

**If Jesus Facebooked:
 Jesus & his disciples are NOT fasting right now!
 July 5, 2009
 Mark 2:18-22**

Mark 2:18-22 / Matthew 9:14 / Luke 5:33

18) Once when John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, some people came to Jesus and asked, "Why don't your disciples fast like John's disciples and the Pharisees do?"

- Why aren't you as "spiritual" as them? How come your so special?
- Piety is fun! I got to be a pharisee once:
 - prayed prayers of piety
 - cried out my good deeds
 - showed everyone how good I was
 - declared how close I was to God and how far away they were
- Glad we aren't in the habit of making comparisons today with one another!
 - One of the cautions I have with Facebook & Twitter is this idea of self promotion
 - But before there was FBing & Tweeting, there was the church
 - how fake we are, not wanting anyone to know!
 - You ever get a new bible, and start ruffling the pages...
 - What events we show up for, and then how we look to see if "so & so" is there
- We are EXPERTS at faking our faith!! Looking the part!
- Isaiah 58:1-5 (hold on to this place!)

19) Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. They can't fast while the groom is with them.

- That's such a sweet answer isn't it?
- Mark 3:6
- What Jesus has done in these debates, these interactions, these skirmishes...is he reveals more about himself to the people and especially to the religious leaders!
- Mark 2 gives us examples of Jesus revealing himself:
 - Not only does he cause a paralyzed man to walk, but forgives him his sins "but only God can forgive sins...wait a second!!"
 - Calls Levi/Matthew and refers to himself as the healer, a good pious Jew would consider God the healer
 - In each of these instances, Jesus KNEW their thoughts

- When he calls himself the groom (bridegroom), a good pious Jew would know that God refer to himself as the bridegroom and his people, his bride!
- Hosea, one of the prophets, the entire book illustrates this very idea!

20) *But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.*

- Jesus knows all about Mark 3:6, that they would seek to kill him.
- Jesus says that then, his disciples will fast, they will mourn, they will abstain from the pleasures of this life, in their grief as Jesus is put to death on the cross!
- Jesus is just getting started! But the plan of God was that Jesus would be a stumbling block to some, that he would be rejected, that he would be crucified...becoming an object of wrath, a sacrifice for all mankind.
- The Pharisees and even John's disciples would fast twice a week, they would make a show of their fast, everyone knew they were fasting. The only reason for their fast was to appear spiritual.
- Jesus says, I will give them a reason to fast. Not so they can appear spiritual, not because it is THE day to fast, but because they will need to fast out of mourning, grief, confusion, they will be seeking clarity for their lives, because everything they will have known as my disciple will turn them upside down.

21) *“Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before. 22) *“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both be lost. New wine calls for new wineskins.”**

- This passage has been interpreted several ways:
 - 1) Law vs. Grace
 - now you have grace, so there is no need to practice these things
 - Jesus will fulfill the law
 - 2) Old Covenant vs. New Covenant
 - OT vs. NT
 - 3) Religion vs. Life Change
 - Instead of going through the motions of religion, I'm going to make you NEW!
 - Jesus doesn't just patch us up, but makes us NEW!
 - 2 Cor. 5:17 - Therefore if anyone is in Christ, they are a NEW creation!
- You don't fast so that others think you are religious! You fast because in that fast, you are crying out to God to change who you are, your circumstance and create in you someone who looks like Jesus...

- Isaiah 58:1-12

- Jesus didn't say not to fast, that his disciples wouldn't fast, or that fasting wasn't important! What is important is to know why we fast, which can answer the "when" we fast and how we fast:

Why/When to Fast:

- #1 - When Grieving
- #2 - Asking God for breakthroughs
 - marriages
 - ministries
 - sin
 - outreach
- #3 - Need Wisdom
 - direction in life
 - decisions (big or small!)
- #4 - When God Calls you to Fast
 - Draw you nearer to God

How to Fast:

- #1 - Don't make a show of it - Matthew 6:16-18
- #2 - Food / Noise / Busyness
- #3 - Replace those things with prayer, solitude & meditation

What fasting does for me & you!

- I've done weddings & funerals
- Wedding a few weeks ago, which way should I face...always toward the bride!
- In our lives and faith, we focus on the church, the bride so much!
 - Got to serve here!
 - Have to do this!
 - I don't like that song!
 - Why are they doing that!
- Over and over again we are called to give our attention to, to focus on, to live for, to die for...not the bride, but for the groom Jesus!

John the Baptist's disciples are concerned that people are beginning to follow Christ, Jesus, the Messiah instead of him. He answers their concerns...

- John 3:27-31

- I don't fast to look spiritual, we don't encourage you as a church to fast, so that we will look more like a church.
- I fast because it helps me focus on the bridegroom, Jesus!
- He must become greater and greater in my life, as things become less and less about me!