

Lesson 21

Luke 5:27-39

If this ministry has prospered you spiritually, you can always respond by giving in the little church in the back of the church. By doing this you can also partner with us in getting this teaching out to others through the website and missions we support. As always giving is never under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver, but it is necessary to support this ministry,

Last week we studied Luke 5:12-26. This section describes two events, the healing of the leper in 5:12-16 and the Sanhedrin's first stage of the investigation in 5:17-26. These sections are deliberately connected by Luke. Luke is showing us how Jesus' healing of the leper was done in order to provoke the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem to send out a delegation to investigate His person and work. It all began with the leper in verse 12. Jesus was in one of the cities of the Galilee, and behold, there was a man covered with leprosy. The word 'behold' is used to signify something unique is about to happen. The man had leprosy covering him and he was about to be healed. Leprosy was a skin disease that began as a small spot and spread quickly. It was a horrid disease that the rabbis believed was a judgment of God for personal sin. If a person had a spot he would go to the priest. The priest would evaluate the spot and quarantine them for seven days and evaluate the spot again. If it was determined that the person had leprosy they would have to live outside of the village, they would have to leave their head uncovered and walk through the streets covering their face crying out "unclean, unclean," and they could not respond to or address anyone. It was a horrible condition. Significantly, no one in all Israel had ever been cured of leprosy and the rabbis considered lepers beyond the possibility of healing since they were under the judgment of God. As such they considered them as good as dead and were treated awfully. And here was a man who not only had leprosy, but was covered in it. This meant he was in the final stages. What had begun as a spot had covered his body and had worked through the skin and muscles into the bone so that he was literally rotting to death. In verse 12, when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." He believed that Jesus was the Lord, that is that He was God, and that He could make him clean, but only if He was willing. In verse 13 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched the leper, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him. In verse 14, He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." The miracle was done specifically for the leadership of Israel, as a testimony to them. It was the first of a special class of miracles known as messianic miracles. These were miracles that only the Messiah could do. The other class of miracles were miracles that could be done by anyone empowered by God, such as Moses and Elijah. But the healing of the leper was a messianic miracle. It received a unique response among Jews. And He did it to prompt an investigation of the leadership into His claims. The man, now healed, would go to the priest, the priest would evaluate whether the man had indeed had leprosy, and then determine if he had been healed of leprosy and how, and finally proclaim him clean. In the meantime, verse 15 describes that the news about Him and what He had done was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. The news of Messiah was getting out. But in verse 16, Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray, presumably about what was going to happen next.

Now, in verse 17 we gather that the man healed of leprosy did make his way to the priest and went through the procedure and was proclaimed clean because a large delegation from the Sanhedrin had assembled in the Galilee to observe Jesus' words and works. This is exactly what Jesus was inviting them to do. He wanted them to investigate Him. So one day He was teaching. And who showed up but a lot of Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. This was no small group. This was not the normal crowd. It was an official body sent to observe. Observation was the first stage in a Sanhedrin investigation. During this stage they would say nothing, they wouldn't ask any questions, they would only observe. Afterward they would report back to the Sanhedrin. If their report was deemed significant they would move to the second stage of the investigation, which was interrogation. So, while they were in the house that day, the end of verse 17 notifies us that the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing. A notable miracle will take place. In verse 18, some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and set him down in front of Him. But verse 19, not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. What they did was go up the stairwell commonly attached to these homes onto the flat roof which was composed of a mixture of thatch and tile. They dug through and lowered the man in front of Jesus. In verse 20 Jesus, seeing their faith, referring to the faith of the four men, said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." When He said this, verse 21 says, the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" They were right in their theology, God alone can forgive sins. But there were only two options before them. Either Jesus was a blasphemer or Jesus was God as man. In verse 22, Jesus reveals what they were thinking saying, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? He then challenges them in verse 23 with a form of rabbinic logic they were accustomed to called *kal va'chomer* where one argues from the easy to the hard, but which Jesus reversed, saying, "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? The easier thing to say was "Your sins have been forgiven," because it required no physical proof. The harder thing to say was, "Get up and walk" because it would require physical proof. At this point, *kal va'chomer* logic set them up so that they had only one option left as to His identity. Verse 24, but so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home." And immediately he got up before them. This decided the issue. Jesus had now done the harder thing. Therefore, it was apparent He had also done the easier thing, forgive this man's sins. There was only one person Jesus could be; the Messiah, the God-man who forgives sin and brings wholeness. This was very significant. Nothing like this had ever been seen. The delegation would now go back to the Sanhedrin and they would begin stage two of the investigation, an interrogation.

Tonight we come to that interrogation in Luke 5:27-39, the calling of Levi and the banquet at his home with tax collectors and sinners. This marks the second stage. Now the scribes and Pharisees will ask questions and raise objections and look for a basis to accept or reject His Messiahship.

In verse 27 we read, **After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me."** The man referred to as **Levi** is referred to in Matthew 9:9 as "Matthew" and in Mark 2:14 as "Levi, the son of Alphaeus." He is the man who

authored the Gospel of Matthew. Fruchtenbaum speculated that “Levi was probably his birth name and Matthew his post-conversion name.” This is possible since the name Matthew means “gift of YHWH,” and he may have been given the name Matthew as a sort of nickname, since not many believer’s names were changed when they became believers. At any rate, when Jesus **went out** He noticed Matthew, a **tax collector...sitting in the tax booth**. From this statement we can identify which kind of **tax collector** Matthew was. The Roman Empire system of taxation was one of farming out the position to the highest bidder. There were chief tax collectors who farmed out the positions of tax collector to men in their districts. Each chief tax collector had a required amount and the tax collectors under him would collect that amount plus more in order to cover their expenses and greed. Lachs explained that there were “*tax collectors* Gr. *telonai*; Heb. *Mokhsim*, a lower echelon of tax (toll) collectors but part of the tax-farming system. Most were Jews. There was the chief tax collector, *architelones* (cf. Luke 19.2), who farmed out the territory to the *telonai*, who, in order to make a profit, inflated the amount to be collected.”ⁱ Matthew was of the lower echelon of tax collectors. He had been the highest bidder and acquired this post for a period of five years. The Jews considered this type of tax collector as worse than the chief tax collectors. Fruchtenbaum said, “Both were considered bad, but one was worse than the other. The lesser of the two evils was the income tax official. The other one was the customs or toll official. All three Gospel accounts state that Matthew was *sitting at the place of the toll* (Mt. 9:9a; Mk. 2:14a; Lk. 5:27a), which means he was a customs official, the worst kind of all.” Because he was collecting taxes from his fellow Jews he was assigned to the worst class of Jewish society. Shepard said, “The publicans were classed by the people with harlots, usurers, gamblers, thieves, and dishonest herdsmen, who lived hard, lawless lives. They were just “licensed robbers” and “beasts in human shape.” “According to Rabbinism there was no hope for a man like Levi. He was excluded from all religious fellowship. His money was considered tainted and defiled anyone who accepted it. He could not serve as a witness” in a court of law. “The Rabbis had no word of help for the publican...”ⁱⁱ The only word they had for them is the word in verse 30, “sinners.” This word had a special meaning in rabbinic theology. It referred not to all men but to someone who was virtually beyond the pale of repentance. Yet, Jesus in verse 27 **said to** this tax collector, “**Follow Me.**” The verb **Follow** is from *ακολουθεω* and has the ordinary-literal meaning of “to move behind someone in the same direction,” but here is the figurative-literal meaning of “to follow someone as a disciple.” Jesus is calling Matthew to discipleship. The call to discipleship is not the call to faith. There is no gospel presentation here. The call to discipleship is for believers only. What Matthew is being called to is committed discipleship. Matthew was already a believer as we’ll see later. And why did Jesus call this tax collector to be a committed disciple? What He did here was entirely done on purpose. He wanted to cause a dispute so that what He was teaching would be clearly distinguished from rabbinic Judaism of the time.

In 5:28 we see Matthew’s response, **And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him**. His response is significant considering that he had responsibilities to Rome. He simply got up out of the tax booth and **left everything behind**. There’s no word of what he did with whatever taxes he had collected that day, yet these were due to be sent to Herod Antipas as people exported goods out of his tetrarchy into Philipp’s. Yet, Matthew realized that his ultimate responsibility was to the Messiah and not Rome. So he obeyed the voice of his Master.

Now in verse 29 we read that **Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them.** This **reception** was **large**, probably referring to the number of guests that were invited. It was a big crowd. And it was given **for Him**, that is, for the Messiah. What Matthew wanted to do was introduce his friends to the Messiah. Matthew evidently took his call to discipleship seriously and wanted Jesus to touch their life as He had his own. He hoped they would come to salvation through faith. And note that this is a brilliant way to reach out to lost friends. Everybody likes a good party. Matthew threw a big party. Everybody came. He's using the technique of attraction we mentioned a few weeks ago about how to be a fisher of men. It's very important that you have a strategy and that this strategy incorporates modes of attraction. You have to attract men. Then you can talk about persuading men.

Now we see in 29b how many people came. There were **a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them.** The picture of **reclining** is of fellowship. These people were all having fellowship with Matthew, Jesus and His disciples. They were eating and drinking together. And this very much bothered the Pharisees because you can see in verse 30 that all these people were classified by them as **sinners**. They had been ostracized from the community. Cut off from Temple worship. And the average Jew had no dealings with them. Fruchtenbaum said, "By Jewish law, the only kinds of people allowed to associate with publicans were other publicans and prostitutes." So they were a group and Matthew's house was full of this group; tax collectors and prostitutes. And the reason is because these were his colleagues and friends and he knew they needed Christ. So he spent a lot of money to provide a pleasant banquet in order to introduce them to Him. Again, this is smart evangelism. This is a man who is using his assets to attract men to Jesus so that they can be persuaded and believe in Him. Further, it's worth noting that Jesus had no trouble being there. He came to seek and save that which is lost. He knew what was in man. He knew that man was wicked and it didn't bother Him to be with these people. They needed spiritual life like anyone else. There is no one that is beyond the pale of salvation, no one. And it's bad theology if you think there are. You're being a Pharisee. And also, note that the other disciples like Peter and John and Andrew also attended. They probably weren't as comfortable as Jesus, but they were there. And ultimately, while we don't know whether any of these so-called sinners came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah or not, we do know that this did not go unnoticed by the Pharisees.

In verse 30, at some later time we see **the Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?"** Note that this is the second phase of the Sanhedrin's investigation. They are now interrogating, asking questions, criticizing and looking for a basis for which to accept or reject His messiahship. And thinking they could address the situation through **His disciples** and avoid a head on confrontation with Jesus, they **began grumbling at His disciples**. The verb **grumbling** is a verb of complaint. They were complaining. It is a very graphic verb of criticism. And they said to them, "**Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?**" Of course, what they are really wondering about is Jesus' behavior. How could Jesus be the Messiah if He spent time with these sinners? And not just spend time with them but fellowship with them over food and drink? And by association, why would the disciples follow Him in this unacceptable behavior?

But Jesus, knowing that they were really attacking Him, responded in verse 31, **and said to them, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”** This odd saying is only understood when we understand that Jesus is speaking in their own terms. In other words, the terms **righteous** and **sinners** are being used according to the Pharisees definitions. And obviously He makes a parallel between **well** people, a **physician** and **sick** people and the **righteous, sinners** and Himself. Let’s identify the three groups. First, those who are **well**. Who are they? The Pharisees and scribes. Second, who are **those who are sick**? The tax collectors and sinners. And third, who is the **physician**? The Messiah. Therefore, in verse 31, who are **the righteous**? The Pharisees and scribes. And who are the **sinners**? The tax collectors and prostitutes. But why does Jesus refer to the Pharisees and scribes as **righteous**? Because He was just using their terms. Were they really **righteous**? No, they only thought they were **righteous**. And that’s why they saw no need for the Messiah. They had Abraham as their father. They had a free pass into the kingdom. But Jesus did **not come to call** people who have no need of Him. Instead He came **to call...sinners to repentance**. The Pharisees and scribes agreed that tax collectors and prostitutes were in need of **repentance**. But they didn’t think they could ever get it! But Jesus’ point is that those who are **sinners** have a keen sense of their need. And the whole point is that Jesus came to call those who sensed their need for Him, not people like the Pharisees who did not sense their need and saw themselves as righteous. And the same is true today. If you are talking to someone and they see no need for salvation, you’re wasting your time.

Now the proper response is stated to be **repentance**. Why repentance and not belief? Because this is the **repentance** that both John and Jesus proclaimed when they said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This was a repentance that was preparatory for the Messiah to establish the kingdom on earth. What does the word **repentance** mean? “a change of mind.” What did these tax collectors need to change their mind about? About the way they were exacting taxes. They were extorting money from people above and beyond the required taxation. If you turn back to Luke 3:8, you see John the Baptizer teaching this same message and he tells the tax collectors to “bear fruits in keeping with repentance.” Down in 3:12 they asked him what this meant, saying, “Teacher, what shall we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.” The repentance was a “change of mind” about the way they were collecting their taxes, the fruit of repentance was a changed way of collecting taxes, meaning they collected no more than was required. And as I mentioned before, I believe that Matthew had heard John’s message and had already repented and changed his way of collecting taxes. So that when Jesus found him sitting in the tax booth he was only collecting what was required by law. So, Matthew had already believed. The repentance was something additional, after the fact. In other words, the repentance was post-salvation. And that’s what Jesus called people to do, once they believed He was the Messiah, they also needed to repent of their ways and live changed lives. At the time this would help prepare the way for the Messiah to establish His kingdom.

In verse 33, the Pharisees continue their interrogation. **And they said to Him, “The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink.”** There were three groups of **disciples** at this time. For some reason the **disciples of John** continued when they should have ceased when John pointed out the Messiah. And what the Pharisees had noticed was a similarity between **the disciples of John** and **the disciples of the Pharisees**, but a difference with His disciples. They wanted an explanation for the difference.

The issue was one of **fasting and offering prayers**. This conflict involves extensive explanation of the development of Pharisaism after the Babylonian Exile. So let's go into that. During the intertestamental times, a period of about 400 years, a certain school of spiritual leaders arose called the Sopherim, from the Hebrew for "scribe." The Sopherim thought that they would do a service to all Jews by building a fence around the 613 laws of Moses so that people would not get even close to breaking these laws, and thereby avoid another captivity like they experienced in Babylon. As such they used a principle of logic called *pilpul*, that means "peppery" or "sharp." According to this logic they would ask what new laws could be logically derived from the original law or commandment. As an example, the Mosaic Law stated in Exod 23:19, "You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother." The probable meaning of this commandment was to avoid a Canaanite practice of taking the young goat from its mother and boiling it in the mother's milk as a first fruits offering to Baal. The Jews were not supposed to be involved in that idolatry. A thousand years later there were no Canaanites, so the original meaning was probably forgotten. When the Sopherim looked at this law they discussed how they could make sure that a young goat was never, never, never, boiled in its mother's milk. That is when the *pilpul* logic began to kick in. They said that if you eat a piece of meat and you drink a glass of milk, it is possible that the meat came from the young goat and the milk came from its mother, so when the two come together in the stomach it violates Exod 23:19. So they invented a new law that you could not eat milk and meat products at the same meal. Instead you have to separate the eating of meat and the drinking of milk by at least four hours. Then they continued to use the logic and said, what if you eat a piece of cheese from a plate, then you wash the plate and put it away. Later you pull out the plate and eat some meat from the same plate but you didn't notice that a tiny speck of cheese did not get washed off the plate. Now some of the meat picks up the tiny speck of cheese and you eat it and violate Exod 23:19. So they generated another law; you have to have two sets of plates, one set for eating dairy and another for eating meat. And if any of these plates get mixed up you have to throw out all the plates or give them to Gentiles. In this example you can see how the Sopherim used *pilpul* logic to develop all kinds of new laws that formed a hedge around the original 613 laws. Now about the time of Christ the Sopherim went out of existence and a new school came into existence called the Tannaim. They took the work of the Sopherim and said, hmmm....there are still some holes in the fence, we need to plug them up by making more laws employing the logic. Their beginning principle of the Tannaim was this, "A Tanna may disagree with a Tanna, but he cannot disagree with a Sopher." What that meant was that all the extra laws that the Sopherim generated during those 450 years between the testaments were now equivalent to Scripture. To justify this to the Jewish people they argued that at Mt Sinai Moses received two laws, one written, the 613 laws, and one oral, which was memorized by Moses, passed down to Joshua, then passed down to the judges who passed them on to the prophets who passed them down to the Sopherim. Their history of doing this continues after the time of Christ, but we have hopefully shown that in the Pharisaic Judaism at the time of Christ, the authority was not Scripture alone, but Scripture and the Tradition of the Sopherim, which was wholly accepted as authoritative by the Tannaim. Therefore, what Jesus was rejecting was not the Law of Moses, but the Tradition of the Sopherim, which today is known as the Mishnah, or at least a part of it, since it continued to develop until AD220. In any event, in the minds of the 1st century Pharisees the Messiah would be a Pharisee. He would be in submission to the laws of the Mishnah. In fact, He would help in writing new laws to continue to plug up holes in the fence. Therefore, anyone who was not a Pharisee could not possibly be the true Messiah. And it's right here in the text of Luke 5:33 that we see why they would not accept

Him as the Messiah. Fruchtenbaum said, “A common misconception is that they rejected Yeshua because He would not overthrow Rome. However, this is not the reason they themselves gave. The real reason was that He rejected Pharisaism. Over the preceding four centuries, the Pharisees had developed a whole body of traditions, rules and regulations. By the time of the first century, the rules had become sacrosanct and of equal validity to Scripture.”

One of those rules is here, that of fasting and offering prayers. The Pharisees and their disciples fasted and offered prayers two days a week, on Mondays and Thursdays. Apparently John’s disciples followed this practice as well. Fasting was supposed to make prayer more effective. However, they noticed that Jesus and His disciples did not do this. They wanted to know why not?

In verse 34ff Jesus gave four answers. **First**, the wedding analogy. Verse 34, **And Jesus said to them, “You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?”** His analogy with a wedding is potent. You don’t go to a wedding to fast, you go to a wedding to feast. As long as Jesus was there there was no reason for His disciples to fast. In verse 35 He adds, **But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.** This is Messiah’s first intimation of His death, since the words **taken away from them** commonly refer to one’s death. In other words, as long as He is with them they do not fast, and there is not one example of Jesus or His disciples ever fasting after His ministry became public at the first Passover. After He is crucified, then His disciples will fast, and they probably did between His death and resurrection, as well as after His ascension. But the point is that this was not the time to fast. This was the time to feast, the King was present.

In verse 36 we see His **second** answer; the garment analogy. Verse 36, **And He was also telling them a parable: “No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.”** In the first place, if you tore **a piece of cloth from a new garment** it would destroy the **new garment**. Nobody does that. Further, you wouldn’t **put it on an old garment** to patch it up because the old garment had already shrunk down whereas the piece of cloth from the new garment had not, so after it was patched up then the piece from the new garment would shrink and it wouldn’t fit the tear anymore. That is Jesus’ point. **Otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.** But what did Jesus mean? He meant that He was not going to take part of His new teaching and patch up the old Pharisaic Judaism. Pharisaic Judaism was beyond needing to be patched up. Nor could that even be done. If it was done it would conflict with the Pharisaic teachings. Therefore, the point was that Jesus’ teachings could not mix with Pharisaic teachings.

In verses 37-38 we see His **third** analogy; the wineskin analogy. **“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. ³⁸“But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.”** Wineskins were made from goat or sheep skin. If you put **new wine into** a wineskin it would stretch it through the fermentation process. After a few years that **wineskin** lost its elasticity and was considered **old**. At that point **no one put new wine into old wineskins**. If you did the fermentation of the new wine would cause the skins to be stretched beyond their ability and they

would **burst** open and the wine would **be spilled out** everywhere **and the skins would be ruined**. It would be a total waste. Instead, you always put **new wine...into fresh wineskins**. But what was Jesus' point? His teaching was like new wine, it described a fresh way to approach God. It could not be put into the mold of Pharisaic Judaism. Pharisaic Judaism was old and its ways were stiff. It did not allow for any elasticity. If Jesus' teaching were put into it it would cause it to burst. In other words, the two were not compatible.

And finally, the **fourth** answer, in verse 39; the old wine analogy. **“And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, ‘the old is good enough.’”** Most wine connoisseurs know that older wine is smoother than new wine. Because of this they prefer to drink **old wine**. What did Jesus mean? Probably the **old wine** refers to the Mosaic Law, which Jesus was truly teaching, and the **new wine** was the Pharisaic Judaism. What He meant was that if one had truly tasted of the Mosaic Law he would not want to put himself under the new Pharisaic Judaism. The old Mosaic Law was better. There was no need to add anything new.

In summary, in Luke 5:27, Jesus went out and noticed near the border of Antipas and Philip's tetrarchies, a tax collector named Levi, sitting in the tax booth. These were the most hated tax collectors because this man extorted vast amounts of money from his fellow Jews and was an agent of Rome, reminding them that they were under the Gentile powers. He was ostracized from Jewish society, yet Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” This was the call to committed discipleship and it is my understanding that Matthew was already a believer in Jesus' Messiahship and that he had repented of his robbery and was collecting only the tax amounts that were required by law. On this day, verse 28 says he left everything behind, that whole life, and got up immediately and began to follow Him. Out of appreciation in verse 29 he gave a big reception for Jesus in his home. He wanted to introduce his unbelieving friends to the Messiah. And the only people who would attend were tax collectors and other sinners and they were all fellowshiping around food and drink together. Sometime later verse 30 reports that the Sanhedrin had now formally begun their second phase of investigation; the interrogation. And the Pharisees and scribes began complaining at His disciples, really complaining at Him, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?” In other words, if Jesus was really the Messiah, He wouldn't be fellowshiping with these people that are beyond the pales of repentance. But in verse 31, Jesus answered, It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call those who think they are righteous, but those who sense they are sinners, and I have called them to repentance, a change of mind regarding their ways. At that they dropped that point and in verse 33 came against him with another point. “And they said to Him, “The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink.” Their criticism is that Jesus did not follow all the Traditions of the Elders, what were known as the laws of the Sopherim or the Mishnah that had equal authority with Scripture. In those rules they considered fasting as making prayer more efficacious. They fasted and prayed twice a week, they were holier than thou. Jesus answered four ways. Verse 34-35, the wedding analogy, it's not proper to fast when the Messiah is present; it's only proper to fast when He is absent. That time was not now, but it was coming. Verse 36, the garment analogy, you don't tear up a new garment to fix an old one and if you do it won't fit. His teachings would not fit with the Pharisaic teachings. Verse 37, the wineskin analogy, you don't put new wine into an old wineskin because it will cause it to burst and all the wine will be wasted. His teachings could not be fit into the mold of Pharisaism. It was too different; they were not compatible. And verse 39,

the old wine analogy, old wine is better than new wine and the old Mosaic teachings are better than the new Pharisaic ones. There was therefore, no reason to prefer the new over the old. He and His disciples would follow the old Mosaic Law.

In conclusion, what can we learn? **First**, Matthew shows us the true heart of outreach. He used his assets to provide a big banquet in order to introduce his friends to the Messiah. This is smart evangelism. It's not door to door, it's in his own house. He knew unbelievers and he invited them into his own home to introduce them to the guest of honor, the Messiah, the one who could save them as He had saved him. Are we using this method of outreach? Are we inviting our friends who are unbelievers into our homes? Do we even have any unbelievers who are our friends? This is an excellent method of outreach that begins with befriending people, whether colleagues, as here, or otherwise, and inviting them into our own homes and providing for them and introducing them to the Messiah. You may not have the money to do this, but this is just an example, there are other things you do have that you can use to reach people. **Second**, the problem with adding rules and traditions to the Scripture. The Pharisees added tons of rules to the Scriptures to provide a hedge around the law of Moses. They wanted to plug up all the holes they thought were leaking. The Church has not escaped this tendency. The difference is that every denomination has a different set of rules and traditions that they have imported. But they are doing the same thing. These traditions are treated with the same validity as Scripture. We have some of them right here in our own church. And whenever these man-made rules and traditions are used to judge whether someone is spiritual or not it has become legalism. Legalism is not when a believer chooses to live by a set of rules that goes beyond Scripture, but when that set of rules is applied to other believers who they expect to live according to them as well. But the church and people in the church have no right to go beyond the rules and regulations of the Scripture any more than the Pharisees. And when we do we have gone beyond the Scripture and have become like Pharisees ourselves.

ⁱ Lachs quoted by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 192.

ⁱⁱ Shepard quoted by Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 155.