

Study of Mark – Lesson 05

Mark 2:18-27 Fasting and the Sabbath

Jesus questioned About Fasting

2¹⁸ Now John's disciples / and the Pharisees / were fasting. / Some people came / and asked Jesus, / "How is it / that John's disciples /



and the disciples of the Pharisees / are fasting, / but yours are not?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered, / "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast / while he is with them? /

They cannot, / so long as / they have him with them. / ²⁰ But the time will come / when the bridegroom will be taken from them, / and on that day / they will fast.

²¹ "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth / on an old garment. / Otherwise, / the new piece / will pull away / from the old, / making the tear worse. / ²² And no one / pours new wine / into old wineskins. / Otherwise, / the wine will burst the skins, / and both the wine / and the wineskins / will be ruined. / No, / they pour new wine / into new wineskins."

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²³ One Sabbath / Jesus was going through the grain fields, / and as his disciples walked along, / they began to pick some heads of grain. /

²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, / “Look, / why are they doing / what is unlawful / on the Sabbath?”

²⁵ He answered, / “Have you never read / what David did / when he and his companions were hungry / and in need? / ²⁶ In the days of Abiathar / the



high priest, / he entered the house of God / and ate the consecrated bread, / which is lawful only for priests to eat. / And he also gave some / to his companions.”

²⁷ Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Vocabulary

1. **To fast:** to voluntarily do without food for a period of time.

2. **Patch:** Something that covers or mends. A small area. *Mom sewed a patch over the hold in my jeans. The farmer has a tomato patch.*

3. **To shrink, shrank, shrunk:** Reduce in size. *My new cotton shirt shrank in the wash. I can't*



wear it now because it is too small.

4. **To burst, burst, burst:** To split or break. *The Mississippi River has burst over the dams in this awful flood. The balloon burst when he blew it up too full.*
5. **Grain:** Wheat, rice, barley, etc.
6. **Consecrated bread:** Made holy to God.

Questions

1. Do you know of any tradition for fasting in your country? Explain it.
2. Jesus uses the bridegroom as a contrast. What are some wedding/food traditions you know about?
3. How does Jesus foreshadow his death in these verses?
4. Rules for the Sabbath dominated the life of religious Jews in the time of Jesus. Do we have rules or laws special to Sunday here in the USA? Explain them

Notes

1. The only required or compulsory fasting day in the Jewish religion is the Day of Atonement, done once a year. It is the 10th day of the High Holy Days, Oct. 11, 2011, this year. In the time of Jesus, the very religious fasted two days a week, and made a great show of fasting. They wanted everyone to know they did their fast. They thought the extra fast days would win favor with God, and perhaps with men.

2. Jesus knew the one feast to celebrate a wedding meant no one would fast during that happy time. He says he is like the bridegroom and is not required to fast. The time to fast was dawn to dusk, and then they could eat a good meal. Here Jesus is telling us that the Christian life should be full of joy, not rules and restrictions. Also, in this passage, Jesus foretells his coming death. This is very early in his ministry.
3. Jesus knew he was bringing a new way of life. Unlike attaching this way of life to the old rules of the Pharisees, Jesus wanted all to know that God wanted a new beginning. So, putting new or unwashed cloth on old torn cloth would not make a good patch. Jesus knew the religious people could not accept change or new thoughts and ideas.
4. Martin Luther knew he could not patch up or fix the Catholic Church, and he started the protestant reformation. It was a whole new way to do church.

