

Lesson 6 Matthew 9 14-17 cf v14 Jesus teaches joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom 14.17 (cf Paul the Pharisee)

The visit of John's disciples

The disciples of John asked "on what account do the Pharisees' disciples fast a lot and your disciples never fast? Jesus gave what then must have seemed an epic reply, "The sons of the bride chamber are not able to mourn in a sad and miserable state "as long as" (Greek *οσος*) the bridegroom is with them"

The death of Christ and the Ascension

"There will come", said Jesus "the days when the bridegroom will have been taken away (Greek *απαιρω*) from them, then they will fast. From this we may take it that the ministry of the early church included fasting. From Luke 24 41-42 we learn that if the disciples did fast for a few days after the death of Christ they were certainly eating again when Jesus appeared in the upper room. Plainly Jesus was referring to his ascension to Glory and the days preceding Pentecost. The death of Jesus was an anguished experience but the permanent lifetime loss of His presence after 40 days was a huge change.

The old rags and old skins

Jesus now made reference to the Pharisees and their habit of life under the allusion of "garments threadbare and torn with age" and "wineskins that were cracked and ready to burst". He counselled these disciples to go for the New Way. He encouraged this by adding, "If you pour the new wine of joy (in the Holy Ghost) into the new vessels which are powerful then both will aim right or are watched closely " (Greek *συντηρω*) Jesus here was not only speaking about the vessels but also about observation and watchfulness which awaits the coming of the Spirit of God and prepares by the New Birth of the vessel of the human life.

The example of practical people

People do not go on sewing up old garments and turn out like patchwork quilts. People discard heavily worn clothes for new and strong garments. It is no joke even today to be wearing trousers which suddenly split at the seams or a coat whose pockets are so worn that one's money has been pouring out. It is no joy either to find one's electric kettle has begun to leak in the area of its electrical power source. Mr. Worldly Wiseman just does not try to hold on to things which are clapped out. The way of "fasting for show" was a bad habit which was better shed from religious observance. Instead "fasting" that would enable the saint to hold on to God until He should answer in blessing was what the LORD sought.

Bible principles on fasting

1 Fasting is acceptable

If it looses the pains of in just

If it breaks the yoke of slavery

If it divides your bread with the hungry

If it clothes the naked Isaiah 58.6

2 Fasting is commended as essential to the expulsion of demons Matthew 17.21

Fasting was used by Christ before His victory over Satan and temptation Matthew

Fasting is handmaid to Repentance Jonah 3.5

Fasting is ministry to the LORD -cf the five teachers in Antioch who sought God's will together.

From Paper to Practice



Can you recall a Pharisee who put *joy in the Holy Ghost* prior to *fasting* in relevance?

Without fasting would the modern church be poorer?

Does Fasting play any part in knowing God's will?

When the teachers in Antioch fasted and ministered to God did they keep joyful by praising God?