



‘Now!’ Sermon Series

Sermon #10

Sunday, June 16th, 2024

‘Break Your Box!’

Mark 2:18-22

Last week in ‘NOW’ sermon series:

- Last week Rev. Steve Kittrell did a fantastic job of filling the pulpit in my absence. He preached in Jonah, and in just two Sunday’s he’ll be back, Lord willing to continue his mini-series in Jonah.
 - The last time we found ourselves in Mark’s Gospel was two weeks ago.
- We looked at *Mark 2:13-17* and I preached a message entitled ***‘Unconventional Thinking!’***
 - ***In that sermon we looked at how Jesus thought process and thinking is so much different than our own, oftentimes.***

- We looked at how you and I need to make sure that we align our thoughts more with that of Christ, then that of our own flesh.
- I asked the question: ***How does Jesus show us that He does not think in the normal/conventional way that many people do?***
 - **Point 1: *Calls an Obscure Hated Man. (V. 13-14)***
 - **Point 2: *Converses in an Open Home. (V. 15)***
 - **Point 3: *Clarifies Out-loud Heresies. (V. 16-17)***
- ***How has your thinking changed since we studied that text to reflect that of the thinking of Christ Jesus?***

‘Break Your Box!’

Mark 2:18-22

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can break the boxes that we have in our lives, that we have progressively placed over Jesus, by learning from Jesus’ response to the Pharisees in regards to fasting. We see this in the Disappointment Revealed, a Deliberate Response, and a Distinct Reason.

Intro:

- The scripture text that we find this morning is the third controversy with the religious leaders and or other people, that we find in Mark 2:1-3:6.

- *In Mark 2:1-12, the religious leaders had an issue with Jesus forgiving a man of his sins.*
- *In Mark 2:13-17, the religious leaders had an issue with Jesus calling a tax collector to be one of His disciples and spending time with who they deemed as ‘sinners’.*

- In both of these scriptural examples, we see that Jesus responded with the authority that had been given to Him by His Father.

- *In both of those previous circumstances, we see that the religious leaders (scribes and pharisees), could not have joy for the fact that Jesus forgave a sinner, and that the paralytic’s eternal destination changed.*

- *They couldn’t find joy in the fact that Jesus was reaching what was considered an ‘unreached’ people group at that time. Tax collectors and sinners.*

- In our text this morning, it’s the religious leaders directly, that are going to try and trap Jesus in a box, but the common people. Who maybe, were persuaded to do so by the Pharisees.

- *They are going to bring up an issue that they have with Him concerning fasting and seek to*

put Jesus in their religious boxes that they refused to destroy.

- Similar to these Pharisees, or commoners as we will find, many of us have boxes that we have been putting Jesus in for years.

- *Today is the day that you BREAK your personal BOX and truly find your JOY in Christ and in Him alone!*

Question to Ask:

How does Jesus show us in this passage that He broke the boxes of religion that the Pharisee’s attempted to put up around Him?

Point 1: A Dissapointment Revealed. (V. 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?”
- In order to understand how Jesus lack of fasting was a ‘*Disappointment*’ to the common people of that day, we need to understand the term that is used here, ‘*John’s disciples*’-we know who the Pharisees are by now, but who are *John’s Disciples*’
 - This is first of two times in Mark’s Gospel that he will make a reference to John’s disciple. The other occurs in Mark 6:29.

- *The ministry of John the Baptist was strong and effective, because of this, his ministry did attract disciples.*
 - *This is why John the Baptist himself said these words in Mark 1:7-8.*
 - ‘And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”’
- *John made it clear that Christ was coming.*
 - *But these disciples that Mark refers to here, were most likely committed to the teachings of John the Baptist.*
 - They most likely moved into the cities from the wilderness after John’s imprisonment and execution.
- Dr. Daniel Aiken gives a could reason as to why John’s Disciples were most likely fasting:
 - *‘John’s disciples were probably fasting in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah.’*
 - Which would make total sense when it comes to the first analogy that we will see Jesus give.
- So, we know who ‘*John’s Disciples*’ are, but how can we see that a Disappointment was revealed in the question that they asked Jesus?
 - I believe we find **2** ways in the text to answer this:
- *Commoners Provide the Question. (V. 18a)*
 - ‘Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came’
 - *We know who the Pharisees are.*
 - *History will tell us that the Pharisees first arose and became prevalent around 168 B.C. which would have been at the time of the Maccabean Revolt.*
 - So, they had two centuries to settle in before Jesus came onto the scene.
 - We will deep dive into fasting for that time in their culture in just a moment, but first we need to see who asks this question to Jesus.
 - *We see in verse 18, ‘And people came’*
 - **Word Study**
 - The word ‘people’ does not occur in the Greek Text. In many translations you have this morning (including NKJV & KJV), it translates it to ‘they came’, which makes

one think it is referring to the pharisees.

- When studying the greek, the phrase in the ESV '*And people came*', is all one word.
- It comes from the greek word **erchomai**-έρχομαι which literally means to come, go, or pass by.
 - *The use of this word is significant in Mark 2:18, because the word is conjugated to the present, indicative, passive voice, and is in the 3rd person plural form.*
 - *The fact that this particular voice is used, doesn't mean it is coming from the Pharisees, but rather a group of people that may have followed the pharisees and their leadership, but not actually a pharisee.*
- The common people want to know why the '*disciples*' of Jesus are not following in the fasting rituals.
 - It's possible that the Pharisees wanted to be more in the shadows since they had just confronted Jesus on two big items,

that they persuade someone that followed them closely to confront Jesus on this issue.

- *Maybe this was the case, maybe it was not.*
- The main question these people are asking is why is it that John's disciples fasted, the pharisees's fasted, but Jesus' disciples were not fasting.
 - *The only exposure, apart from Jesus, that these commoners had to religion came from what they saw from John the Baptist's disciples, and the Pharisees themselves.*
 - They really and truly want to know why Jesus' disciples are in the religious box that they are.
 - *Similar to when people ask...*
- Scholar James Edwards said '*They evidently were commoners rather than Pharisees, which reinforces the impression that fasting was regarded as part and parcel of true piety in the Jewish world of Jesus' day.*'
 - *The commoners had been brainwashed by someone (pharisees), that in order to be 'HOLY', they had to stay in the box.*
 - So they confront Jesus as to why His followers are clearly outside of the box, and ont in it...

- The second part of verse 18 shows us more about the common practice of fasting in that day.
- **Common Practice in that day. (V. 18b)**
 - ‘and said to him, “Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”
 - **Scholar Eckhard J. Schnabel defined fasting as this ‘Fasting is not merely relinquishing food for a period of time, but an act of worship which expresses one’s dependence on God.’**
 - In the NT, there is only 1 annual fast that is mentioned and we find it in Acts 27:9, which was on the day of Atonement.
 - In the OT, there was only 1 fast that was required for all of Israel, and we find that in Leviticus 16:29.
 - **Other than that, throughout the history of Israel, other fasts had been added.**
 - Zechariah 8:19 indicates that during the times of the prophets, there were 4 additional fasts that were added.
 - **Then, in the time of Esther there was another fast that was added according to Esther 9:31.**
 - The other references found in the OT are a matter of an individual’s choice on whether or not to fast.
- **We find scriptural evidence of this in 1st Samuel 31:13, 2nd Samuel 12:16, Ezra 8:21, Nehemiah 9:1-3, Joel 1:14, and 2nd Chronicles 20:3.**
- But, several times in the OT we see that the prophets criticized fasting that was done with wrong motives in one’s heart.
 - **An example of this is found in Zechariah 7:5**
- **The common practice for the pharisees, is that they would fast twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays.**
 - When Jesus started His ministry, we read in Mark’s Gospel how during the time of temptation He fasted for 40 days.
 - Later on, Jesus would assume that those who followed Him would fast according to Matthew 6:16.
 - “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.’
 - **See, Jesus doesn’t say ‘if’ you fast, but ‘when’ you fast.**
- **Jesus wasn’t opposed to fasting as long as it was genuine and directed towards God.**

- But, the Pharisees and those that follow them expose their own superficiality by asking Jesus this question.
- What the pharisees are doing here, is described of what Jesus would say later on:
 - ‘in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’” Matthew 15:9
- *So the man disappointment that the people have, is that Jesus doesn’t doesn’t follow rituals or religion, He follows a true relationship with His Father...*
 - A disappointment is revealed, but also...

Point 2: A Deliberate Response. (V. 19-20)

- *Verse 18 clearly shows us the question that is being asked. Now, verses 19-22 are the record of Jesus response to this.*
 - Jesus' initial response to the question that was proposed, is deliberate and begins with an Analogy.
 - *What I find deliberate about Jesus’ response, is that He does not apologize, but exposes their spiritual ignorance in even asking such a question.*
 - Jesus is very clear that the box they are trying to put Him under, just doesn’t fit, and He is going to explain why.
 - There are **2** important things to point out concerning this deliberate response:

- **Joy with Jesus. (V. 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.’
 - Jesus begins to answer this by bringing to their minds a vivid example. He uses the Jewish wedding celebration to begin making His point.
 - *In the Jewish culture, a wedding was a big deal, especially within the community.*
 - *It would last 7 days for a virgin bride and 3 days for a widow who was getting remarried.*
 - Scholar James Edwards describes it as this *‘Friends and guests had no responsibility but to enjoy the festivities. There was an abundance of food and wine, as well as song, dance, and fun both in the house and on the street.’*
 - It was to be an event of joy.
 - *Even to the Pharisees, to fast/mourn at such a joyous occasion would have been wrong and rude.*
 - So, Jesus is pointing out that it is wrong to think that His own disciples were to mourn and grieve while He was standing right in front of them.

- **Truly, those asking the question do not understand, they are still living in a BOX of religion instead of being able to BOAST in their relationship with Christ.**
 - *Many Christians want to have JOY in Jesus but they aren't willing to get out of the box that they have placed themselves in.*
- Jesus is essentially saying that why wouldn't you want to celebrate and have a joyous occasion while I'm here?
 - *The same could be said of us here today...*
- **If you are here and you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior then you should be living in JOY with Him as He's given you the Holy Spirit to guide and walk with you.**
 - Many Christians today don't want to live in Joy, because they get more attention and comfort from others when they boast in their box...
 - *Jesus is telling them here, that if only they could really see and acknowledge that it was He who was the Christ, they too, wouldn't have to fast in such a joyous occasion.*
- It's very important to see here, that Jesus is not condemning fasting, He's simply stating that it's not appropriate while the Messiah was there.
 - *We have way too many 'doom and gloom' Christians that it is truly alarming.*
 - ***We don't actually understand the magnitude of WHO Jesus is and WHAT He did on the Cross if we are constantly 'doom and gloom' and 'woe is me'. This is evidence that your Christianity is simply confined to a Box.***
 - Break it down.
- Dr. Daniel Aiken said *'Of course we should be holy, but we must not be somber. We should be moral but not legalistic and righteous but not stern. Why? Because there is JOY in Jesus! Christian, do not mourn when it is time to celebrate.'*
 - Maybe Jesus wants to Deliberately respond to you this morning. That in order for you to be able to Break your Box today, you need to find Joy in Christ alone.
- ***Justified Fasting will come. (V. 20)***
 - 'The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.'

- *Secondly in Jesus' Deliberate Response, He shows that there will be a time to fast and grieve, but it's not now, because He is still on the earth.*
 - Verse 20 in Mark 2, is the first time in Mark's Gospel that Jesus alludes to death.
 - *The people, even His own disciples, don't understand now, but they will soon understand that joy is going to be exchanged for sorrow.*
 - *Most of the time in a wedding celebration, the guests are the ones to leave.*
 - *But Jesus gives a striking image here that the Groom is going to be taken away from them.*
 - Surely this was an alien concept to them.
 - **Word Study**
 - The phrase 'taken away' in verse 20, comes from the greek word **ἀπαίρω**, which only occurs 3 times in the Greek NT and means to be taken away forcefully, not just natural causes.
 - JM said this about this greek verb *'(It) conveys the idea of a sudden, violent removal and serves a clear reference to Jesus' crucifixion.'*
 - It's at that time that fasting, mourning and grieving will be warranted. But, not at this time.
 - *While Jesus alludes to His own death on cross by crucifixion with the use of this word, I also believe that He is showing them that He has a mission to complete.*
 - The Bridegroom was obviously Jesus, and He makes that clear here.
 - He tells them that He is going to be snatched away, and would bear God's wrath. That would be the time to mourn.
 - *As christians today we should have times where we fast, mourn and grieve what Jesus did for us! The Lord's Supper is a great time to do this.*
 - *But we must also not forget that Jesus death on the Cross has given us the opportunity to have JOY every moment of our lives.*
 - This morning we've been able to see a Disappointment was Revealed, a Deliberate response was given by Jesus, and lastly and finally, we see more analogies that Jesus gives to make sure that they understand this...
- Point 3: *A Distinct Reason. (V. 21-22)***
- '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.”

- ***While the wedding and Bridegroom analogy is really strong, Jesus adds a few more examples to ensure that they have the concept.***

- As we will see Jesus do quite a bit later on in Mark’s Gospel and throughout His ministry, He will use parables.
- Scholars James Edwards said the following about these two parables that Jesus uses here: ***‘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 statues quo.’***
 - Many of these Jews wanted to practice a Jesus+ theology instead of a Jesus period, theology.
 - ***But see Jesus would not be integrated or crammed into preexisting structures, including Judaism, the Torah or the Synagogue.***
- ***Jesus is the great I am and can’t be contained in the religious boxes that many of the pharisees and jews desperately wanted Him to stay in.***

- I believe they somewhat knew, that once Jesus gets out of their box, He will radically change everything. Just like He will in our lives, if we let Him.

- ***Jesus came to make things New.***

- In verse 21, we find the first parable He gives.
- ‘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.’
- ***In the OT, it would not be right to repair an old piece of clothing with a new piece of clothing.***
 - Obviously the new cloth wouldn’t match the color of the old due to the fact it would have faded, but it would shrink when washed and then would rip.
- ***So, what was Jesus’ point in making this first parable?***
 - ***Jesus was telling them that He came to make things new.***
 - Not to be attached to the old.
 - ***Jesus did not come so that He could be attached to the tattered garment of a legalistic religion, when He offered something TOTALLY different, a relationship with Him.***
- So, if Jesus came to make things new, then why do you and I take our boxes out of the closet that He has already freed us from?

- Remember what Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth?
 - ‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.^[a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.’ 2nd Corinthians 5:17
- **Jesus did not come to bask in ‘tradition’.**
 - In verse 22, we see the second parable that Jesus gives.
 - ‘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.’
 - **We just looked at how a piece of new clothing could ruin and destroy a piece of old clothing.**
 - In the same way, new wine would destroy old wineskins.
 - JM said **‘Wine was stored in ancient Israel in containers made from animal skin. As new wine began to ferment, gas would be released, causing the leather skin to expand. An old wineskin, having lost its elasticity, could break during the process of fermentation.’**
 - If it broke, then the wine that had monetary value, would spill out and be lost.
 - The point of this parable and the last one, both are to illustrate the radical new era that had been brought in by Christ Jesus.

■ **The point of this parable is to show that legalism was an old wine skin, that couldn’t contain the grace that was attached with the Gospel.**

○ **The main question is, will we allow Jesus to expand and grow in our own hearts?**

■ So much, that we’re willing to break our box in order for that to happen...

Conclusion:

- This morning as we close, we need to break our Box.
 - **For too long, many of us have been confining our relationship with Jesus to a box.**
- I’m not sure what your box looks like this morning, but it’s time that we break them down.
 - **Let me give some examples of some things in your life that you may have put into a BOX, and Jesus is just waiting for you to break that box. You can do it today. Break. Your. Box.**
 - Pride.
 - Religion.
 - Legalism.
 - Sin.
 - Self Pity.
 - Drugs.
 - Alcoholism.
 - Jealousy.
 - **These are just a few of the boxes that we place around Jesus that keep us from experiencing Him fully in our daily lives.**

- I don't know about you. Maybe you've got some of the boxes I just mentioned, or God will reveal to you another BOX that needs to be broken so that you can experience Him fully.
- *Do you want this to be a Father's Day to remember? Than make today the day that you got right with the Lord, and you BROKE YOUR BOX.*
- During this time of invitation, seek His face, speak with your Father, and Break Your Box!
 - **Point 1:** *A Dissapointment Revealed. (V. 18)*
 - **Point 2:** *A Deliberate Response. (V. 19-20)*
 - **Point 3:** *A Distinct Reason. (V. 21-22)*