

Would just like to remind you how important it is you bring a Bible to church, have it open, and please follow along.

The title of this morning's message is *The Joy of the New Covenant*.

We're back in Luke and we're going to finish this section where Jesus is questioned about fasting. We've covered verses 33 to 37, and this morning we're going to look at verses 38 and 39. We've been away from Luke for a few weeks, so let's review what we studied in the previous verses.

Please look back at verse 33...

³³ Then they said to Him, “Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?”

They wondered why Jesus didn't seem to fast and pray more often. We said one reason they thought He did so infrequently, is He generally fasted and prayed the way He taught people should fast and pray in the Sermon on the Mount: privately. So one reason they thought He didn't fast and pray more is they didn't know when He was fasting and praying; He didn't do it publicly as a show like they did.

We said though, the other reason they might have thought Jesus didn't fast much, is b/c He didn't fast much. There are plenty of times we're told Jesus prayed, but aside from His temptation in the wilderness there's no mention of Him ever fasting. In the first lesson we'll talk about why there's so little fasting in the NT.

³⁴ And He said to them, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵ But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days.”

Fasting is associated w/ mourning, so Jesus said there was no reason for His disciples to be fasting while He was w/ them, b/c that's not a time of mourning; it's a time of joy. But He said He would be taken from them and that would be a time of mourning and then it would be appropriate to fast.

Jesus actually used the imagery of a wedding and a funeral:

- You don't fast a wedding, which pictures Jesus being w/ them.
- You fast at a funeral, which pictures Jesus being taken away from them.

With that in mind please look at verse 36...

³⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them: “No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was *taken* out of the new does not match the old.

Now I need to tell you something very, very important: verse 36 looks like it's NOT related to verses 33 to 35, but you need to know everything Jesus says in verses 36 to 39 completely relates to verses

33 to 35.

To help you see this relationship, in verse 36 please circle the words “**new does not match the old**” and write “*fasting at a wedding.*” Jesus is saying if the disciples fasted while He was w/ them, it would be like fasting at a wedding: it wouldn’t *match*. A wedding is a time of joy, not a time of mourning. Putting a patch from a new garment on an old garment is like fasting at a wedding: they don’t go together.

And this brings us to our first lesson...

LESSON 1: (PART I) THE NEW COVENANT IS ABOUT JOY...

When we first studied these verses I told you the **new garment** represents the New Covenant, so here’s the point Jesus is making: under the New Covenant, our lives should be characterized by joy... and not mourning and fasting: This is why we see verses like:

- **Phil 3:1 My brethren, rejoice in the Lord.**
- **Phil 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS. Again I will say, rejoice!**
- **1 Thes 5:16 Rejoice always.**
- **1 Pet 1:8 Though now you do not see [Jesus], yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.**
- This is why in **Gal 5:22** one of the Fruit of the Spirit is **joy**.

Let me ask you to consider a question that helps illustrate all this...

If Jesus said the disciples would fast when He was taken from them, what should happen if He returns to them? If they fast and mourn while He’s gone, what do they do when He returns? That should mean the mourning comes to an end and the joy is restored.

Let me get you to please look at **John 16:16-22**. I think this is so important I’d like to have you turn there to see this.

To tell you ahead of time what you’re looking for, I want you to see how Jesus said they would mourn when He’s gone - like He said in Luke 5:35 - but then their mourning would be turned to joy when He returned...

¹⁶ “**A little while, and you will not see Me** (referring to when He dies and then they would mourn); **and again a little while, and you will see Me** (referring to Jesus’ resurrection, which would be a time of joy).”

Now look at verse 20...

²⁰ **Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament** (when He’s taken from them), **but the world will rejoice** (this is terrible, but true: most of the world rejoiced when Jesus was killed; think of the multitudes calling for His crucifixion); **and you will be sorrowful** (unlike the rest of the

world, the disciplines would mourn. Now notice this next part...), **but your sorrow will be turned into joy** (when Jesus is resurrected and returns to them their mourning ceases and their joy is restored). ²¹ **A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.**

If you talk to women who have given birth or you've been around a woman giving birth or you're a woman who's given birth, two things seem to be true:

- There's excruciating pain
- But then there's unimaginable joy when the baby is born and they seem to forget the pain.

That's what Jesus is saying is going to happen to the disciples: excruciating pain when He's gone, but then unimaginable joy when they see Him again and they'll forget the pain they previously experienced.

²² **Therefore you now have sorrow** (knowing He's about to be taken from them); **but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice** (now here's the really important part...) **and your joy no one will take from you.**

He said their joy would continue, and that's why right after Jesus' ascension when they were all in the upper room, what WERE they doing and what WEREN'T they doing? They were praying, but they weren't fasting. They weren't mourning anymore.

Let me tell you something really interesting...

Jesus said their joy would stay w/ them forever...even though He wouldn't be staying w/ them forever. In these verses you would expect Jesus to say, **"You'll have sorrow when I'm crucified. Then you'll have joy when I'm resurrected. But then you'll have sorrow again when I leave you to go to the Father."** But He doesn't say that. Instead He says they'll have a joy that would remain w/ them.

Now here's the really, really important question: why would they have joy that would remain?

- When they saw Jesus resurrected, they would know everything he said was true; until Jesus was resurrected, they felt terribly defeated b/c they wondered if He was really the Messiah.
- They would know the Gospel is true.
- They would know the Kingdom of God is true and they were part of it.
- They would be under the New Covenant and all the blessings that came w/ it.

And all of this would give them inexpressible joy. Please listen to this verse: **1 Pet 1:8 [Jesus Christ] whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls.** That's reason to be joyful!

Now here's the question...

If they're supposed to fast when He's gone b/c that's a time of mourning, but then He returns to them and their mourning comes to an end and their joy is restored, what else should cease? Their fasting should cease and this brings us to the rest of Lesson 1...

LESSON 1: (PART I) THE NEW COVENANT IS ABOUT JOY, (PART II) WHICH MEANS THE FAST IS OVER.

If the disciples mourned and fasted while Jesus was gone, but then He returned to them, they should stop fasting.

Now let me tell you something pretty fascinating...

Jesus appeared to His disciples numerous times after His resurrection, and what did He often do w/ them? He ate w/ them...and He didn't just eat w/ them, He made them food. Before Jesus' death He was a carpenter, but after His resurrection He came back as a chef.

Listen to these verses...

- In **Luke 24** after walking on the Road to Emmaus **30 [Jesus] sat at the table with them...He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.** ³¹ **Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.** He stayed long enough to give them some food, and then He was gone!
- A little later in **Luke 24** Jesus miraculously appeared to the disciples: **41 He said to them, "Have you any food here?"** ⁴² **So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.** ⁴³ **And He took it and ate in their presence.**
- In **John 21** When the disciples were fishing, Jesus was on the shore and it says **9 As soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.** ¹⁰ **Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."...12 "Come and eat breakfast."...** ¹³ **Jesus...took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.**

Jesus kept giving the disciples food! What's He communicating? He's communicating: I'm back. The time of mourning is over. The time of fasting is over.

The New Covenant brings tremendous joy w/ it, and Jesus wanted people to celebrate and rejoice over the Gospel and the salvation He provided.

Please turn back to **Luke 5:33**...

In this verse Jesus was asked why He didn't "**fast often.**" When we covered this I preached a sermon called, "**When You Fast.**" Then I preached a follow-up sermon called, "**Fasting and Food.**" If you remember those sermons, I told you the NT says very little about fasting:

- There's the example of Anna the prophetess in Luke 2:37. It says [**she**] **was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.**
- Most famously Jesus fasted 40 days in the wilderness.

- In Acts, there are only two instances of fasting in chapters 13 and 14.
- After that there's no mention of fasting in the entire rest of the NT! To be clear: fasting is never mentioned - say nothing about commanded - in any of the NT epistles, even though they are THEE letters of instruction for the Christian life.

So here's the question: why isn't there more fasting in the NT?

You're looking at part of the answer: fasting is associated w/ mourning, and being under the New Covenant is about joy.

This doesn't mean there's no fasting at all – even Jesus said His disciples would fast when He's taken from them, and if you go back and listen to the two sermons on fasting, I did say fasting has a place under the New Covenant at appropriate times:

- There could be times of intense prayer when fasting is appropriate. An example would be a few weeks ago when we fasted and prayed for Scott Steenbarger.
- There could be times of crushing sadness or grief when fasting is appropriate, and sometimes it happens naturally b/c you've lost your appetite.

But even though there might be the occasional time to fast under the New Covenant, our lives should not be characterized by mourning and fasting under the New Covenant...for no other reason than the great joy we should have regarding what Christ has done for us.

Even when we do mourn or grieve under the New Covenant, we still never mourn or grieve w/o hope. As a Christian, we always have joy and hope.

Please listen to this...

In **Eph 2:12** Paul said, “**You were without Christ...HAVING NO HOPE.** But now we have Christ, so we have hope, and that's why **1 Thes 4:13** says: **Brethren** (referring to believers) **I do not want you to...sorrow as others who have no hope** (referring to unbelievers). He's saying believers can sorrow and mourn, but we shouldn't mourn like unbelievers, b/c **OF WHAT WE HAVE THAT THEY DON'T HAVE.**

Now we've finally reached verse 38, which is where we stopped before...

³⁸ But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

As a note, most translations don't have the words **and both are preserved**; more than likely verse 38 should just say **New wine must be put into new wineskins.**

Here's the physical explanation of this parable, which we briefly discussed a few weeks ago...

Wine can't be put into old wineskins b/c old wineskins have lost their elasticity from having wine fermented in them. If new wine that needs to ferment is put into old wineskins they'll burst and you lose the wine and the wineskins.

Now obviously Jesus isn't telling us this parable b/c He wants us to understand wine better. Like most of Jesus' parables, Jesus is discussing something physical and earthly to describe something spiritual and heavenly.

So we need to look at the physical elements in the parable and define what they symbolize spiritually. Please look at the top of your inserts...

Symbolism in The Parable of the Wineskins:

- New Wine – The Gospel offered under the New Covenant
- Old Wineskins – Lives under the Old Covenant/Judaism
- New Wineskins – Lives under the New Covenant/Christianity

The first symbol is the new wine, which represents the Gospel offered under the New Covenant.

The second symbol is the Old Wineskins, which represent life under the Old Covenant or the Law.

1. The Old Covenant is associated w/ works and tradition that don't save.
2. The Old Covenant is associated w/ man's failure to live up to God's perfect, holy, righteous standard.
3. When you think of the Old Covenant, you think of man failing; if man had succeeded under the Old Covenant, there would've been no reason for a New Covenant.
4. It's very possible one of the reasons we see so much fasting in the Old Testament is it's a time of mourning over man's sin and failure.
5. The joylessness of the Old Covenant is seen in the fasting and mourning of the religious leaders in verses 33 to 35.
 - a. Just think about the religious leaders for a moment: were their lives characterized by joyfulness?
 - i. No, their lives were dreary and joyless, characterized by mourning and fasting.
 - ii. I heard someone say the Sadducees got their names b/c they were, "Sad you see!"
 - iii. That's why they asked Jesus why He didn't fast more. This is part of the reason they had so much trouble following Him: He wasn't mourning and fasting enough like them.

The third symbol is the New Wineskins, which represent life under the New Covenant:

- This is the life the New Wine of the Gospel is poured into.
- You could say the New Wineskins represent life filled w/ the Gospel, or life filled w/ the New Wine of the New Covenant.

Let me remind you of a lesson from a sermon a few weeks ago: **THE NEW COVENANT DOESN'T "PATCH UP" (OR FIX) THE OLD COVENANT BECAUSE THEY DON'T GO TOGETHER.**

Please look back at verse 36. Jesus said, **“No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was *taken* out of the new does not match the old.”**

This is saying:

- The New Covenant doesn't fix, repair, patch or improve the Old Covenant.
 - The New Covenant is not an upgraded or perfected Old Covenant.
 - Jesus didn't take the Old Covenant and make it better and then call it the New Covenant.
- The Old Covenant is Judaism and the New Covenant is Christianity; they're two different religions.
- The New Covenant was meant to be as separate from the Old Covenant as the two garments were meant to be separate from each other
- At the Last Supper in **Luke 22:20 Jesus said, “This cup is the New Covenant in My blood.”** That's when the New Covenant was instituted and at that moment it replaced the Old Covenant.

Now this is all review from our sermon on verse 36, but I remind you of it b/c the same idea carries into the Parable of the Wineskins and this brings us to our next lesson...

LESSON 2: THE NEW WINE OF THE GOSPEL CAN ONLY BE POURED INTO LIVES UNDER THE NEW COVENANT.

When Jesus said the New Wine can't be put into old wineskins, He's saying the Gospel can't be poured into Old Covenant Judaism and lives that are still living under it:

- The Old Covenant is Law and works, which can't be mixed w/ the Gospel and grace: you can't pour the Gospel and grace into a person wanting to live a life of Law and works.
- If you remember:
 - The Old Covenant was conditional: it was filled w/ “If statements.” It's about what man was supposed to do.
 - But the New Covenant is filled w/ “I will statements.” It's about what God has done.
 - Therefore you can't be saved by the Gospel if you're trusting in what YOU'LL DO instead of what God HAS DONE.

This is why the religious leaders couldn't have the Gospel poured into them; they wanted to live lives under the Old Covenant...and this is the same today for anyone who wants to follow a works-based religion instead of pursuing grace-based salvation through faith in Christ.

Here's a good way to look at this parable...

The new wine is the Gospel we have poured into us under the New Covenant by Christ after we've repented. Only new wineskins – or only lives lived under the New covenant - can hold the New Wine of the Gospel.

Now we've had a lengthy discussion about the New Covenant – not just this morning, but over all the weeks we've spent in these verses – and there's one HUGE problem...

Despite how great the New Covenant is, if you've been under the Old Covenant, or you've been under works or Law, you're not going to want to switch to the New Covenant. You're going to want to stay under the Old Covenant. Believe it or not, you're going to think the Old Covenant is better.

And this is NOT my opinion. This is exactly what Jesus said in verse 39...

³⁹ And no one, having drunk old wine (referring to the Old Covenant), immediately desires new (wine, referring to the Gospel); for he says, 'The old is better.'

LESSON 3: THE OLD ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER.

There is potential in all of us to want things a certain way, not b/c it's what's best, but b/c:

- It's what we're used to...
- It's what we've known...
- It's what we're comfortable w/...
- The classic question is, "*Why do we do this?*" and what's the classic answer? "*It's the way things have always been; it's the way we've always done things.*"

This verse is making the point that when people get used to doing things a certain way, it's hard to want to do things differently. Change is difficult. The immediate reaction is to say: "**The old is better.**"

Even the word **immediately** is significant b/c it captures how most people take time to change; they take time to let go of something to embrace something else:

- Almost nobody can **immediately** change.
- Almost nobody can **immediately** move from something old to something new.

An interesting companion verse to this is **Jer 6:16** which says, "**Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in the ways and see, And ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE THE GOOD WAY IS, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls.**"

So just like the old isn't always better, the new isn't always better. There's nothing wrong w/ doing things the way we've always done them...assuming that's the best way to do them.

- I'm of the opinion that you don't change things just for the sake of changing things; there has to be a good reason for change.
- But we also don't want to say, "*The old is better*" ...just b/c it's old, or just b/c it's the way we've always done it, or just b/c we don't like change, or just b/c we don't like something new.

There's obviously a lot of application from this for the church, for our lives, for our families, but the verse is primarily about the religious leaders; it's a commentary on their inflexible, unchanging, unteachable hearts and how they have been drinking old wine so long they don't want to switch to new wine.

Jesus knew the religious leaders would not let go of Judaism and embrace Christianity. He knew they would not let go of their religion and tradition and rituals under the Old Covenant and embrace the New Covenant.

Simply put, they thought the old was "**better**" so they rejected the new, fresh, life-giving teaching of Jesus:

- They wanted to keep fasting twice per week and mourning and acting somber for no reason other than to look spiritual to everyone.
- They didn't want to embrace Christ's teaching and rejoice over the Gospel.
- It all goes back to verses 33 to 35 where they basically asked Jesus, "*Why aren't you engaged in all the religious behavior we're engaged in?*" The religious leaders had been drinking Judaism so long they wouldn't try the new wine.

This can be the case w/ anyone in a works-based religious system.

Having come out of a works-based religious myself I can really relate to this verse. If you've ever witnessed to people in a works-based religion, you see this verse played out in their lives; they'll tell you, "**The old is better.**" They have acquired a taste for works and tradition and they're going to have a very hard time embracing the Gospel and the grace that comes w/ it.

The HUGE problem is shown in verse 38: the new wine of the Gospel can't be poured into works-based religion. The **new wine** or the Gospel of the New Covenant can only fit into **new wineskins**, which are lives under the New Covenant.

Please listen to this quote by Dwight Pentecost. He says, "*If men would taste Jesus' wine, that is, if they would accept what He was offering them, they would not want the old. However, the Pharisees, having tasted the old, were satisfied with it, they had no desire for what He was offering them.*"

Before we move on I want to ask you to do something...

Please circle the words '**The old is better**' and write, "*Book of Hebrews.*" I cannot tell you how perfectly this verse captures the point of Hebrews. The Jews thought Old Covenant Judaism was better than New Covenant Christianity and Hebrews was written to show them Christianity is better. Literally, Hebrews can be broken down into two points:

1. First, Jesus is BETTER than the prophets, the angels, Joshua, Moses, the Promised Land, the Day of Atonement, He's a better High Priest, His sacrifice is better than all the sacrifices in the OT.
2. And because Jesus is BETTER, the covenant He's bringing - the New Covenant - is better than the Old Covenant.

Now I would like to give you an illustration of everything we've discussed this morning, but really everything we've discussed in verses 33 to 39...

The illustration is in John 2 when Jesus turned water into wine. Jesus' first miracle wonderfully illustrates the superiority of the Gospel and the New Covenant; you could show this miracle shows how the New Covenant is **better**. In **Luke 5:39** please look at the words "**immediately desires new**" and circle the word **new** – referring to new wine - and write **John 2:10**.

We know the story: the people at the wedding had drunk all the old wine – it was old wine b/c it came first – and Jesus was going to provide them w/ new wine. But here's the thing: you always brought out the new **FIRST!**

You want to make sure all the good wine is drunk by the guests. You don't want to put out the bad wine and have them drink that and then have the good wine left over. Plus you want to serve the good wine while people still have the sense to recognize it's good wine.

John 2:6 says **there were six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.** The NIV and NLT say the **waterpots were used FOR JEWISH CEREMONIAL WASHING.**

The point is these pots were related to Judaism; they were related to the Old Covenant; they were related to the Law and the ceremonial washing that took place under it. You could say, these waterpots were related to the old wine b/c they held the old wine, but also b/c they were related to the Old Covenant in their purpose.

Now let me tell you what this Jewish ceremonial washing did and what it didn't do...

- It washed or cleansed people outwardly or physically.
- But it did not wash or cleanse people inwardly or spiritually.

These pots represent or they're pictures or types of the Old Covenant and the outward cleansing associated w/ it, but they also picture how the Old Covenant couldn't cleanse people inwardly.

But something really beautiful happened: Jesus filled these pots w/ water and turned the water into new wine. Now listen to what happened after that...

John 2:9-10 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine...[he] called the bridegroom. ¹⁰ And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. **YOU HAVE KEPT THE GOOD (or better) WINE UNTIL NOW!**"

This is a great picture of what happened in Christ's day: the old wine of the Old Covenant came first and then Jesus provided the better wine or the new wine of the New Covenant later.

But imagine someone saying at the wedding, "*We don't want this new wine. We want the old wine. The old wine is better.*" It sounds crazy to think of someone doing that, but that's exactly what

happened in Christ's day w/ the religious leaders, and it's the same thing that happens today w/ people who want to hold on to works-based religions instead of embracing the Gospel of the New Covenant.

Let me close by sharing w/ you the blessings that come from the New Covenant; let me share w/ you what Jesus was saying...

He was teaching that there's joy under the New Covenant...

- The Bridegroom, the long-awaited Messiah had come. He's bringing the Gospel - the Good News - w/ Him.
- The Bridegroom is always w/ us. He isn't w/ us physically, just like He stopped being w/ the disciples physically, but He's w/ us in our hearts. That's why even when Jesus was about to leave His disciples in **Matt 28:20** He said, "**Lo, I am WITH YOU ALWAYS, even to the end of the age.**" When you're leaving people, you don't tell them you're staying w/ them b/c that's the opposite of what you're doing. But Jesus could say this b/c He was really staying w/ His followers.
- We have the Holy Spirit that indwells us.
- We have the forgiveness of sins.
- We have the hope of eternal life.

These are all blessings that should give us great joy under the New Covenant.

If you haven't had the new of the Gospel poured into you, please come and see Pastor Doug or myself after service. We'd love the opportunity to pray w/ you.

LET'S REVIEW THESE LESSONS:

LESSON 1: (PART I) THE NEW COVENANT IS ABOUT JOY, (PART II) WHICH MEANS THE FAST IS OVER.

LESSON 2: THE NEW WINE OF THE GOSPEL CAN ONLY BE Poured INTO LIVES UNDER THE NEW COVENANT.

LESSON 3: THE OLD ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER.