

THE PARABLE OF THE NEW PATCH & OLD GARMENT

Text: Matthew 9:14-16
Mark 2:18-21; Luke 5:33-36

Key Word: Tradition

Key Thought: The Best Way to Break Away from past Traditions Is to Understand Their Original Purposes and Determine Whether They Still Exist

Jesus loved to eat. It gave Him time to fellowship as much as it did to cause Him to feast. Times of feasting need to be times of enjoyment and laughter. Unfortunately, there was a group of “I am more righteous than you are” people who followed Jesus and His disciples. It’s ironic that the disciples of John the Baptist linked up with the Pharisees to bring forth the accusation found in our text. They were looking for something to find a fault with.

“By what right do you have to break from tradition?” Have you ever been confronted like that? Jesus was, a number of times. He seemed to find ways to cause these people to look into the deeper meanings of their actions. When people fail to do so, they can fall into a dangerous trap of repeating an action without fully understanding its purpose. In this case, it became a question about when and where was the right time to fast.

Jesus knew that there would always be a conflict between the old and the new. Many wanted to hold fast to their traditions even though they had lost their original meaning. Jesus reminded the people of the words of Isaiah,

“Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. 7. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. 8. You have let go of the commands of God and are holding to the traditions of men.”

Mark 7:6-8

Paul warned the people of Colosse,

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”

Colossians 2:8

What Will True Spiritual Life Do for Someone with a Sincere Heart?

I. IT WILL EXPOSE WRONG ASSUMPTIONS

II. IT WILL REGULATE THEIR LIVES

III. IT WILL FIND APPROPRIATE FORMS OF EXPRESSION

I. IT WILL EXPOSE WRONG ASSUMPTIONS

We must never lose the fact that our Christian beliefs were meant to bring us liberty to live a life that is pleasing before the Lord. What is helpful for one may not be for another. **We should never give some temporary form the same respect and dignity that is found in the everlasting principles of God's Holy Word.** Some things are nonnegotiable. Others are not.

“Men do harm when they attempt to transform the temporary into the immutable, and the local into the universal; by seeking to gain undue reverence for forms which are of human origin, they lessen men's regard for the invisible, changeless laws of God.”

Rev. W. Sunderland Lewis

“The Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary”

Vol. 1; Revised 1980

Baker Book House

God's work has stood the test of time and trial and testing. What was proven to be of God has withstood the opposition that has been hurled at it. That which has been manmade has often disappeared; lost its meaning or created damage when set at the same level as God's Word.

Our text deals with both **feasting and fasting**. Both were quite prevalent in Israel. The Pharisees used fasting as an external evidence of their dedication to God. Unfortunately, it degraded into a way of attempting to impress others with their high levels of commitment. The disciples of John the Baptist fasted out of a sincere heart awaiting the coming of their Messiah.

The Pharisees used the fact that Jesus's disciples were not fasting as a way of attempting to bring about a division. After all, why should one group be dedicated while the other wasn't. **Why would one group lay aside their personal needs and walk in humility while the other one wouldn't? At least that is what they tried to imply.**

Jesus used the illustration of a marriage feast to answer their question. Basically, He explained that there is a time to mourn but there is also a time to rejoice. People do not mourn at the time when the groom (and the bride) are present for their wedding feast. Other times will come that will be much more appropriate for fasting and crying out to God. **Jesus (as their bridegroom) was with them so it was inappropriate to act in that manner at that time.**

I. IT WILL EXPOSE WRONG ASSUMPTIONS

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven . . .

4. A time to weep and time to laugh. A time to mourn and a time to dance.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1,4

We can often assume that what is right for us is also right for everyone else. In some cases that may be true while in others cases it may be false thinking. **We must be careful making assumptions.**

Carpet Layer

****** A professional carpet-layer stepped back to survey a newly installed carpet. Reaching into his shirt pocket for a cigarette, he realized the pack was missing. At the same time he noticed a lump under the carpet in the middle of the room, about the size of the missing cigarette pack.

There was no way to retrieve his cigarette pack from under the attached carpet without ripping everything up and starting over. Finally, he decided to beat the object flat, thereby destroying any evidence of his mistake.

Gathering his tools, the carpet layer walked out to his truck. There on the seat of his truck was the mislaid pack of cigarettes. As he lit one up, the homeowner hurried out of the house and asked, “Hey, have you seen my son’s gerbil?” ******

*“Braude’s Treasury of Wit and Humor”
Prentice-Hall, Englewood Hills, NJ.*

II. IT WILL REGULATE THEIR LIVES

“How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them?”

Matthew 9:15

Let me put this example in a clear manner. The disciples of Jesus were coming into a new way of life. They were witnessing the presence of the living God walking and talking among them. The teaching they were receiving was bringing about a new life within their soul.

Why would they walk around with their heads down and their stomach's aching from lack of food? It would be acting like a hypocrite. Their hearts were rejoicing. They were seeing the lame walking; the blind seeing; the deaf hearing; the mute speaking; the lepers cleansed; the demoniacs set free and even the dead raised to life.

The time would come soon enough to mourn. The Shepherd would be smitten and then the sheep would scatter. They would watch as their Saviour would be mistreated by the cruel Roman soldiers. They would listen as words of mockery were hurled at their Master. They would cringe as the nails were placed into His hands and feet.

The day of mourning would come when they would seclude themselves behind closed and locked doors in fear of what would happen to them. They would weep when others would be rejoicing. Their broken hearts would cry out for their crucified Lord.

Isn't it strange that some who pride themselves as knowing and practising the “deep things” of God are actually void of much truth? **Why is it that legalism appears as a more righteous way of living?** Why does it always seem to be the better way to “*work out our salvation with fear and trembling*” (Philippians 2:12)?

True spiritual life brings a proper balance to what we say and do. We will not become deceived into thinking that doing is better than learning. We can gain so much by sitting at the feet of Jesus as we learned in the Bible story of Mary and Martha. **Living for Christ should always introduce us to a better way of living.**

“Seize the moment. Remember all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart.”

Erma Bombeck

III. IT WILL FIND APPROPRIATE FORMS OF EXPRESSION

We now come to Parable of the New Patch of Unshrunk Cloth and the Old Garment. Jesus uses this parable to solidify His main point. **We must always remember that times of transition are very vulnerable.** It is critical that these times are introduced with caution and great wisdom. This is what Jesus did.

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament were based upon the teaching of Judaism. They were never meant to become identical. Jesus had not come to patch up Pharisaism or bring new life to Rabbinism. The two needed to stand separately, entirely on their own. It is like seeing two pieces of garment (lets say dresses) hanging in your closet. You can only wear one dress at a time. Older dresses, even though they will serve the same purpose, are often left aside in place of the more modern dress.

Jesus told them,

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse.”

Matthew 9:16

“New garments were made of undressed cloth that shrank with the first washing; therefore, should a new patch be sewn on an old garment, the new patch would shrink and tear away from the old garment in the process of washing. Then the hole would be larger than before. This would lead to the destruction of the old garment.”

J. Dwight Pentecost
“*The Parables of Jesus*”
Zondervan Publishing House
1982, p. 27

Not only would it ruin the old cloth, it would cause the patch to be of no more use as well. In other words, one would bring damage to both in an attempt to bring the two together. They were meant to be apart. We must learn to let go of things whether they are traditions or teachings that have served their purpose. The Old Testament filled with its teachings of animal sacrifices and rituals were fulfilled in Christ and no longer needing to be practised. They had served their time.

Their form of expression was no longer as meaningful under the New Covenant.

III. IT WILL FIND APPROPRIATE FORMS OF EXPRESSION (Contd.)

Purdue Commencement

** At the commencement exercises for Purdue University's engineering schools, graduates of each school stood en masse to be recognized by the dean of engineering. When the aeronautical-engineering students rose, they launched a swarm of paper air planes toward the stage, where the university's president and other dignitaries were sitting.

After students from all the schools had risen in turn, the president stepped up to the rostrum. Looking at the paper planes covering the stage floor, he remarked, *"I'm very glad the agricultural-engineering graduates decided not to throw anything."* **

"Reader's Digest"
May 1990, p. 28

I would like you to think about what is vital to your spiritual growth. There is no use is trying to attach something to your life that has lost its meaning. We all need the vibrant life that Christ came to bring to us. It may be time to lay aside outdated traditions that take you away from God instead of bringing you closer to Him.

Would you allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart and mind for just a moment as we come to the close of this service? As Mary once told the guests at the wedding of Cana in Galilee may I also say,

"Do whatever He tells you."

C:\Documents\WPWin(X9)\Sermons.2019\Parables\Matthew 9_14.16.wpd

Date: Aug 4 & 11/19

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: The Potter's Hand - G

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