional patterns of religion. The coming of the kingdom of God (1:15) is a time of celebration! The cause of humanity's mourning is about to be removed forever!

⇒ What is the cause? Sin (2:10, 17).

⇒ How is it removed? By the removal of the bridegroom (2:20), Jesus' 1st allusion to the central theme of Mark's gospel: salvation thru the violent death of the S.S.

⇒ The Greek word "taken away" [αἰ,ρω] is also used 2X in Isa. 53:8 LXX.

⇒ What's the big deal if the bridegroom is taken away? In the OT, this metaphor was repeatedly applied to God (Isa. 54:5-6; 62:4-5; Hos. 2:16-20). The significance is that Jesus is saying that He, is God, will remove the shroud of death hanging over His people by being killed. This is the Gospel → rejoice!

Application

⇒ At work, home, in public, do we represent Christianity as a dismal religious fast, or a celebratory wedding feast that rejoices in sins forgiven & fellowship w/ the glorious Bridegroom, Jesus Christ? I've never been to a sad wedding. Our lives should mimic this outlook. If so, we've drifted from Christ's presence. Repent!

⇒ As Christians, we ought to be the least miserable people in the world. Unfortunately, the opposite is often the case. Like the older bro of Luke 15.

⇒ Why our celebration of the Lord's Table ought to be a time of celebration, which looks forward to the day when we will forever and joyously celebrate Him, a time when the sackcloth & shroud of death would forever pass away

The New Garment & the New Wine further illustrate Jesus' main point: the newness He brings cannot be reduced to or contained or confined to the old forms of the O.C. The messianic bridegroom has come & has radically transformed the entire structure of Jewish religion. Christianity is not merely a breach w/ Judaism, but its fulfillment

Application:

- ⇒ Reminds us of how we are to read Scripture, esp. the OT, including Sabbath.
The newness of the N.C. (tears & bursts). The OT couldn't contain Him fully.
How we fast is diff., how keep Sabbath, pray, 'tithes', offer sacrifices, etc.
- ⇒ I.e. we are radically Christ-centered. Christology affects discipleship.