

Matthew 9:14-17
Fasting and the Kingdom of Christ

- I. The question brought to Jesus: religious fasting.
 - A. John the Baptist taught his disciples to fast.
 - B. The disciples of John want instruction from Jesus.
 - C. Fasting in the Old Covenant.
 1. Commanded public fasting for yom kippur, Lev 16:29 (compare Isaiah 58:3).
 2. As a sign of repentance and affliction of the soul, 1Sam 7:6; Ezra 9:5-6; Neh 9:1; Psalm 69:10-11; Joel 2:12-13.
 3. As a sign for sorrow and mourning, Judges 20:26; 2Sam 1:12.
 4. As a remembrance of judgment, (see Zechariah 8:19).
 5. As a sign of earnest urgent prayer, 2Sam 12:16-23; Psalm 35:13; Psalm 109:24.
 6. As a sign of waiting for Messiah, Luke 2:37.

- II. The question redefined by Jesus: the purpose of fasting.
 - A. The bridegroom's presence indicates a celebration (John 3:19).
 - B. The bridegroom's departure brings on sorrow and longing, John 16:16-22; Acts 1:9; Revelation 19:7.
 - C. The New Covenant will not fit in the form of the Old.

- III. The question for Christ's disciples: the use of fasting.
 - A. Jesus has taught us about a change in time and in practice, Jeremiah 31:31; Matt 26:28; Hebrews 8:13.
 - B. Fasting, when separated from the fruit of godly living is no fast at all in the sight of God, Isaiah 58:3-7; Joel 2:12-13.
 - C. Fasting is a practice for solemn times.
 1. When mourning the absence of Christ and longing for him.
 2. When mourning sin, Mt 5:4.
 3. When needing to be humbled before God, Psalm 69:10.
 4. When God's judgments are upon us, Psalm 35:13; 2Sam 12:16.
 5. When preparing for ministry, Acts 13:3; Acts 14:23.
 - D. Jesus has given us all the instruction we need for fasting, Mt 6:16-18.
 1. Let your fasting be in secret.
 2. Do not fast with a sad countenance.
 3. "When you fast..."
 - E. The presence of Christ ordinarily calls for celebration, not fasting, Hebrews 12:22-24.
 1. In anticipation of his return, Luke 12:35-27; Colossians 3:4; Revelation 19:9.