

Group Study Guide

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
New Beginnings
Luke 5:33-39
1.7.18

Main Point

As Jesus begins to establish His kingdom in the lives of His people, He teaches us that His way of doing things will require a new kind of life for His followers.

Getting Started

This account contrasts the new situation of the kingdom of God with the previous old situation under the Mosaic law.

Observation

Why did Jesus' disciples not fast? What did they do instead according to verse 33?

What offended the Pharisees about the behavior of Jesus' disciples? With whom did the Pharisees compare the disciples?

Jesus answered the question of fasting by comparing himself to the groom. What would guests not do when the groom was present?

On the heels of the controversy about fasting, Jesus illustrated the point that his message was radical and new. It could not serve as a patch for the existing form of Judaism. Jesus' life, death and resurrection ushered in the new covenant. His substitutionary death on the cross accomplished what the law could not – namely our right standing with God.

What did Jesus want to communicate with his 2nd parable? What everyday objects did he use to illustrate his point?

Jesus was noting that his way and the way of the Pharisees was simply unmixable. The Pharisees would refuse to try the new way for they assumed that their old way was better. Jesus' teaching was considered by the Pharisees and religious leaders to be like new wine and they wanted no part in it.

Application

What's something new you sense the Lord is doing in your life? Share this with your group. Ask group members to pray for you as you walk with the Lord in new beginnings this year.

Share a time when you believed God called you to fast. What according to this passage is the reason for fasting? What did you fast? Ask the Lord to show you when you need to fast again. Be open to giving up something you want for His divine presence.

It's so easy to cling to what is old and familiar rather than embrace what is new and uncertain. How is God challenging you these days to grow in your faith? How is He using new and difficult circumstances to help you mature as a Christ follower? Read Romans 5:3-4. Change produces stress and to a certain extent, suffering. What changes has God led you through recently? How have you handled those changes? God wants to do something new in you, something that will cause people to glorify Him because of the character they see in you. Embrace what Jesus is doing in you and allow Him to have his way in your life.

Prayer

Dear God, keep me from being like the Pharisees who completely rejected Jesus and instead clung to their old familiar ways. Help me fully embrace your work in my life. I want to celebrate new beginnings as an opportunity to demonstrate my growing faith in You!

Commentary

5:33-34 Jesus refers to himself as the Bridegroom who in the OT was the Lord. While Jesus is present with the disciples, they are to rejoice. When He is taken away from them, then they will fast. They will then return to the practice of fasting to seek the presence of the Lord. But they need not do that when Jesus, the Son of God, is with them in bodily form.

5:35 Jesus is fully aware of his coming death. Although a riddle for Jesus' audience, Luke's readers would have understood this as referring to Jesus' death. Fasting is appropriate between Jesus' death and resurrection and between his ascension to the Father and his return to earth.

5:36-39 Jesus concludes his response to the question about fasting with a parable consisting of two main metaphors: (1) a new patch cannot be put on an old garment. Upon washing, it will shrink and will tear the old garment. (2) One does not put new wine into old wineskins. New fermenting wine would stretch the old, inelastic skins. No one is best understood as an ironical condemnation of the Pharisees, who favored the past and rejected the arrival of the kingdom and the new covenant it brought. The point of these two metaphors is that one cannot mix the old with the new covenant, and that the new covenant and that the new covenant era inaugurated by Jesus' coming will require repentance, regeneration and new forms of worship.