



April 25, 2021

“Patches and Wineskins”

Mark 2:18-22

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When Jesus was asked a question about fasting, he gave an answer that went beyond the subject of fasting. Jesus addressed the purpose for his coming, which was not to patch up an old system, but to bring something brand new. The New Covenant is not a patch on the Old Covenant; it’s something brand new. The same can be said about what Jesus came to do for us. He did not come to patch up our old lives, he came to bring us new life in him! In this message Pastor Gary explains what it means to put off the old ways of the world and put on the new ways of Christ.

1. Fasting

- a. Fasting is mentioned more than sixty-five times in the Bible.
- b. [Mark 2:18](#) - *“The disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, ‘Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?’ ”*
- c. Every rabbi or teacher had followers, so that’s not unusual, but what is unusual is that John’s disciples joined the Pharisees to ask Jesus a question about fasting.
 - i. John’s disciples were very “pro-Jesus,” and they accepted Jesus as the Messiah.
 - ii. The Pharisees were very “anti-Jesus,” and they rejected Jesus as being the Messiah.
- d. Biblical fasting is the voluntary abstinence from food for a limited period of time for the purpose of drawing near to God; it’s denying the flesh to strengthen a person’s spirit.
 - i. Pastor Gary said, “This is the reason Puritans used to call fasting “soul fattening.”
 - ii. Biblical fasting is encouraged and will be rewarded.
 1. [Matthew 6:16-18](#) - *“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the*

hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

- e. Biblical fasting is not:
 - i. A Christian dieting plan
 - ii. A ritual to show you are more spiritual than others
 - iii. Intended to “punish the flesh”
 - iv. Required
- f. Pastor Gary said, “[I] think it’s appropriate to look at [our] lives and ask, in general, ‘What [are some of the] things that I engage in that are not necessarily wrong, but they crowd out my time with the Lord?’ ... It’s not just food; sometimes you may fast from social media for a short period of time, or fast from TV [or online programs or sports or shopping].”
- g. Pastor Gary said, “[Jesus downplayed] the need for them to fast... because... how much more can you draw near to God when God is already there in your presence! ... [Jesus was saying], ‘My disciples don’t need to fast because the bridegroom is here with them. There won’t be fasting in heaven because once you are in the presence of the Lord, there’s no need to draw near to him... Once in a while when God might put it on your heart, it’s okay to go ahead and fast...”
 - i. **Mark 2:19-20** - *“And Jesus said to them, ‘Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.’ ”*

2. Traditions of Man

- a. **Mark 2:18** - *“The disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, ‘Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?’ ”*
- b. Pastor Gary said, “They asked [Jesus] a question about fasting, but it’s not really about fasting; it’s about tradition. ... [They basically were asking], ‘Why aren’t your disciples doing what we are doing because that’s the way it’s always been done.’ ... [The problem was that Jesus didn’t follow their traditions.] Now, there’s nothing wrong with traditions, [except when] traditions supersede the Bible. And, unfortunately, sometimes in Christian circles or religious traditions, people elevate traditions and they do things [without] knowing why they [are doing those things]. ... [They also questioned Jesus about healing on the Sabbath, ceremonial washing of

hands, eating with sinners and tax collectors.]”

3. Why didn't Jesus follow the religious leaders' rules?

- a. **Mark 2:21-22** – *“No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins.”*
- b. Pastor Gary said, “Jesus [did not follow their religious traditions] because he [was trying] to make a statement or trying to be different. What Jesus was doing [was trying] to help them understand that some of [their traditions were not necessarily according to God’s Word].”
- c. Pastor Gary said, “Jesus didn’t come to patch up something old; he came to offer something brand new. That’s the main point that he was making... This is the reason why we have an Old Covenant, also known as the Old Testament [and a] New Covenant [also known as the] New Testament. ... The Old Covenant was pointing to the New Covenant in Jesus. ... Do you know that every other world religion places the emphasis on your ability to try to do enough good things to reach God [or a god]. Christianity says that because God knows that we are all sinful and we can’t do enough good things to get to [God, so God] decided to come down to [rescue us]. That’s why [God] offered Jesus as a sacrifice.”
 - i. Old Covenant
 1. The Old Covenant was about man’s way to reach God through the sacrifice of animals.
 2. The Old Covenant was a performance-based religion between man and God.
 - ii. New Covenant
 1. The New Covenant is about God’s way to reach man through the sacrifice of a Savior, Jesus.
 2. The New Covenant is a grace-based relationship between God and man.
- d. Jesus did not come to patch up your old life but to do something brand new in you!
 - i. Pastor Gary said, “Sometimes people mistakenly think that coming to faith in Jesus is just folding Jesus on top of [their] current lifestyle. [A] relationship with Jesus is not about dressing up [your] old life; [it’s] about trading [your life] for a new life. We are not to mix the old with the new; it’s incompatible.”
 - ii. **2 Corinthians 5:17** – *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*

1. Pastor Gary said, “[[2 Corinthians 5:17](#)] is not just a statement about how God sees you as a new creature in Christ, forgiven, loved, [and] redeemed. [It’s] also a statement about how God calls you to live as his redeemed children, not blending the old with the new but leaving the old for the new.:
- iii. [Colossians 3:5-17](#) - *“Therefore **put to death** your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to **put off** all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have **put off** the old man with his deeds, and have **put on** the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things **put on** love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”* (Emphasis added]
- iv. [Ephesians 4:22-24](#) - *“... **put off**, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you **put on** the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”* (Emphasis added)

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Mark 2:18-22](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s definition of what biblical fasting is and what it is not. (See #1d and #1e above)

3. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the reason(s) Christians should consider fasting or modified fasting. (See #1f above)
4. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments concerning the reason Jesus downplayed the need for his disciples to fast. (See #1g above)
5. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about religious traditions they embraced at some point in their life.
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the main point of this encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees and John's disciples. (See #2b above)
7. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments about Jesus not coming to patch up the old but bringing something brand new. (See #3b and #3c above)
8. Read and discuss the differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. (See #3c-i and #3c-ii above)
9. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the misunderstanding many people have concerning a relationship with Jesus. (See #3d above)
10. Read [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) and discuss what it means to be a "*new creation*" in Christ. (See #3d-ii above)
11. Read [Colossians 3:5-17](#) and [Ephesians 4:22-24](#) and discuss the putting off and putting on aspects of a new life in Christ. (See #3d-iii above)
12. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)