

In God's image

Part 2

Luke 5, Jesus Questioned About Fasting

³³ They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking."

³⁴ Jesus answered, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? ³⁵ But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast."

³⁶ He told them this parable: "No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. ³⁷ And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. ³⁸ No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. ³⁹ And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'"

1 Peter 1:13-16 – Be Holy

¹³ Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

If you remember last week we spoke about what it means to say we are in the image of God and I put forward the idea that in Christ we see perfect humanity – we see the image of God in human form, what it's meant to look like in the person of Christ. For us to realise our humanity, to find the image of God in us it will only come as we move closer to Christ in our lives as Christ radiates the image of God onto us so that we might walk around with an afterglow of Jesus imprinted on our lives.

Jesus gets asked this question by those pesky Pharisees, about John's disciples: "we fast, John the Baptist's disciples fast, but yours don't?" And Jesus responds with this parable, not quite a parable but it takes the form of one.

Jesus says if you sew new cloth on an old garment it will tear, if you pour new wine in old skins, they will burst. Jesus must have been feeling particularly cryptic that day. But this is the answer he give the Jews that day, so let's have a better look.

Jesus says verse 36:

³⁶ He told them this parable: "No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old."

The ways of the OT, Judaism had become an old garment, in Christ there was something new, there was a new covenant. The era of faith has over taken the era of Law. But the Jews of Jesus time didn't want to let go of the old ways.

This question of fasting is one example of a wider question. What do we do with all our old traditions and rituals now Jesus is teaching us something new? And it almost always came back to the Law for the Jews because they had a law that said everyone should fast twice a week. When Jesus talks about fasting he says its good as a person act of devotion but the Jews have made it a law, no longer do you do it out of love for God but duty.

But Jesus and his disciples were not fasting according to the Law and the Jews didn't like the look of this at all. Why were they getting away with not fasting?

Jesus says, when you try to sew something new (Jesus teaching about faith and grace) into something old (the Jewish Law), the two won't mesh... one will tear away from the other.

Jesus also says V37-38

³⁷ And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. ³⁸ No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.

In ancient times, the practise was you would make a flask out of goat skin, pour in the grape juice and ferment it in the skins, the wine would expand and the skins would flex and grow with the wine. But if you use the same wine skin again, the skin has already stretched to its capacity so as the wine ferments and expands, it will burst from the new wine. This is a graphic depiction of the new covenant.

Here the imagery Jesus uses is of a catastrophic failure. When trying to merge the old with the new, if the two are so incompatible there will be big problems for the Jews listening. Jesus was saying that to follow me, to hear my teachings, to hear the words of eternal life, you will need to let... go.... of the old. I want to make you a new creation... and the first step is to let go of the old ways – to realise the image of God in our lives, to meet our potential as the kind of people God has called us to be. We need to get rid of the old things that hold us back and pick up the new way that Christ has given us.

There is a problem trying to fit something new into something old. Max Lucado tells this story of a man he knew in his days as a pastor of a local church who suffered from terrible drug addiction, all that goes with it. Over the course of a couple of conversations he wanted to come to Christ, he wanted a fresh start he wanted to be made anew, transformed by Jesus. There wasn't much good in his life and the gospel of love was a powerful message for him but he had a girlfriend who he loved and she was not buying it. Every time he wanted to make changes in his life, get off the drugs, start hanging out with the church crowd she would slow bring him back to his old life, drugs, parties and eventually he gave up on the whole Christianity thing altogether. He was trying to put new wine in old skins. The two were incompatible, one will destroy the other – either the wine will be ruined or the skin will split.

Sometimes, as we are trying to be made in the image of God, we all need to let go of those old skins. We need to let go of the things that are preventing us from being

made in God's image. The things that are stopping us reaching the potential God has for our lives.

You know how every so often Facebook throws up a picture from a few years ago and says memories... well the other day I picture came up of some people I when to youth group with in the 90s and I started thinking about that group and all the people and not many of them are still in church, or have an active faith. I remembered one girl, from a Christian family, totally committed to youth. But in her late teens had these constant struggles with living out the faith, with turning her beliefs into actions, her group of school friends were living one life style, partying, sex and drugs and all the rest. And every time she would come to church on Sunday, she would feel like crap because of what she was doing Friday and Saturday nights. In the end she stopped coming to church – she was trying to put new wine in the old skins.

Jesus wants more than just Sunday night from us, he want to change us body, mind, soul.

Paul the Apostle says in 1 Peter

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

Don't just keep living life the same way you always have. Now in Christ the world should look a different colour because the grace of God seeps into every aspect of life. It makes no sense to keep living life the same way.

In the 1400s most people believed the world to be flat, Columbus wanted to find a quicker route to India so he sailed west from Europe and he accidentally bumped into the Americas. Now after he proved this, that the world was round, how could you go back to the old ways of thinking? How could you go back to thinking the world was flat? Surely you couldn't – your view of the world would be changed for ever.

So it is with Christ after we see the truth of Christ as the son of God. The world has changed for ever, How could we go back to the old way of thinking?

The apostle Paul goes on:

¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

God is many things, he has many attributes – eternal , unchanging, infinite, all powerful, omni-present, all knowing, but we can't be these things they are for God alone, only he can be eternal yet some of his attributes are communicated to us. He says "be holy as I am holy". Holy meant separate, set apart, I have heard it used of the refining process in metal. That you purify the metal by setting apart all the dirt and grime, making it more holy. God is Holy, he is set apart and he is different. He calls us to be holy, to be made in God's image is to be set apart... to be different.

That when on Monday morning your colleagues or friends ask you about the week end, you can say I went to church, has a great time of worship in song, heard this sermon about being in God's image ... being holy, being different.

Or you could take one of the last envelopes and put it out at work, ask for people to chip in, tell them your church supports ministries in Zimbabwe.

Here at Pittwater we are a church that Engages, Grows and Goes: **Engage** with our creator God, to **Grow** in our life in Christ and to **Go** into the world.

And as we think about being made in God image, this is how it happens:

Engage with our God in prayer, in his word, in his church, we confront our creator. We seek proximity to Christ that his image might radiate on us. We seek to grow in Christ as we put on the new ways, and put down the old. As we cast of the old garments to wear the new, as we become made more and more in the image of God.