

Gospel of Mark || Part 9

Feasting and Fasting

Mark 2:18-22

1. An accusation

2. A response

3. A declaration

- You cannot fix the old tear with a new
- You cannot use old wineskins for new wine

The parables illustrate the radical posture and presumption of Jesus. Jesus is the new patch and the new wine. He is not an attachment, addition, or appendage to the status quo. He cannot be integrated into or contained by preexisting structures, even Judaism, Torah, and the synagogue. He is, of course, neither ascetic nor anarchist, and thus he participates as a human being in human structures. He goes to the synagogue, but not as everyone else goes to the synagogue. Jesus goes with a new teaching (1:27). He is like the scribes in that he teaches, but his authority surpasses theirs (1:22). He honors Torah by sending the healed paralytic to make the offering required by Moses, but he is not bound by Torah; he breaks it when it impedes his ministry (2:24; 3:1–6), and he subordinates it to himself (Matt 5:17; Rom 10:4). His contemporaries exclaim, “We have never seen anything like this!” (2:12). He relinquishes himself completely, though never surrendering his divine authority. He gives himself in service, though rendering allegiance to none but God. He gives his life to the world, but he is not a captive of the world. The question posed by the image of the wedding feast and the two atom-like parables is not whether disciples will, like sewing a new patch on an old garment or refilling an old container, make room for Jesus in their already full agendas and lives. The question is whether they will forsake business as usual and join the wedding celebration; whether they will become entirely new receptacles for the expanding fermentation of Jesus and the gospel in their lives.

James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 92.

Concluding Thoughts:

- To follow Jesus is to follow him to a life full of feasting
- Any spiritual discipline pursued without connection to Jesus is pursued in a wrong way