

WHY DOESN'T HE FAST LIKE US?

Mark 2:18-22 Rev. Brian W. Secor
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Mankind is incurably religious. What does it mean to be religious today?

1. Ch. 2 & 3's question & answer dialogues give us clear insight into what Jesus said & thought about religion and religious observances.

I. THE QUESTION: WHY DON'T YOUR DISCIPLES FAST LIKE THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN & THE PHARISEES?

A. Nature of fasting.

1. _____, as a religious practice, is clearly taught in OT & NT
2. Old Testament practice: usually abstinence from food, but not water.
 - a. Law of God requires only one _____ of fasting a year. Day of Atonement: Leviticus 23:23-32. Time for repentance & forgiveness.
 - b. Fasting was to humble the _____ by the affliction of one's soul based upon belief that such humbling is pleasing in God's sight.
 - c. Act of fasting does not always please _____. Isaiah 58:3-9a
3. New Testament practice.
 - a. Pharisees overextended law to where said had to fast 2x per week. When did, had to paint face white & wear torn clothes so everyone would know you are fasting. It was religion for ceremony's sake.
 - b. _____ disciples joined in this practice as symbol of repentance & desire for Kingdom to come.
 - c. _____ fasted, including 40 days in wilderness at beginning of his ministry. Paul fasted. So did whole churches in Antioch (Acts 13) & Galatia (Acts 14).
 - d. Jesus taught that fasting is appropriate for his followers but was to be done differently than what was practiced in Judaism. Mt. 6:16-18.

B. Purpose of question is to drive wedge between Jesus & others.

1. Jesus & disciples of _____. John came preaching a gospel of repentance. With it, one was to afflict one's soul & be baptized so Kingdom of God might come. Practiced Pharisaical fasting.
2. Jesus & his _____. Jesus' followers did not practice fasting as Pharisees & disciples of John did.
3. Jesus summed up facts well in Matthew 11:16-19. John & Jesus each had different ministry. John came preaching _____. Fasting is right & necessary. Jesus came preaching the Kingdom. Time to _____, not fast.

II. THE ANSWER:

A. _____ is for repentance and sorrow.

B. Now is the time to _____ for the Messiah is here.

1. No wonder Jesus said it wasn't time for this. He, the Messiah, was present. Gospel he declared & declares through his ministers today is a Gospel of celebration. Redeemer has come. Peace & reconciliation have

been made with God. This life in the King is not doom & gloom; common day to day life in the Kingdom is joy, peace & love in the Holy Spirit. We celebrate the coming, presence & victory of the King.

C. Man's understanding of _____ must give way to the pure & undefiled religion revealed by me, Jesus.

1. Two mini-parables are here. You can't put new cloth on an old garment. You can't put new wine into old wine-skins. If you try, the original will be ruined & the new will be wasted.
2. Pharisees perfected making religion boring, burdensome & dismal.
3. For few years after Jesus' resurrection, some in Church thought could synthesize Judaism & Christianity. Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 decided once for all that Christianity & Judaism were separate & distinct dispensations of God's grace at work & could not be fit together. What the law of Moses could never do, the Gospel of _____ brings to us --- joy, peace & love that we celebrate with delight.

III. APPLICATION

A. _____ does not equate with being Christian.

1. Christian faith is about living in & loving Christ & brethren so that the Church demonstrates convincingly that the time of celebration has come & we know how to rejoice & live in mighty, definite joy in Jesus.
2. We are no longer lost. We've been found, redeemed, renewed, restored, reconciled, regenerated not by keeping any specific ritual but by the glorious, majestic, transforming grace of God in Jesus Christ. .

B. What _____ to work for church growth and worship may need to find new ways of expression in order to reach people with the Gospel.

1. How do we reach people today with Gospel so that lives are changed & hearts transformed? My reformation heritage helps me.
 - a. The _____ of the Word of God.
 - b. The _____ of people in worship of God.
 - c. What we do in Church activities & events is to draw folks to _____, not entertain them. High calling & commission is to present Christ, not tickle people's ears, to offer events that draw people to Christ.
2. What this means is that what we used to do as church that worked & drew people in past, may need to _____ in order to help people of this time & age come to Jesus. Please pray with me that we will, as this church has been & needs to be, a lighthouse that shines brightly for Jesus & is not bound by "we've always done it that way" or "we used to do it this way."

Our innate tendency is to be religious.

1. Jesus calls us to celebrate a new way of living---living in joy, living in peace, living in love that can't be squeezed into old religious ways.
2. The Lord is w/ us & we are with him. We cannot help but celebrate --- the new has come, the old has gone. Let us _____ the King!