

Read Mark 2:18-22 (Difficult lesson. May want to skip?)

18 Once when John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, some people came to Jesus and asked, "Why don't your disciples fast like John's disciples and the Pharisees do?"

19 Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. They can't fast while the groom is with them.

20 But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

21 "Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before.

22 "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both be lost. New wine calls for new wineskins."

What were John the Baptist's disciples and the Pharisees doing (v. 18)? Fasting.

What is fasting? Not eating.

What is the purpose of fasting? Sacrificing/giving up a meal or meals so you can concentrate on prayer and thinking about God. Every time you are hungry, when your stomach growls, you pray or read the Bible instead of eating.

Should we fast?

vv. 19-22 contain three parables. What is a parable? A simple story with a moral lesson or an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

In the first parable, who is the groom (v. 19)? Jesus. **Do the guests of the groom normally fast at His wedding?** No. A wedding is a time to celebrate and eat and drink.

When can the guests of the groom fast (19-20)? After He leaves and goes back to heaven.

In the second parable, why do you not sew a piece of unshrunk (new) cloth on an old garment (v. 21)? It will shrink and tear away from the garment you just sewed it on.

In the third parable, why don't you pour new wine into old wineskins (v. 22)? It will ferment (bubble up) and burst the old hard wineskin.

What do you pour new wine into? New wineskins which are soft and will expand as the wine ferments.

What's the meaning of the second and third parables? Jesus is starting something brand new (Christianity). You can't mix it with the old way of worshipping God (Judaism). You can't mix the Old Testament with the New Testament. You can't mix together the spiritual freedom of the gospel with the old ceremonies of the Law.