Thus saith the Lord...
The Parable of the Friends of the Bridegroom
(Mark. 2:18-20)
In overstepping the boundary line of Jewish religious and social etiquette, the Lord performed an act of great significance, which was sure to call forth criticism.
The Lord Jesus did not come into the world, as some suppose, **to be nothing more than** a law-giver, a king, a teacher, and an example.

Had this been all the purpose of His coming, there would have been **small comfort for man**.
And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they come and said unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples fast not?
And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.
20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day.
Inadequate knowledge, when linked with malice, will put the worst twist upon the best actions.
The moral code of the day was invoked to condemn Christ in mingling with the publicans. No trouble was taken to ascertain the true character of the feast. By their criticism the Pharisees exposed their own hollow spiritual lives.
The Pharisees condemned themselves in seeking to condemn Christ.

Great care and soul searching should be taken before judgment is passed upon the actions of others, especially when their character is known to be good.
There may be **good reasons** for fasting. However, the trouble with the **Pharisees** was that in far too many cases their fasting was for **self-display**. It was to **call the attention of men** to their goodness.
The Pharisees actually whitened their faces and went about with disheveled garments on their fast days so that no one could miss the fact that they were fasting and so that everyone would see and admire their devotion.
The Lord Jesus came into the world to be a physician as well as a teacher.

He knew the necessities of human nature.

He saw us all sick of a mortal disease, stricken with the plague of sin, and dying daily.

He pitied us, and came down to bring divine medicine for our relief.
He came to give **health** and **cure** to the dying, to **heal** the broken hearted, and to offer **strength** to the weak.

No sin-sick soul **is too far gone** for Him.
It is **His glory** to heal and restore to life the most desperate cases. For **unfailing** skill, for **unwearied** tenderness, the **great Physician** stands alone. There is **none** like Him.
After Jesus called Matthew Levi to be a disciple, he went to Levi's house to enjoy a meal.

It must have been a situation similar to any of the times when we might gather for a meal.

We don't get together to be miserable,

We get together to enjoy the time and each other.
As is often the case, those critical of Jesus saw an opportunity to find fault.

More concerned with censuring the conduct of others than in rectifying their own.
They desired that Jesus should regulate *his righteousness by theirs*

And embrace their particular *customs and forms of devotion.*

Comparing themselves with other people.

That they may have an opportunity of *exalting themselves.*
In that setting, Jesus told one of his short parables to communicate something important about himself and God‘s kingdom.
At the dinner, Jesus chose to eat with a suspicious crowd.

Luke 5:29
there was a great number of tax collectors present

Mark 2:16
also other "sinners"

As one might expect that there was an air of enjoyment
However, others knew about the dinner party.

**Scribes** and **Pharisees** were thinking how can he eat with this bunch of **riff-raff**?

They could not understand that Jesus came to help **people just like this.**

**We still struggle** with that same conflict today.
Even the disciples of John were critical.

They and the Pharisees made a regular practice of fasting.

It appears from the text they might have been fasting on the very day that Jesus was enjoying the dinner party.
To them, religion was composed of **rigorous rules** and **traditions**, and there was **little to enjoy about it**

They could **not understand** Jesus or his disciples

Their criticism came out of an inability to explain what seemed like **non-religious behavior**.
The opposition can never be satisfied.

• Matthew 11:18
For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon.

• 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!
• We might note a couple of points about the criticizers of Jesus.

• It is very easy to take one's own religious practice, that may be acceptable as one's own personal expression, and turn it into something that is equal to God's standard and requirement.
Those who already **harbor ill-will** or **prejudice** against someone tend to always see or believe **the worst about the other person**.
It was in that setting that Jesus then told the story which answers the criticism.
THE PARABLE OF THE FRIENDS OF THE BRIDEGROOM

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."
This little story was intended to communicate a single point:

The presence of Jesus is reason to celebrate, not mourn.

**John 10:10**

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

I am come that they might have life,

and that they might have it more abundantly.
The real question is not, "Why isn't Jesus and his disciples fasting?"

It's really, "Why isn't everyone else celebrating the fact that God's Son is among them?"
These people had no idea who was with them

**John 4:10**

Jesus answered and said to her, "'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'"

If people had only realized who Jesus was, it would have changed their entire outlook
When one realizes who Jesus is and what he came to do......

how can one not celebrate?
Jesus relieves us of tedious religious *ritual* like fasting

There are *examples* of fasting, but there is *no regulation* or burdensome ritual to follow...

only the expression of *a heart full of faith*

We still struggle to keep our practices from becoming *ritualized*
Jesus came to bring joy
He does speak of a time when
the bridegroom is taken away and
there would be
no feasting
then fasting would be appropriate
because of their sorrow.
However, that time is short-lived because of the resurrection

**John 3:29**

He who has the bride is the bridegroom;

but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him,

rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.

Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.
People tend to resist changes even when those changes are created by God

Look at how the religious leader resisted what Jesus taught

Look at how the masses resisted Jesus' effort to change them

Look at how people today resist following God's word

Look at how, even religious people, so often make their religion a chore rather than a change
In the setting of this parable, the people are asking Jesus, "What's wrong with you and your disciples?"

But again, the real question isn't what's wrong with Jesus, it's, "What's wrong with us?"

God has given us reason to celebrate.

Jesus is reason enough to discard every burden and sorrow.
• Jesus knew quite well that he was coming with a message which was startlingly new;

• He also knew that his way of life was extremely different from that of the orthodox teaching of the day.
• He also knew how difficult it is for the minds of men to accept new truth;

• And so he uses two illustrations to show how necessary it is to be open to truth.
• He speaks of the danger of sewing a new patch on an old garment.

• It may well be that there are times when we try to patch,

• When what is necessary is the complete abandonment of the old and the acceptance of something new.
Wine was kept in **wineskins**.

When these skins were new they had a certain elasticity;

As they grew old they became hard and unyielding.

Jesus is pleading for **a certain elasticity in our minds**.

It is fatally easy to become set in our ways.
As they grow older almost everyone develops a constitutional dislike of that which is new and unfamiliar.

We grow very unwilling to make any adjustments in our habits and ways of life.
Abraham went out not knowing where he was going.
(Hebrews 11:8.)

There is another great verse in that same chapter of Hebrews:

"By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons; of Joseph bowing in worship over the head of his staff."
(Hebrews 11:21.)
With the breath of death upon him the old traveller
He still had his pilgrim staff in his hand.
To the end of the day, with the evening now upon him, he was still ready for the road.
Are you ready?
Are you ready to allow Jesus **to challenge your life**?

Are you ready to allow Jesus **to change your life for the better**.

Are you ready to allow Jesus **to fill your life with joy and thankfulness**?
Doors of the church are open.

Spirit & Bride Say “Come”.

Revelation 22:17
08-28-2005 Tryon, NC
08-19-2012 Tryon, NC
11-17-2019 Tryon, NC