

Abide in Me

*Mentored by the Master
Discipleship in Real Time*



Volume 10 - Number 21

The Week of April 6, 2025

Come and Follow
A New Way of Living
Mark 2:18-22

Jesus didn't come to patch up an old system. He came to introduce something entirely new. In this passage, Jesus is questioned about fasting and His response is striking. He compares His presence in the world to a wedding celebration. You don't fast when the bridegroom is with you! This is followed by two vivid illustrations—one about unshrunk cloth on old garments, the other about new wine in old wineskins. These images reveal that the gospel cannot be squeezed into the mold of man-made tradition or self-made righteousness. Jesus offers new life, marked by joy, freedom, and relationship. To follow Him is to leave behind the old and step into the new, living each day in joyful dependence on the Bridegroom who has come.

OBSERVATION (*What does the passage say and how does it say it?*)

Before your group meets, read the passage and perform the following prompts:

- Place a box around all the people or groups mentioned.
- Double underline all the temporal references.
- Circle all the nouns and verbs related to Jesus.
- In the left margin of verse 19, write: *The Bridegroom Is Here.*
- In the left margin of verse 20, write: *The Bridegroom Will Be Taken.*
- In the left margin of verse 22, write: *The New Must Be Treated as New.*

¹⁸ Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

¹⁹ And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

²⁰ The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

²¹ No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made.

²² And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins."

In your own words, summarize what Jesus is saying in this passage:

INTERPRETATION *(What does the passage mean?)*

1. How is this passage part of the growing conflict between Jesus and other religious leaders? Who is questioning Jesus in this context? (see also Matthew 9:14 and Luke 5:33). What does this reveal about their expectations for religious behavior?
2. Why does Jesus refer to Himself as “the bridegroom”? What does this metaphor suggest about His relationship to His followers? (See Isaiah 62:5 or John 3:29 for added insight.) Why do you think Jesus used a wedding feast to illustrate following Him?
3. What does Jesus mean when He talks about sewing new cloth onto old garments or putting new wine into old wineskins? What’s the deeper message behind these metaphors? (What do they all have in common?)
4. How does Jesus challenge the idea of simply adding Him into existing religious systems or traditions?
5. What do these images teach us about the kind of transformation Jesus brings into our lives? How is this different from following man-made traditions and rules?

APPLICATION *(How does the passage apply to our lives?)*

1. What was so unique about the coming and presence of Jesus in the world?

2. In what ways do we sometimes try to fit Jesus into old patterns, habits, or religious expectations instead of letting Him create something new in us?

3. Jesus invites His followers into joyful relationship. How can you make room for more joy and intimacy with Christ in your daily walk?

4. Have you ever resisted change because it was unfamiliar or uncomfortable, even though it was necessary for your growth in Christ? What “old wineskins” might God be asking you to let go of?

5. Jesus promises His followers will fast “when the bridegroom is taken away.” How does this remind us of the tension between joy and longing in the Christian life? What place does fasting have among your spiritual habits today?

6. *Pause and reflect:* Do you see your life as new in Christ? Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. What specific areas of your life need renewal right now? How can you embrace the new way Jesus offers?

Lessons in Discipleship

- **Joyful Relationship:** Disciples live in joyful awareness of Jesus' presence.
- **Radical Renewal:** Disciples are not called to patch up old ways but to live fully into the new life Jesus brings.
- **Spiritual Readiness:** Disciples embrace rhythms of joy, fasting, and renewal in step with the presence and promises of Christ.

