

- **Fasting Series Summaries**

- P. Kenny: Started the series by defining what fasting is
 - In fasting we give up the legitimate pleasures of the world for the extreme pleasure of **knowing** God.
 - He shared how through fasting we get **to know** God. That we fast because **we need** God.
- P. Sam
 - Spoke about Fasting as Formation, that fasting **challenges** our self-centeredness and teaches us **to sacrifice**

Transition: Today I continue our series on Fasting. The title of today's message is...

The Old Cannot Contain the New

Introduction:

- **College:** "The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become"
 - I lived in a tension between who I was and who I wanted to become
 - When I made the decision to follow Jesus, to be a disciple of Jesus, I knew there were things that I would need to sacrifice to be who God called me to be.
 - Some of those sacrifices came easy while other sacrifices took a while for me to lay down before God.
 - Those sacrifices along the way paved the way for what God wanted to do in my life.
- God has something new for you
 - 2 Cor.5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
 - The old needs to pass away to make way for the new

Transition:

- Fasting that is saturated with God's Word and Prayer reveals in our lives the old that needs to pass away while revealing the new that God wants to do in our lives
 - The question we must wrestle with and will be challenged to answer is will I surrender the old to make way for the new?

Today's Scripture Reading is from Mark 2:18-22.

Scripture Reading: Mark 2:18-22 (Matthew 9:14-17; Luke 5:33-39)

- 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?" 19 And Jesus said 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. 20 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. 21 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. 22 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.”

PRAYER

- This passage can be broken down into two points
 - **Jesus Being Questioned**
 - **Jesus Responding**

1. JESUS BEING QUESTIONED

Mark 2:18 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?”

a. Observation

- i. There are three disciples mentioned:
 1. The Disciples of John
 2. The Disciples of the Pharisees
 3. The Disciples of Jesus
- ii. The disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting and they noticed Jesus' disciples were not fasting
- iii. First, let us establish why the disciples of John and Pharisees are fasting. What would have been the purpose of their fasting?
 1. It was part of Jewish custom to fast. The Pharisees themselves fasted twice a week. However, throughout the gospels we see Jesus confronting the Pharisees and their ritual practices
 - a. They Fasted to be seen and praised by others
 - b. They Fasted as a means to be justified and demonstrate their spirituality
 2. Theologically why would they be fasting?
 - a. They were captive to Roman rule, they longed for God's deliverance and restoration of Israel
 - b. They were awaiting the Promised Messiah the one who would bring deliverance and restoration
- iv. So a question is asked to Jesus of his disciples, “but your disciples do not fast?”

2. JESUS RESPONDS

Mark 2:19-20 And Jesus said to them, “Can the **wedding guests** fast (**mourn**-Matthew 9:15) while the **bridegroom** is with them?

As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 The days will come when the **bridegroom is taken away** from them, and **then they will fast** in that day.

a. Observation

i. A Note on Fasting

1. Fasting was, by and large, associated with mourning in that day (note Matthew 9:15)

- a. Fast and Mourn are interchangeable. We can look at the previous passage when they ask about the disciples not fasting and read it as “but your disciples do not mourn?”
2. Fasting was an expression of broken-heartedness and desperation, usually over sin or over some danger or some deeply longed-for-blessing. It was something you did when things were not going the way you wanted them to.

Transition: Jesus responds, you want to know why my disciples don't fast? Why my disciples don't mourn? Jesus answers with a word picture that has tremendous implications on who he claims to be.

ii. **Lesson 2 What is Jesus' Claiming?**

1. Who is who in this word picture?
 - a. Wedding Guest: Disciples
 - b. Bridegroom: Jesus
2. Jesus is making a tremendous claim for himself here. One of the word pictures used in the Old Testament is God himself as the husband(bridegroom) of his people Israel(bride).(Isaiah 62:5; Ezekiel 16:8; Hosea 2:19-20)
 - a. Jesus is essentially claiming to be God. His hearers would have understood the implications of that statement and would have had trouble accepting it.
 - i. Surrounding Context of Mark Passage
 1. In the previous verses Jesus heals a paralytic and forgives his sins. People are then left asking, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?”
3. So why are Jesus' disciples not fasting? Why are they not mourning?
 - a. Because God is in their midst. The joy of Christmas as we prepare to celebrate is Immanuel-God with us. The messiah has come, the long-hoped-for prince and ruler of Israel, he has come, and he brings deliverance and restoration.

“God has come! You simply cannot fast in this situation. It is too happy and too spectacularly exhilarating. Fasting is for times of yearning and aching and longing. The absence of fasting in the disciples of Jesus was a witness to the presence of God in their midst” -John Piper

iii. **Jesus Reveals When They Will Fast**

1. There will be a time of fasting, of mourning and that will be when He is taken away.

Transition: However, the fasting they have known is not suitable for the new reality. With Jesus' arrival, death, and resurrection everything changed.

3. **Mark 2:21-22** 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. 22 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.”

a. Observation:

- i. The two-word pictures Jesus uses here relate directly to fasting as an old Jewish custom. Fasting was inherited from the Old Testament and had been used as part of the Jewish system of relating to God.
 1. Fasting among the Pharisees had become another Religious Ritual and Jesus brought those things to light. They used fasting..
 - a. As a means to justify oneself before God
 - b. As a means to accept praise from others for their spirituality
 - c. As a means of burdening others
 - d. As a means of demonstrating external performance while ignoring internal change
 2. Jesus Confronts The old way of religion vs the new way of the gospel. Tim Keller gives a great side by side comparison of religion vs the gospel
 - a. Religion says “I obey; therefore I’m accepted but the new way of the gospel says, “I’m accepted; therefore I obey”
 - b. Religion says, “I obey God in order to get things from God”. The gospel says “I obey God to get God-to delight and resemble him”
 - c. Religion says, “my identity is based on my performance.” The gospel says “my identity is in Christ and what he has done”
 - d. Religion says, “I pray and fast to control my environment”. The gospel says, “I pray and fast to be in fellowship with God”
- ii. Great damage can be done when we force religion on ourselves and others. Jesus invites us into a new way of living.
 1. The danger of this fast that we are about to enter into as a church community/as individuals is that it can easily become a religious ritual for us. Another year, another fast. It can easily become a spiritual/church obligation.

Closing Application:

1. **Don't Miss Jesus:** Here is the heartbreaking part of this passage. They missed Jesus. Everything their hearts and souls were longing for was in their midst and they missed him. Jesus the Messiah the reason why they are fasting for, but they just don't see him. They miss Jesus.
 2. **The Old Cannot Contain the New**
 - a. God wants to pour out something new but the old must go.
 - i. What are you holding on to that God is calling you to let go?
 - b. The work in our heart that is needed for us to arrive to a place of sacrifice and surrender is one that can come only through the Holy Spirit.
 3. **Jesus Makes All Things New: Gospel Invitation**
 - b. Jesus the Messiah has come, he has defeated sin and death at the cross and resurrection.
 4. **A New Heart for Fasting**
 - a. The longing and aching of our hearts now is the return of our King. Jesus who was crucified and died for our sins and rose from the grave, and ascended into heaven is coming back.
- **Stories:**
 - Fasting mom interrupted my prayer time i was angry
 - I fainted while fasting
 - "Though my heart fears I will follow you"
 - Guidance-to be strengthened
 - Last year-the longing of Jesus and his kingdom to come
 - Rock Climbing-Taking the leap

Notes:

- ESV Study Bible
- A Hunger for God by John Piper
- Shaped by the Gospel by Timothy Keller
- ABBA's Child by Brennan Manning