

Mark 2:18-28—Jesus and Traditions

I. Context

- a. It would be an overstatement and wrong to say that Jesus was anti-traditional. Jesus grew up within the traditions of his culture

II. Jesus challenges Jewish tradition of fasting (vv. 18-22)

- a. Question of fasting
 - i. Pointed out to Jesus that pharisees and John the Baptist's disciples fasted regularly; therefore, so should Jesus' disciples
 - ii. Their fasting was ritualistic but not necessarily relational; they don't explain the intention behind it (do we ever push for something without explaining why and in a way that hinders relationships?)
- b. Jesus' response: The Bridegroom is here (vv.19-20)
 - i. Jesus uses wedding analogy to explain the 'why'? It's inappropriate in this moment because bridegroom is present
 - ii. Traditional practices should reflect reality of God's presence, not just routine
- c. Parable of new cloth and old wineskins (vv.21-22)
 - i. The newness of Jesus' kingdom can't be contained in old religious structures; Jesus inaugurates something new in which the old system cannot explain; and in the moment the right response is to rejoice
 - ii. Do we cling to religious traditions with no clear (or outdated) reason which hinder our growth in Christ?

III. Jesus challenges traditional notions of the Sabbath

- a. The Accusation: Disciples Plucking Grain on the Sabbath (vv. 23-24)
 - i. The Pharisees see this as unlawful work, but their focus is on legalism, not God's intention for the Sabbath.
- b. Jesus' Response: The Example of David (vv. 25-26)
 - i. David and his men ate the consecrated bread out of necessity, showing that human need outweighs ritual observance.
 - ii. God cares about mercy more than sacrifice (c.f. Hosea 6:6)
- c. Jesus' Declaration: The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (v. 27)
 - i. Bold declaration about self
 - ii. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath—Jesus reclaims the Sabbath as a gift, not a burden.
 - iii. Our rest ultimately comes from Christ, not an observance

IV. So what? A willingness to move beyond traditions

- a. Are we willing to evaluate our traditions and modify, change, or drop those that are now holding us back from Christ? If no, why not?
- b. Embrace the newness and true rest of Christ. Has your spiritual life been more about traditions? Do you need to take an honest look at yourself in light of the perfect holiness and graciousness of Christ?
- c. Rest in the Lord of the Sabbath; true rest comes from turning to Christ (*Matt. 11:28-30*).