

Mark 2:13-22: Eating with Sinners and Fasting Questions

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- [0 : 00] So, if you've got your Bibles, we'll open up to the Gospel of Mark. It's the second Gospel there in the New Testament. And we've been studying about the life of Jesus.
- And we made it into Mark chapter 2 last week. We started in Mark chapter 2 with looking at Jesus' healing ministry and specifically him healing a paralytic.
- Today we're going to look at a couple of things. The kind of two big, or two sections of Scripture we're going to be looking at is when Jesus calls a new disciple, a tax collector of all things.
- And then there's a little bit of a controversy around a feast or a dinner that Jesus has with this new disciple and with his friends who are also tax collectors and his other friends who are sinners like the tax collectors.
- And then there will be a question about Jesus and his disciples and this whole concept of fasting. And how come Jesus' disciples don't fast like some other faithful religious people do?
- [1 : 17] So, we're going to start off. We'll read through here four or five verses. And then we'll go back and talk through them. Mark chapter 2, verse 13. Then he went out again by the sea, and all the multitude came to him, and he taught them.
- And as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax office. And he said to him, follow me. So he arose, and he followed him.
- Now, it happened as he was dining in Levi's house that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and his disciples. For there were many, and they followed him.
- And when the scribes and the Pharisees saw him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to his disciples, how is it that he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners? And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, those who are well have no need of a physician, but it's those who are sick.
- And I did not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance. So we'll go back here, back to verse 13.
- [2 : 27] Then he went out again by the sea, and all the multitude came to him, and he taught them. Jesus had a significant teaching ministry. And his popularity was growing, and people were coming from all over to listen to him, to be healed by him, some just to see if what they heard was true.
- Would he do some kind of a miracle? But as he was passing by here, he passes by a tax office. And there's a guy sitting there.
- His name is Levi, the son of Alphaeus. And he says to him, follow me. And the guy gets up, and he follows him.

What is going on here? It's just some random guy, and he says, come, follow me. Now, first of all, who is this person, Levi, that's following Jesus? Well, if we look, actually, in the books of the Gospel of Mark and Luke, or excuse me, just the book of Matthew, we're in the book of Mark.

If you look at the book of Matthew, this same incident, the same account, uses not the name Levi, but the name Matthew. The name Matthew.

[3 : 37] If you look in the book of Luke, the same incident also uses Levi. So, what most have surmised is that, well, this is talking about Matthew.

And not just any Matthew, but actually Matthew, who was the disciple of Jesus, who was also the author of the Gospel of Matthew. And it's not uncommon in these biblical periods for someone to have two different names that they went by.

And so, we know Peter was given the name Simon. There's actually lots of examples we see in the Scriptures where someone had two names that they went by.

And you'll see that sometimes called out and sometimes not. Here, it's not. But sometimes you'll see so-and-so who was also called such-and-such. And so, that's pretty common in the Bible and during that time period.

It says that he was the son of Alphaeus. And interestingly enough, there was another disciple who was also the son of Alphaeus. His name was James, the disciple James, the son of Alphaeus.

[4 : 43] So, somehow, it doesn't say anywhere in the Scripture that these two were brothers, but it's possible that that could be the case. Of course, it's also possible that there were two dads whose names were Alphaeus, right?

So, nobody knows for sure. But this guy, Levi, this guy, Matthew, he was a tax collector. He was sitting at the tax offices.

It was his job to collect taxes for who? Was it for the Jews? No, this was for the Roman Empire, for the Roman government. And you can imagine that somebody who was a tax collector, especially as a Jewish person, and you are somewhat of a conquered people, and you have these occupiers in your land, and they're taxing you.

It's difficult enough, right, when your own government that you formed for your people is taxing you. That's difficult enough. But when it's an occupying nation, that's a lot more difficult.

But tax collectors were notorious. Were they notorious for their honesty? Not at all.

[5 : 56] They were notorious for cheating, for their dishonesty, for taking more than they ought to. And is this something that is unique to this time period in the world?

Or is this something that is common throughout the entire history of the world? When it comes to taxes, it always seems to come with dishonesty, cheating, extortion, those kinds of things.

And so Matthew, or Levi, was a tax collector. And you can imagine that his own brother, but he was Jewish, right?

He was not a Gentile. In fact, Jesus' ministry was only to the Jews. He had very little interaction with the Gentiles. But specifically, all of his disciples that he called to him were only Jews.

And so Matthew was a Jew, but you could imagine that he was looked upon as somewhat of a traitor, right? You were helping to collect taxes for the enemy.

[7 : 06] It's not really clear if Matthew was an honest tax collector.

But I would imagine that it's fairly unlikely that he was so. Tax collection back in those days was a scenario like this where you might have a tax collection business.

You would hire yourself out to the Romans, and you would bid for maybe a certain region to collect taxes in a certain region. And the Roman government would expect you to collect so much in this area based on how many people were there, whatever the criteria might be.

And so they expected X number of denarii or whatever the money was. And you could collect exactly that amount, but then, well, you didn't really make any money, right?

So this is a business for you. You didn't want to make a profit. And so really it was up to you as the tax collector how much extra profit you made. Was it a little or a lot?

[8 : 16] So you would collect taxes from people and make sure that there was plenty left over for you to make a profit in your business. And the tax collectors were known for taking way, way too much.

But interestingly enough, Jesus comes along and he says to this tax collector, who, you know, at least was perceived to be an unsavory character, and Jesus says, follow me.

And we don't really know where Matthew was at in his life, but, you know, he was, you can imagine just taking a job like that in which you are seen as a trader would be, you know, probably not something that somebody would choose who had good character, who wanted to remain in good standing with his community.

And so it was likely, very likely, that Matthew was not in the greatest of standing with his own people. But Jesus said, follow me.

Now, we've talked about this in the past, but when Jesus said, follow me, he wasn't saying, hey, I want you to become a Christian or I want you to believe in me.

[9 : 37] What Jesus was saying when he said to Matthew, come follow me, he meant, I have a ministry that I'm doing right now in which I'm traveling all over Israel, and I want you to come with me and do this with me.

That was the whole idea. It wasn't just, well, I just want you to believe in me. What he was asking Matthew to do was to give up your tax collection business, leave all that behind, which I'm sure was fairly profitable, and I want you to follow me around.

I'm going to disciple you, and I want you to do ministry with me. And Matthew left all that behind, and he was willing to go. We don't have any information on what was going on in Matthew's head, what was going on in his mind.

But I imagine when we look back at the other disciples, we've already looked at four, who Jesus called. Previously, it was who was a Peter and his brother Andrew, and then James and John have already been called.

And we look at their lives, and they were already, at least several of them were following John the Baptist, right? They were looking for the Messiah. They were being faithful, it seems, in their lives. So we can see why Jesus would call them, right?

[10 : 54] But here Jesus calls somebody else. Somebody who, and we don't know where he was at, but it seems there was probably, maybe Matthew had heard about this Jesus, and is he really the Messiah, and maybe reflecting on his own life, and how he's living his life, and what he's doing, and what he's living for.

And is this really what I should be doing with my life? And then this man, the Messiah, comes, and he says, I want you to follow me. And as we'll read here in a bit, you know, Jesus came, I guess we already read, Jesus came to call the sinners to repentance, right?

Not just the righteous. So Matthew was ready. You know, and I think some people think in their lives, well, I'm considering becoming a Christian, but I think I have to get my life together first.

I have to kind of work towards, like, living like a Christian should live first before I can take that step. But here we have an example where Matthew said, I'm all in.

He goes from a life of being an unsavory tax collector to, all right, I'm giving it all up, and I'm going to go follow Jesus.

[12 : 27] Reading on, we'll read this over again. And now it happened as he was dining in Levi's house that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and his disciples.

For there were many, and they followed him. So it says that Jesus was dining with them. And now if we read in, let's see, where is it at? Luke chapter 5, verse 29, which is a parallel account of this same thing.

It gives a little bit more detail. And it says this in Luke 5, 29, then Levi gave him a great feast in his own house. So Levi was called by Jesus.

He was going to follow him. And he decided, I'm going to throw a feast for Jesus. He probably had lots of resources to throw a feast.

And he didn't want to just do it with just Jesus and his disciples. He wanted to invite all the people that he knew. And if you are a tax collector, who are the people that you know the best?

[13 : 26] Other tax collectors, right? So again, it says, now it happened as he was dining in Levi's house that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and Jesus' disciples.

For there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and the Pharisees saw him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to his disciples, how is it that he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?

And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

And what an incredible thing, right? It's hard to... I think that truth, that Jesus came, not for the righteous, not for those who were doing pretty good, not for those who had their life together, but it was those who...

those who were in rebellion against God, those who were living a life that was... that was away from God, it was in rebellion against God, those are the ones that Jesus came.

[14 : 53] This is one of the greatest truths I think there is in Christianity. You know, Jesus was calling sinners in Israel. Jesus' ministry, his ministry was to Israel, the nation of Israel.

You might think, well, this is the nation of Israel, they're God's people, they're religious, so of course they're good, right? But of course that's the whole story of the Bible, and especially here in the Gospels, is that they were living very much not how they ought to.

Romans 5, 6 speaks to this whole idea. Because Jesus didn't just come for Jewish sinners, but it says in Romans 5, 6, for when we were all still without strength, in due time Christ died for the righteous, no, he died for the ungodly.

Some have taken this passage where Jesus sits and he eats with the sinners, with the tax collectors, with the unsavory characters, and he is chastised for doing so, which of course, we look at the Pharisees and their pride and self-righteousness and hypocrisy, and we see how wrong that is for them to think, of course, you know, the Savior would eat with sinners.

But some have looked at this passage and they've taught, well, the way of Christ, if you want to really follow Jesus and do what Jesus did, what Jesus did is he just went out and had parties with sinners.

[16 : 43] That's what Jesus did. And so if you want to be a good Christian, you know, just hang out with whoever, you know, go to the parties, go do all these things, and just love on people.

And is it true that we ought to love on people? Sure, absolutely. And some people might even call you a Pharisee, right, if that's not what you do.

If you ever bring up, for example, to someone that the way that they're living is destructive or that their rejection of the Lord is going to lead to condemnation or judgment.

Now, they'll point to a passage like this, or actually, usually they don't point to the passage, they just point to the idea because if you actually read the passage, there's too much detail in there that kind of undermines the whole concept.

The idea is that Jesus just came to be friends with everybody. And he just wanted everybody to know, you know, I'm okay and you're okay. And God loves everybody and, well, that's it.

[17 : 59] That's the end of the story. God just loves everybody. And we shouldn't bring up this whole concept of sin and righteousness and judgment which is actually a huge part of the story of the Bible.

And why do people need God? Is it just because they need a friend when they're down and out? Is that why people need God? People need God because they are sinners who are in rebellion against him and they need to be brought back into right relationship with him.

And that's what Jesus says here, doesn't he? They say, how is it that he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners? And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick.

I did not come to party with the righteous but to party with the sinners. Is that what he said? I did not come to call the righteous but the sinners to repentance. Jesus ate with sinners because he wanted to tell them, turn to God.

And that's what repentance means. Repentance means to turn. People need the Lord. They need God. And they need to turn to him.

[19 : 29] You know, one of the things I've noticed, we talked about Pharisees last week and does anybody, you know, Pharisees, the term Pharisee is a very negative term.

If somebody calls you a Pharisee, they're not doing you a favor, they're not giving you a compliment, right? It's a put down. It's a derogatory term. The Pharisee is somebody who's a hypocrite, who's prideful, who's self-righteous.

But just like with a lot of terms these days that get thrown around at people, Pharisee is one that gets thrown around a lot.

And Christians are called Pharisees quite a bit. And sometimes it's very applicable. Sometimes it fits.

And other times, though, and we talked about that last week, and we ought to be careful about having a Pharisaical attitude in our lives. But I think we also need to be careful about those who would use that term Pharisee as a bullying tactic, as a tactic of intimidation.

[20 : 42] Christians are known, especially in this culture, for a lot of different things. but as being those who kind of oppose some of the things going on in the culture.

And that's not very popular. You oppose abortion rights or homosexual rights or these kinds of things.

And that doesn't fly very well with the culture. And so some, both non-Christians, non-believers, and also even some believers, who I would consider more on the liberal side, will point at the Christians who are upholding God's standard for righteousness and saying, look at this sin.

This is sinfulness that's destructive, it's against God, it's hurtful to others. And say, you shouldn't do that. You're being a Pharisee.

And it's a tactic to what? What's the end goal? It's to get you to shut up. Don't tell me how I should live my life.

[21 : 57] And so we ought to be careful. One, we ought to be careful that we don't truly act like Pharisees, full of pride and self-righteousness, like we have everything together.

but at the same time, we should not allow the world, the culture to bully us into keeping our mouths shut. The Bible is full of scripture that talks about all of these things and the kinds of sins that are leading people to hell.

And also full of the answers to lead people to heaven towards God. We shouldn't be intimidated when people try to call us Pharisees just because we're upholding God's word and exposing works of darkness.

But just to be clear, and I think this is a big point that Jesus is making and makes throughout the whole Bible, we can just focus on one group or certain groups, especially other groups, as the sinners.

And that's what the Pharisees did, right? They were always looking outward at these other people over here that were sinners. You know, there are male sinners, men who sin.

[23 : 24] There are female sinners too. Did you know that? There are rich sinners, people that abuse their riches and make money off the backs of people that they shouldn't.

But you know there are poor sinners too. There are sinners that have lots of power and political clout, but there are also sinners that have no power.

And there are sinners too. you have young sinners and old sinners. You have educated sinners and uneducated ones.

There are homosexual sinners, and did you know that there are heterosexual sinners too? There are Democrat sinners.

There are Democrat sinners. And there are Republican sinners too.

[24 : 28] Did you know that? There are those gangster rap sinners. There's also country music sinners.

Sinners of all kinds and all stripes, and that's the story of the Bible. that all of us have fallen short of how we ought to live.

God is willing to reach out to any one of us, to all of us, no matter what we've done or where we're at. And it doesn't matter if, you know, a lot of times we're prideful, right?

Well, I didn't do those kinds of sins. I'm not like that pervert over there. I'm a different kind of pervert. The most dangerous place to be in life is to think that you are righteous when you're not.

The number one character attribute that God looks for in people is what? Humility. Humility. self-righteous pride does, has, does, and will continue to send many, many people to hell.

[25 : 55] and is this just a problem, this self-righteous pride, is it just a problem among religious people? Some people will make you think that, right? Well, self-righteousness is something that is only an issue with those religious people.

This month, you know, on my calendar, I have a calendar that I go by, you know, I've got lots of events and different things. And on June 1st, on my calendar, with a list, this is on the calendar that lists all the holidays.

holidays. And on June 1st, the holiday that it was showing on my calendar was the first day of LGBTQ Pride Month.

Now, what does holiday mean anyway, right? It means holy day. So, evidently, the first day of Pride Month is a holy day.

And it seems fitting, right? Appropriate. It is a pagan holiday, a pagan holy day. But there certainly couldn't be self-righteousness or pride in that, right?

[27 : 05] Well, in point of fact, it's called Pride Month. I had one experience, this was probably, oh, 10 years ago or so, probably more than that.

I guess if I go with 10 years, it makes me feel younger. where I went to a pride parade out in Columbus, Ohio. There's one every year. In fact, back at that time, they said it was the largest pride parade in the East Coast, I think, Columbus, Ohio.

And one of the things I noticed early on, there was churches passing out stickers. stickers, and the stickers were these little circles, and they said, I am part of God's diversity, what the stickers said.

And I was, I had heard of these pride parades before, but I had never actually seen one. And it was shocking to me how utterly depraved it was.

There were things I saw there that I don't even want to describe because it's too filthy and disgusting. But instead of shame, instead of shame, there comes pride.

[28 : 33] Instead of being ashamed that we would allow little children to walk through or even participate in these kinds of pride parades and different things, instead of shame, which is appropriate, there is pride.

So, in Luke chapter 18, Jesus talks about religious pride. He tells a story, I think it's a made-up story, but it's to make a point, Luke chapter 18, verse 11, and he says this, the Pharisee, he's talking about a Pharisee and a tax collector who went to pray.

And this is what the Pharisee said, the Pharisee stood and he prayed thus within himself, God, I thank you that I am not like the other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

And that's the attitude of a Pharisee. Hey, I'm not like these other guys. And I thank you that I'm holy and righteous and good. And only religious people are that way, right?

That's only a sin that religious people have. Except I saw with my very own eyes. and you see it everywhere.

[29 : 46] LGBTQ pride. And Jesus could very well also talk about that. About the man who went to pray.

I thank God I'm not like these Christians, judgmental, homophobic, unaccepting, unaffirming. is that pride? Or pagan pride?

Those who worship false gods? I thank the gods that I'm not like these Christians, these atheists who worship only one God, rejecting the worship of our idols.

Now, Jesus didn't focus on these things, right? Why? Because he came, he was preaching to Israel. He was preaching to Israel. Or maybe Jesus could speak of those who are especially enlightened, those who are highly educated, those who don't believe in God.

I believe in science. And so they might say, well, I thank nature, but I'm not like the religious. Because who else do you have to thank, right, when you don't believe in God?

[30 : 58] You just thank the trees or the dirt, the creation itself. I'm not like the religious superstitious and unscientific and uneducated.

And all of those are examples of pride. But the number one person that we need to be concerned about when it comes to pride is who? Is it them out there?

That's me. Am I being prideful? And Jesus was specifically talking to people who were rejecting God, but even we as Christians, right, we can think, well, I'm not rejecting the Lord.

I'm a Christian. I love the Lord. You think, well, I don't need to worry about pride. That's not true at all. Let's continue on.

Mark 2, verse 18. The disciples of John and of the Pharisees, they were fasting. Then they came and they said to him, why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?

[32 : 07] 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.

So what's this whole thing with fasting anyway? So they noticed that Jesus and his disciples, they're not fasting, and the Pharisees and then John the Baptist, his disciples, they were fasting pretty regularly.

It was something that people noticed. And they're like, well, if you were really like a good man, if you were really a good teacher, if you were really a good rabbi, you and your disciples, you would fast as well.

Jesus had an interesting response. Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? What is a bridegroom anyway? Well, in our language, we would just call it the groom.

This is an older word, a bridegroom, but the groom in a wedding. A man and woman getting married, you have the bride and you have the groom. And back in those times, a wedding was not just a single-day affair.

[33 : 18] It was usually like a week. You'd have a wedding feast and all these preparations and all these things that would happen during the week. And you'd have somewhat of an entourage, just like we do today, right?

The groom has his groomsmen and the bride has her bridesmaids. And these are your friends, the people who you're close to, the people that you want to be part of your celebration, your wedding celebration.

And so Jesus was referring to this whole concept of a wedding and saying, why should during a wedding feast there be fasting?

In fact, it was part of the Jewish tradition, and we'll talk about the fasting traditions here in a second, but that if you were someone who fasted, if you were a Pharisee, and you were part of a wedding celebration, then you were to cease your fasting during the wedding.

So Jesus was speaking to something that was a practice that they were familiar with. So what is the purpose of fasting anyway?

[34 : 33] Why were they kind of so uptight about this concept of fasting? You know, there's only one commandment in the Bible, or at least let me go back to only one law, I'll say, in the Mosaic law regarding fasting.

And the Jews were required to fast once per year. It was on the Day of Atonement they were to fast. And that was it.

The Day of Atonement was a day of fasting. But there were no other commandments in the Mosaic law for the Jews to fast. But there were other times in which God specifically asked the Jewish people or certain people to have days of fasting.

We'll look at a few examples. In Joel, chapter 2, verse 12, God calls the nation of Israel to repent.

This is one of the few times that happens, right, in the Old Testament. Now this is one of the many times it happens. The prophet Joel goes to the people of Israel telling them they need to repent.

[35 : 49] They need to turn back to God. It says this in verse 12, Joel 2, verse 12, Now therefore, says the Lord, turn to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.

In this case, fasting was an outward display that you were repentant, that you were sorry for the way you were living your life, that you're mourning over your own sins, and your own complacency, and your lack of love of the Lord.

There's another time in the book of Jonah, which I think a lot of us are more familiar with, the story of Jonah. Jonah goes, or he's sent to Nineveh to tell them that they're going to be destroyed in 40 days, and Jonah tries to run the opposite direction and ends up, the Lord kind of has his way with Jonah and gets him where he wants him to go.

But after Jonah preaches and tells them, God's going to destroy this city in 40 days. And Jonah's kind of shocked because he sees them repent. This is a Gentile nation, not even a Jewish city, but this is a Gentile city.

It says in Jonah 3, verse 5, so the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. They proclaimed a fast. These weren't even Jewish people.

[37 : 13] This was a typical way for people to show a sign of repentance, a sign of sorrow, even mourning. When people would mourn like the death of a loved one, they would put on a sackcloth just like a potato sack, and they would put ashes on their head, and then they would fast, and it's a way to show that I'm grieving, I'm mourning.

It was a way to humble yourself, to show that you were in a state of humility, a state of being brought low. Daniel, he prays for Israel.

In Daniel chapter 9, verse 3, he says this, then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplication with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. He turns to the Lord on behalf of his own nation to pray for them, to ask God to forgive the sins of the nation, and he does it in a spirit of humility.

So he uses fasting and sackcloth and ashes as things to show his own humility. fasting. So what about the Pharisees and their fasting?

Well, the tradition shows that the Pharisees had a practice of fasting twice a week. In fact, Jesus kind of brings this up in Luke chapter 18, talking about an example Pharisee who is bragging about how holy he is.

[38 : 43] In Luke chapter 18, verse 12, the self-righteous Pharisee says, I fast twice a week, and I give tithes of all that I possess. So it was common back then, actually, for the Pharisees to fast on Mondays and Thursdays.

That was their practice. Jesus, at one point, he rebukes the Pharisees for their fasting. And why was that? Because he thought fasting was a bad idea?

No, it was because they did it for the wrong reasons. Jesus was concerned with people's hearts. And it wasn't just Jesus. Even back in the Old Testament. In fact, Isaiah 58 is a whole chapter in Isaiah about God rebuking Israel because of their fasting.

Well, isn't fasting a good thing? Well, it generally was, except I'll read from Isaiah 58, verse 3. And he's basically quoting, it starts off, he's quoting the people.

Well, why have we fasted, they say? And you have not seen us. Why have we afflicted our souls? And you don't take any notice of us, Lord.

[39 : 57] And then the Lord responds, in fact, in the day of your fast, you find just pleasures and you exploit all your laborers. Skip to verse 6. Is this not the fast that I have chosen to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?

He said, you guys are doing these fasting rituals because you think it makes you righteous and holy? Well, this whole time, you're taking advantage of these poor people, these laborers. You're taking advantage, you're exploiting them.

He said, here's the fast that I've chosen. It's justice. That's the fast that I'm interested in. So fasting can be fine as a symbol, but what is God really interested?

He's interested in people's hearts and doing what's right and just and good. And so, just as in old times, so during Jesus' day, the Pharisees were more interested in kind of the outward appearance than the heart.

But part of Jesus' response was around timeliness. There's a time for fasting. There's a time where fasting is appropriate. But right now, for my disciples anyway, it's not that time.

[41 : 18] In Ecclesiastes, there's a famous passage. In fact, one of the musical group, what was it, the birds? There's a time. Turn, turn. What is that? Is that the birds?

Okay. Sorry, my musical history is not that great. Yeah. Ephesians, or excuse me, Ecclesiastes 3.1. To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.

And verse 4, a time to weep and a time to laugh. A time to mourn and a time to dance. So we need to be aware of those seasons.

In our own lives, right? We don't want to be mourning our entire life. We don't want to be just giddy and joyful our entire life as well. I guess I shouldn't say joyful.

We should always be joyful. But there are different times in our lives, different seasons. And so it is with the seasons of God's work in history. There are seasons of his work in history.

[42 : 20] And you know, before Jesus came, there was 400 years of silence. And there were people who would fast and they would pray and they would humble themselves, waiting on the salvation of Israel.

And at that time, it was appropriate to show signs of humility through fasting. But Jesus said, the bridegroom is here right now. They don't need to be doing these fasts.

They're with me. And then it seems like this next section may be unrelated, but I think it very much is related.

Verse 21, he says this, 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.

[43 : 23] So he kind of gives this illustration, this example and like, did he kind of move on in the conversation? Well, no, I don't think so at all. This was, this was a response.

He's saying you have old things and then you have new things. And if you keep, if you have the old things and you take the new things and you put them in the old things or try to attach them to the old things, it's no worky.

It doesn't work. Something new is happening right now. You have the Messiah in your midst.

Things are operating differently. Don't keep working the way things have worked in the past. Things are different. Some have said, well, maybe he's kind of really talking about this new covenant that he came.

The prophets had declared that there was a new thing coming. So it's not like they didn't know. It's not like God didn't foretell the whole nation of Israel that I'm going to do something new.

[44 : 31] It was right there in black and white for them to read. In Jeremiah 31, verse 31, says this. Jeremiah the prophet says, Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.

My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. He says there's coming a day when I'm going to do something new. And they needed to be prepared.

They needed to be aware that things were going to change. In Hebrews chapter 8, 13, there's a reference again to this new covenant.

Hebrews 8, 13 says this. In that he says a new covenant, and this is talking about Jeremiah and what Jeremiah spoke, or what the Lord spoke through Jeremiah, we'll put it that way.

He has made the first obsolete. You have the old covenant and then the new covenant. And does the new covenant just get appended to the old covenant? No.

[45 : 44] It does away with the old. He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

So when something new comes, you don't just patch it with the new thing. It's just going to ruin the whole thing. It's probably better just stick with the old, right?

Stick with the old wineskin and the old wine if you're going to do anything. But if you want the new wine, you've got to put it in new wineskins. Don't wear the old pants.

Don't wear the old pants. Don't try to repair them with a new patch. And so I think the biggest application that we can take away with, and we'll finish with this, and this is a different application.

The same principle, the same idea. Jesus was talking about fasting, and well, fasting was appropriate back then. Right now, while I'm on the earth with my disciples, it's not appropriate to fast.

[46 : 48] But we need to recognize that in different seasons of God's working in the world, that there is a difference. There are different times in which God operates differently with people.

We live in an age of grace in which God has given us, through Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus to wash away all our sins, that we can receive that gift for free, and the law of Moses has nothing to do with our relationship with God.

Galatians chapter 3, verse 23, I'll read this. Paul speaks to this. He says, before faith came, that's kind of a funny phrase, before faith came. What he means not is, it's not before people believed, but it's before the object of faith came.

There was an object of faith in which you could put your faith on something, before that object came, before Christ died on the cross. We were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

Therefore, the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. So the law was a tutor. It was just a teacher to point ultimately to the Savior who would come later.

[48 : 17] But after faith has come, we are no longer a tutor, for you are all, and he's talking about believers, sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

We need to understand the time in which we live. It's not time for us to try to work our way into God's good graces, into his good pleasure, into being reconciled to God through doing good things.

The time in which we live is a time in which God offers his love, his forgiveness, his reconciliation, and eternal life, all for free just by trusting in him.

Last verse, 2 Corinthians, or passage, we'll read a few verses. 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 9. 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 9. And we can get a microphone ready after we finish this.

Paul here is talking about the difference between the old, the old covenant, and the new, really. The age of the law and the age of grace in which we live.

[49 : 37] See if I can find it. We'll start in verse 9. He says this, If the ministry of condemnation had glory.

He's talking about two different ministries. The ministry of condemnation had glory. The ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. He's comparing two things. A ministry of condemnation.

What's he talking about? The law of Moses. The law of Moses is there to condemn you. To tell you that you're a sinner. A sinner without hope? No, a sinner in need of a savior.

You have a need. And then there's a ministry of reconciliation. Where the object of faith has arrived. And the need that was described by the law is now provided for.

For free. Through this new ministry called the ministry of reconciliation. Revelation. Verse 10. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect because of the glory that excels.

[50 : 45] For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious. He's talking about the law. It's passing away. It's been done away with. Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech.

Unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face. This is talking about when Moses came down carrying tablets of stone from the mountain. He had to put a veil over his face because of glory that shone from his face.

It was too bright for the people to look at. Unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.

But their minds were blinded. For until this day, the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament because the veil is taken away. How? In Christ.

But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now, the Lord is the Spirit.

[51 : 46] And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. And then he says this, but we all, with unveiled faces, with unveiled faces.

We don't have that law. The law is like a veil that covered us. Beholding, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

We want to be like Jesus. We want to be like the Lord. We want to be godly. We want to be like him. And we shouldn't look back at the old, that old covenant. We follow all these rules and rituals, and we'll be like God.

So many in the Christian world try to do that in some way, in some degree. But where should we put our eyes? Is it on the law? It's on the Lord.

And we behold him and his glory. We relate to him. We're in union with him. We live for him. We love him. We enjoy him. We pray to him.

[52 : 53] We sing to him. We glory in him. We have peace with him. And through that relationship that we have with him, we are changed from glory to glory to glory to be more like him.

We need to know the season that we're in. The old has been done away with, and now there's something new. We have him to change us.

We don't have to look to the law. Amen? Amen. All right. We'll take some time for thoughts, questions, if anyone has any. Anyone?

Anyone? Anyone? Once, twice? Okay. We have one. Brave taker in the back.

Go to Sarah. Sarah. I only ask this because nobody has asked questions.

[54 : 15] In Hebrews 8.13, the word is used obsolete. Does that also mean abrogated in that sense?

Because he's going to return to the previous covenant with Israel after we're raptured. So does obsolete means no longer, and abrogated means hold off until the current time in history?

Is that, or am I looking at that wrong? Thanks. Well, Sarah, I have a confession to make. I went to public school. So that word abrogated kind of, whew.

So I think you're right, though. It's temporary. There will be a return. If you read in the book of Revelation, there will be a return to the law for a season, for a short season.

And so during the tribulation period especially, there will be a return, an expectation to keep the law. Jesus speaks about it when he talks about this future tribulation. So we live in the age of grace, in the age, quote, of the Gentiles, it's also called.

[55 : 32] And Paul says when the time of the Gentiles is complete, when that's complete, and we see that is when the rapture happens, these believers, those who trust in the Lord through grace, will be taken away.

And this whole kingdom program, as we call it, will be kind of started right back up, kind of right where it left off. And there will be seven years of intense tribulation where the Jews are the ones being persecuted.

They will be expected to keep the law, at least during that time. And I'm not sure all the nitty-gritty details, but I think you, yeah. So it's obsolete for a certain time.

But again, we need to know the time that we're in, the time of the season. Anybody else? Thanks for that. That was a great question and comment. All right, we'll wrap it up there.

All right, let's pray. Father, thank you so much for your word. I love the scriptures, and I want to understand, we all want to understand, what you would have us to know.

[56 : 37] And we're so grateful that you gave us your word, not just to read, not just to put on our bookshelves, not just to put on a coffee table, but to really know and understand you. And I pray that you would work in each one of our hearts to know you more and better, to grow, to behold you as we ought to, that we would, from glory to glory, be transformed to be more like you in your image.

We pray all these things in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.