

The Bible is the most unique book in all of human history. You can read it through over and over, and only appreciate further how much more you have to learn. There is nothing on earth like it.

Recently I was reading through the Gospel of Mark. And I've read through this gospel a few times and didn't expect any challenges or surprises. Well, smooth sailing lasted all the way to chapter 2!

In Mark 2, I ran across a couple of illustrations Jesus uses. I've read them before, but it occurred to me that I really don't know what they mean. I'm not sure about the elements of the illustration itself and certainly I'm not sure about the meaning or implications Jesus intended. And so, a journey of study began. Tonight, I'd like to share with you some interesting lessons learned from **Mark 2:21-22**.

### The Illustrations:

- 1) New patch on an old garment. These two things just don't go together. It won't fit. When the new leather shrinks it will pull away from the old garment. That just doesn't match up.
- 2) New wine into old wineskins. As new wine ferments it expands. So to put it in non-elastic old skins would lead to the skins bursting open. The two don't go together. It just doesn't fit.

Okay, so maybe they are not so difficult to understand when you think about them. But the more important questions must be asked: "What doesn't fit together?" and/or "What is Jesus' point?"

**Popular Interpretation:** It has been often suggested that Jesus is talking about the inability for the New Covenant and Old Covenant to exist together. You cannot put the new patch of the Gospel onto the old garment of the Jewish system. Nor can you put the new wine of the New Law into an old Jewish Law.

This interpretation sounds like it should fit and certainly connects in some ways to principles Jesus had been teaching. However, it runs into a couple of glaring problems:

- 1) There is nothing in this text about Laws. He has made no point nor does Jesus soon pursue a point about what was under the Old Law of the Jews and how the New Covenant figures in.
  - a. Fasting is discussed here, but it was not mandatory or restricted by either.
- 2) If this is about the two laws, then **Luke 5:37-39**, then I guess the Old Law is Good Enough!

So, to apply his illustrations to such would be out of context and quite lazy. Let's do some contextual legwork and see if Jesus will tell us exactly what He means:

**The Setting: Mark 2:15-17** – Jesus and His disciples are dining at Matthew's house feasting and enjoying one another and teaching the gospel to many. It was a truly joyous occasion.

**Mark 2:18** – This so happen to also be a day when others were fasting nearby.

The Pharisees fasted on Mondays and Thursdays and it was usually in connection with some form of somber sorrow or mourning. They would add fasting to the schedule during times of pestilence, famine, war or droughts. The disciples of John were likewise fasting. Perhaps they were observing the same traditional fast. However, it is highly possible that John has been detained by Herod at this point and may have even been recently beheaded. So, in this time of mourning and loss, the disciples were fasting.

So, a natural question emerges: **"Jesus, why are we fasting, but your disciples do not?"**

**The Response of Jesus:** (Jesus answers with not two, but three illustrations)

- 1) "While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they?"
  - a. It would be inappropriate and out of place for the disciples to fast in Jesus' presence!
  - b. The Emotion would not Match the Situation!
  - c. To be sorrowful and downtrodden NOW... well that just wouldn't fit.
- 2) Just as out of place and inappropriate would be a new patch on an old garment.
- 3) Equally as absurd would be new wine on old skins. It just doesn't fit!

**Mark 2:20** indicates a time of fasting would come from the Apostles, and it did: **Mark 16:10-11**. The situation changed and their emotions changed right along with it.

But it would not last long. (**Matthew 28:16-20**) – Jesus appeared to them, having been raised. He promised to be with them until the end of the age. And *sorrow, mourning and woe* would never be appropriate emotions again. They would never again fit this great occasion: Jesus is Risen!

Okay, so what? Why have I presented this information to you? There are two answers, and I'm not sure if you are going to like the first one or not: *I got excited about figuring out Jesus' teaching and just thought you might be interested in learning it as well.*

But there is something else. There is a principle introduced here that opens the door to much more. **Mark 2:18-22** – Jesus' Point: **The EMOTION must FIT the SITUATION.**

If the emotion doesn't fit the occasion, something is wrong. Something needs to change. If Jesus was sitting at that table teaching and converting, and the 12 were down there tearfully abstaining from the feast, Jesus would say: "HEY. Your emotions are not what they ought to for this occasion." And He would expect them to act and feel and think appropriately in connection with the moment.

I'm going to present three Situations and ask you a simple question about an Emotion: **Does it Fit?**

### **I. Perpetual Sadness in Christ's Body**

- a. Does this fit? Perpetual negativity, hopelessness, discouragement. Like life hasn't been fair and things aren't right. You are an enigma. Something is out of place. Like a brown belt with black dress shoes. And Jesus would say, "fix it." Understand the situation better.
- b. In Christ Alone, my hope is found, and there are some emotions and attitudes with it!
- c. **Philippians 4:4-7, 12-13** – This does not mean that all circumstances were perfect, no more than things were perfect for the disciples on that day long ago in Matthew's house, but they were in the house with Jesus, and they rejoiced. And so are you and so should you!
- d. How about: Peaceful Security in Christ's Body? Yes!

### **II. Extreme Boredom in Worship Services**

- a. The situation is a place of God's people united in worship: singing, study, prayer, partaking, sharing, and offering God our best.
- b. The emotion is: "I want to get out of here. When will this be over? Why did he lead that extra song? I hope the preacher knows he has less time than usual? What's for lunch?"
- c. NO! It doesn't fit! This emotion is as inappropriate and ridiculous as a new patch on an old garment. It will not fit, it will not hold, and it IS NOT RIGHT!
- d. The truth is: some are sitting at Jesus' table and not eating a bite. He will not accept that.
- e. **Revelation 2:4-6** – Mechanical routine, but where is the Heart, the Love, the Emotion!
  - i. Hearts on fire. Tears just held back. Passion for giving all we have for God!
- f. How about: Expressive Gratitude in Worship Services? YES! (**Psalms 100**)

### **III. Impending Doom at The Judgment**

- a. No, we have not arrived at the occasion yet. But when we do, emotions will be at an all time high. We will feel things at levels we never thought imaginable. But will it fit?
- b. This emotion is one of dread and terrible expectation. It says, "Though I'm not at judgment day yet, I have no confidence I'll be saved." Some should feel this way. (**Hebrews 10:26**).
- c. But the Christian should not. If we do, something is not right! That does not fit our lives!
- d. And if we feel that lost sense of hopelessness, Jesus would say, "fix it!" You aren't making any sense. I died to save you. I told you I was coming back. Renovate your emotions!
- e. How about: Reverent Hope at The Judgment! Hey, that feels right! (**II Peter 3:10-13**).

Listen, maybe there was a time, a situation, an occasion for a spiritual life of SADNESS, BOREDOM and DOOM. But if those occasions existed, they have been forever put away by the EMPTY TOMB, just as Jesus put those emotions out of the Apostles lives forever by showing them the nail prints in His hand.

So if you feel these things, acknowledge something tonight: something needs to change. To try and feel those things in His name is like trying to put screen doors on a submarine, it is ridiculous and dangerous.

But SECURITY, GRATITUDE and HOPE, oh these emotions and this life has merit, because Jesus has set the table with a great feast. He dines at it and invites you there, but there will be no fasting here, only feasting, rejoicing, strength and expectation. Don't leave here until your heart and the occasion of His glory... fit.