# Luke 5 • (Part 2): 27-39 • The Calling of Matthew, Fasting and New Things

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Luke chapter 5, verse 27. We're going to read through the end of the chapter and then we'll pray. It says,

*"After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me." 28 And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. 29 And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. 30 And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"*

*31 And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." 33 And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink." 34 And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days."*

*36 He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. 37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. 38 But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. 39 And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'" (ESV)*

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. As we get into this this morning, would You please open our hearts to hear Your voice. Speak to us Lord God and direct our hearts. Lord we look to You, give us ears to hear. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

I've got to tell you, this is one of my favorite stories, frankly, in the Gospel accounts and I think the reason is because it's such a bold move on the part of

Jesus. It says that as He was just walking through, and by the way, Jesus is in Galilee still, this is still considered part of this Galilean ministry.

So He's. He's up north, and this is where Peter lived. This is where he was raised. This is where some of the other disciples were raised too, John and Andrew and so forth, and this was their home area. And so Jesus, it says, is just walking along, and he sees this man named Levi, who we also know as Matthew, sitting at a tax collector's booth, and He simply says to him, *"Follow me."* And we're told here in verse 28 that, *"leaving everything, he rose and followed Him."* Matthew was probably known to some of the disciples.

In fact, Peter, Andrew, John, they could very well have even paid their taxes to Matthew, and what that means is they probably hated him even more than just knowing that he was a tax collector because tax collectors were despised in Israel during that time.

Now, I'm not sure they're loved today, and I don't know of anybody that loves paying taxes. I hear people complaining a lot about it, so I'm assuming it's not your favorite activity. But at least you and I have the privilege of knowing that our tax dollars are going to within the coffers of our own country.

You may not agree with how they're being spent. That's a different issue altogether. But at least you know you are benefiting from your tax money in some capacity. That wasn't the case for the Jews. Because they were under Roman occupation, their tax dollars were going into the pocket of Rome. The Romans were their captors. The Romans were their enemies. Can you imagine paying taxes and have your money going to your enemies? Your sworn enemies. I would imagine many of the people of Israel had lost family members to the aggression and violence of Rome.

Now, can you imagine taking some of your hard-earned money and paying the government that killed some of your family members? I think you start to get the picture a little bit here about how difficult this was for them, but to add insult to injury to this whole situation, there were Jews who actually gave themselves and their employment to Rome to collect money from their fellow Jews, and here's how it worked. The Romans said, this is how much money we want you to collect from the people. It all goes to us. You get nothing.

The only way you're going to make any money at all is by adding a surcharge, your own, and we don't care. We couldn't care less about how much you ask from them, but whatever you get above and beyond our rate, is yours. Well, you can imagine that gave way to all kinds of abuse as these tax collectors sought to

gain as much income as they possibly could from their fellow Jews, which made them hated and despised all the more. In fact, the Jews considered tax collectors to be right up there with thieves and murderers.

I mean, that's the way they looked at them. And I have to wonder, when Jesus walks up to this despised tax collector and He says, *"Follow me,"* how Peter, for example, who lived in that area and very likely paid Matthew his own taxes, I wonder how he felt about that. I wonder how Simon the Zealot felt about it.

You guys know about the Zealots, right? They were a, oh for lack of a better term, a political movement that had arisen within Israel during the time of Jesus' ministry, and the Zealots really had one single mission and that was to incite people to riot against the Romans, to incite them to anger, and to rise up militarily or any other way they could think of and put down the Roman oppression.

I mean, that was their whole goal. And one of those guys became a follower of Jesus, Simon the Zealot. And so you've got on the one hand this man who has devoted his life to ridding the nation of Israel from this Roman occupation, and you have this other guy who's a collaborator with Rome, and they're brought into the same group. Which you would think to yourself, you know Jesus, if I could offer just a little bit of counsel, I'm not so sure that's the smartest move you've ever made because that sounds like a tinderbox to me. It sounds like gunpowder and a spark that you're bringing together and putting.

You know what though? We never read of any issues that goes on in His group, and although you and I might have a hard time thinking of how it could possibly be, these men became brothers. But you see, that's what Jesus does to people. We come from all kinds of different backgrounds and ideologies, belief systems that make us passionate about this, that, or the other thing. We come from very different backgrounds. And there might be somebody even in this room who lives a kind of a lifestyle, not a sinful one, but a different lifestyle from you that you really can't even relate to, and you might have even been biased against people who lived that.

I remember the very first time I went to a Calvary Chapel pastors conference; we weren't yet a Calvary Chapel. When we started this fellowship, 28 and a half years ago, we weren't affiliated yet with Calvary. That happened within the first 18 months of the church. But we were invited to go down to a pastor's conference, and I've shared this with some of you. It was down at Lake Tahoe, and I walked into this room where the room was filled with guys, and I noticed

all these bikers. Guys with like braided ponytails and they had the usual, they had the biker outfit on, you know what it looks like.

It's usually the vest with the T-shirt, you got the tattoos – I love mom. And they got, these, and they just, you know what a biker looks like. They've got a chain on their wallet, right? And nobody's taken that thing from me and sort of a thing, and the room was filled with these guys and I thought, well, that's nice, they let these guys come to the pastor's conferences. That's very nice. That's very kind of them. And then, this is back when Pastor Chuck used to go to all the regional conferences. He had everybody, he says, I want to pray for all the senior pastors in this room. Would you guys all stand?

All these bikers stood up! I'm like, where am I? I turned to my wife and I said, we're not in Kansas anymore. And it was just the, and I, because I really honestly can't really relate to that lifestyle, but you know what? We're brothers and sisters, and that's one of the most amazing things about being a believer is that you're grafted into this family and we're often incredibly different. I mean, just go to another country, see how they worship, see what their church services are like and yet there's this sense we are one, and that's the beautiful thing about what the Lord does in our lives.

One other thing before we move on about Matthew becoming a follower of Jesus. Matthew was most likely a fairly wealthy guy. Most tax collectors were, and they lived a lifestyle that went along with it, fairly opulent, usually immoral. But as a fairly wealthy man, it's fairly significant that we're told here in this passage that when Jesus said to him, *"Follow me,"* that he just simply got up and he began to follow Jesus. And it's not like he's taking, he didn't put a sign in on his little booth there saying, back in an hour, going to go follow the Messiah. He left. He left and he didn't go back. He never went back.

In fact, it was a unique situation for Matthew. Some of the other disciples they were, several of them were fishermen. We're even told that in that period of time between the resurrection of Jesus and the ascension of Jesus, we're told that the disciples were at loose ends. And do you remember that there was one point where Peter even said to the other guys, I'm going fishing. And so, they got in the boat and they went out fishing. And of course they had no success, and you guys remember how the story goes.

But Matthew couldn't do that. He couldn't say, well, while we're waiting for our marching orders, I'm going to go back and catch, collect some taxes. There was no going back. Not only did he leave his income, he left his career. He left everything behind. And that's what it means to follow Jesus.

Do you guys understand that when you make a decision to follow Jesus, you always leave something behind. There's always some aspect of sacrifice that goes on, even if it's just leaving behind your old life. And for some of you that's all you left behind. You left behind your old life.

But do you understand that that is the essence of repentance? Do you understand that's what repentance is? We often think about repentance like it's certain words, a certain prayer that I have to say. Okay, now we're going to go through a prayer of repentance with you now, because if you don't repent, you can't be saved, and so we lead people through this particular format right now, repeat these words after me. No.

Repentance is getting up and following Jesus. It's leaving behind the old life. It's taking those things that maybe you loved in the past, and it's saying, I'm done. I'm done with all that, and I'm going to walk toward, I was going this way, but now I'm going to go this way. I'm going to walk toward Jesus.

That is repentance. You see, we don't just verbalize repentance. We live it. It's something we do. It's not just something we say. That's not to say you can't say the words that define repentance. There's nothing wrong with that. But even if you say it with your mouth, it doesn't mean you've done it. You see. W

hat Matthew did is he repented when he got up from his tax collector booth and he walked away to follow Jesus. That was repentance. It was going the other way than he had been going. Verse 29, this is interesting. It says, *"And Levi made him* (that's Jesus) *a great feast in his house…"*

I really, really love this because Matthew, Levi, has just opened his heart to the Lord, but he's still got all these unsaved friends. You guys remember what it was like when you got saved? Do you remember how you still had all those connections with your old friends? And after a while, they probably dropped you like a bad habit because they realized you were doing the God thing. And they're like, you're going where? To church? Didn't you go to church last month? And you're talking about God and you're talking about the Bible and they decide after a while they don't really want to be around you anymore, and that's natural. It really is.

The Gospel either attracts or repels people, but there's this window of opportunity after somebody gets saved where they have a marvelous chance of reaching their unsaved friends, and this is what Levi is doing. He's got all these buds who've been in the tax collector business and all the other people who are living the same immoral lifestyle that he's been living. And all they know is he

just, he's having a party and he invites Jesus to the party. It's pretty cool, isn't it? We're told here in the middle of verse 29 that, *"...there was a large company of tax collectors."*

These are all despised people, both for what they do and their lifestyle, and it says, *"...and others who are reclining there with them,..."* And in verse 30, along come the Pharisees, and it says, *"and their scribes, and they grumbled,"* which of course is what they do best. And they said to the disciples, *"why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?*"

Now you have to understand that the Pharisees believed that to dine with someone was to share something very intimate because back in those days they dipped their food in a common bowl. You guys remember this, and there wasn't any rules against double dipping. So you would dip and eat and dip and eat and dip and eat, and the idea was if a sinner or somebody who's defiled, dips into the bowl, and then I take my bread and I dip into the same bowl, I literally ingest the defilement of that individual. It's a ridiculous idea, but they had embraced it wholeheartedly.

And so that is why they're asking the disciples of Jesus, why are you doing this? Don't you realize that you're defiling yourselves? And they're saying, your Master you and your Master, you're eating with these sinners and so forth.

Verse 31, look at the Lord's response. And Jesus answered them. *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick, I've not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."*

You know, this is of course a wonderful response by our Lord. But you need to understand something here when He talks about sinners and righteous. He's not saying these people who I'm eating with here are sinners and you guys are righteous so you can, that's why I'm not eating with you. He's not saying that.

He's simply making the statement. These are the people I came to reach. This is who I came to connect with. These are the folks right here. Now, you could be among them if you understood that you too are a sinner. Unfortunately, they didn't. The fact of the matter is that the Pharisees were just as much sinners as the people in that room, and they needed the Savior and what the Savior came to bring, just like the people who Jesus was dining with. It's just that those people were notorious sinners. That's why the Pharisees called them sinners. They weren't necessarily saying they're sinners and we're not, although I think that's what was in their heart, but the term sinner simply means these people sin out loud, or for everyone to see. Are you with me?

These are the kind of people, the people that Jesus was having dinner with. I'm trying to put this maybe in the context of something that today you and I might recoil at. These are folks who today had just gotten done having a gay pride parade. Yeah. Just gotten off the parade and they're still and they're liquored up and being weird and wacky, and then they all get together for a party afterwards at Matthew's house, and that's who Jesus went to go sit with.

And I think that there'd probably be a number of Christians today if they saw Jesus sitting with those kinds of people who might turn their nose up too, because you see, Pharisee-ism is alive and well. Just because we don't call people Pharisees today it doesn't mean they don't exist. We still have grumblers today. Jesus, what are you doing with those people? You're going to, you're going to try to, you're going to convey to people that that's okay. What are you doing?

And Jesus says, this is who I came to reach. These are the people right here. These are the folks I came to reach, right? Because you see, God had already told the Jews in the Scriptures, in the Old Testament Scriptures, that everybody's a sinner. He'd already said that. You remember back in Psalm chapter 14? Put it up on the screen here for you.

**Psalm 14:2-3 (ESV)**

*The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.*

*The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand,* (any) *who seek after God.* (What does he find? No, no) *They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.*

Now this was a passage that the Pharisees had access to, and yet they didn't apply it to themselves, even though the New Testament writers did apply it to everyone universally. We're all sinners, right? Moving on.

The conversation then arises on the issue of fasting, and we're going to talk about that conversation and a little bit about what it means. But verse 33 says, *"and they said to him, the disciples of John fast often and offer prayers and so did the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink."*

What's the deal with you guys? Now, you need to know here that the Pharisees had adopted a rather rigorous schedule for fasting. They fasted every Monday,

they fasted every Thursday, and they had other kinds of fasting things that would come up from time to time, and frankly, they went beyond what God had commanded in the Old Testament. They had added their own sort of a deal. But they noticed that Jesus and His disciples weren't fasting, and they're like, what's the deal? Why don't you guys fast like we fast? Now, I'm going to, we'll get into His response and what this thing all means but can I just back up for just a moment and just talk a little bit just about fasting?

Because there's a lot of people that have a lot of questions I've noticed about fasting, so, I want to define it for you here, if I could this morning because, people fast for a variety of reasons. If you've ever had surgery, they tell you to fast for a period of time, usually before you go in and have that procedure or that surgical thing, whatever it is done. So people fast for medical reasons, for health reasons. Sometimes they'll even fast to protest. You've heard about those prison fasts, or something like that, where people go on some kind of a hunger strike, that's what they refer to it as, but it's fasting.

That's not biblical fasting. The biblical definition of fasting is fairly singular. It simply means to deprive oneself of nourishment for a set period of time in order to focus on prayer. That's it. It's pretty simple. To deprive yourself of food for a period of time in order to focus on prayer. Now, here's where people get a little upended. They're like, why? I mean, why can't I focus on prayer anyway? What is so beneficial about fasting when it comes to seeking the Lord and that sort of a deal? Well, here's what you got to go back and think through.

First of all, food, sustenance, is one of our most basic human needs. Without it, you're going to die. And so, it's obviously something that we all need every day. But more than that, it's incredibly pleasurable. I mean, think about it. We like eating. Whenever we get together and have a party, have you ever been to a party where there was no food? That's a boring party. When we have a birthday party, somebody bakes a cake. We don't just look at it, we stuff our faces with it. When you go to somebody's graduation party, or their wedding reception, or their funeral, good grief, when they're born, when they're married, when they die, we eat. Eating is a huge part of our culture and our society and it just, it marks our lives in so many ways and you know what, food also gives us great comfort. Hence the phrase, comfort food.

We all know what that's like and it might be different for you. For me it's spaghetti. But suffice it to say it gets a great deal of our attention. But here's the point about eating. It's purely physical. It's purely physical. Eating dinner doesn't help make me a better servant of the Lord. It doesn't help make me a better husband or a better father or grandfather or pastor teacher.

Eating doesn't affect those things except to extend my life. Doesn't make me better though. It is purely a physical thing, all right? Now I want you to keep that in your mind for just a moment because you see we're more than just physical beings. Our God is a triune God, and He created us as a tri-unity. You and I are made up of the body, the soul, and the spirit. Our soul is that emotional/intellectual part of us. The physical part, we understand what that's all about. The spiritual part, that one confuses us a little bit. We're not really sure how to define that, but we know from Scripture that it is through the spirit that God communicates with us.

We know that it is through the spirit God wants us to worship Him, right? Didn't Jesus say to the woman at the well, God is seeking those who worship Him in spirit and in truth, and we all go, what's that mean to worship God in spirit? And we get all hung up on whether we raise our hands or not. That's just physical. We get hung up even on how we sing or whether we stand up or sit down, or whether we're dancing, or whether we're falling back or not, and those are all physical things. We get hung up on the physical, but it's a spiritual exercise.

In fact, God wants to relate to you through your spirit. Why won't God just appear in my bedroom and talk to me? Because he wants to communicate spiritually, okay? Now, so you are body, soul, and spirit. Now they're all you, but when you think about those things, which one of those or which two of those dominate our lives most often? I don't know about you, but my physical existence dominates my life a lot. I get tired and the rest of me goes, I'm going to bed. I get hungry and I'm going, where's the food, right? Any number of other things.

I get physically hurt and I'm like, where's the band-aids? See, I'm driven by my physical needs, and so are you. We're also driven by our emotional needs. Our emotion. I know some people, they are literally governed by their emotions. Emotions are a wonderful thing. God gave them to you as a gift, but not to control you. They're kind of your - I liken them to taste buds. I really do. Your emotions are like taste buds, in the sense that you get to experience the flavor of life through the emotional joy, sadness, and all the things in between.

Wonderful things that God has given us, but not to control our lives, and yet they do most of the time, don't they? We're either controlled physically or emotionally or both, and do you know that is the definition of the natural man? Biblically speaking, the natural man is the man who is governed by his fleshly and emotional impulses. The spirit doesn't even come into play, because he's cut off from the spirit.  In fact, here's what Paul said about the natural man. Let me

show you this passage. From 1 Corinthians. I'm quoting it out of the New King James. He says,

**1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)**

*...the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

*...the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him;* (In fact, he goes on to say he can't know them. The natural man cannot know the things of the spirit because He needs the Spirit to discern them. They're actually) *nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* (spiritually understood, spiritually embraced)

You with me? All right. So having made this point about this whole thing about how we are body, soul, and spirit now you begin to enter this idea of fasting. Fasting is the idea that I am going to suspend the demands of my flesh in order that I might focus on the needs of the spirit. It's essentially me telling my body, no, you're not going to control me this time, I am. In fact, it's like practice. Fasting is good practice. Practice telling the body and telling the emotions you're not in charge, the spirit is in charge, and when it comes to dinner time and the bell goes off in my brain (GONG!) and I'm feeling that gurgling in my stomach, I need to eat.

It's telling the body no. No. You put demands on me all the time. I'm not going to follow those demands today. And again, fasting is only for a set period of time you've got to be careful not to fast too long, especially if you've got some medical reasons for that, but the point is, it is determining that the flesh is not going to dictate your life for this period of time, or the emotions is not going to dictate for this period of time. I put a definition of fasting together that I want to show you on the screen.

Fasting is an exercise whereby we choose to give precedence to the life of the Spirit over and above our physical needs.

Fasting is an exercise whereby we choose to give precedence to the life of the Spirit over and above our physical needs.

You guys do understand, right that's what sets you apart from your pets. We think a lot of our pets, we spend a lot of money on our pets, and we even call them family members. Weirdest thing in the world. But they're not, in the sense that they're not like you. You do know that your pets are driven like all animals

by their fleshly instincts. They're not driven by reason, and they cannot be driven by the Spirit. They cannot be controlled by the Spirit. They cannot. You can. If you and I become dominated by the flesh, just like your pets are dominated by their flesh, the Bible refers to that as you and I becoming like a brute beast.

That's the natural man. So, there are times in our lives when it is important for us to practice giving way, saying no to the flesh, no to the emotions, even no to the intellect. I'm going to focus on the Spirit. Right. And that's really what fasting is all about. Now there's nothing wrong with fasting. The Jews had taken it, like I said, to a level beyond what they really needed to. We're told even in some of the Gospel accounts that they wanted people to know they were fasting. They would disfigure their faces. I don't even know what that means. They walk around just I can't even, it's like, I'm in agony. I haven't had lunch, I don't know, but you know what? I understand what that's like.

When I was working in Christian radio a number of years ago, this is back when I was going to Bible college up in Seattle, I got involved for some reason or another in a period of fasting and I'd been fasting the day before and then I woke up the next day and I went to work at the radio station and I was walking into the studio and I had this sudden overwhelming urge to let everybody know I was fasting. I wanted them to know but I knew I couldn't tell them. So I was like, arrrgh! I wanted people to admire me.

Is that the flesh or what? That's the stinky rotten flesh, but I know what it's like to be a Pharisee, and want people to look at you and go, I was just hoping somebody was going to ask me out for lunch or something, and I'd say, well, I'm sorry I'm fasting today, and then have them go, ooh, or something. It's like, what an idiot you are. I get it. I get it. The flesh wants to show people. Anyway, when we fast, we're supposed to do it in private.

So why didn't Jesus and his disciples fast? Look at the response again that Jesus gave in verse 34. He said, Jesus said to them, *"can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?"*

He uses a wedding illustration to say when the bridegroom is with the crowd this is a time of joy and rejoicing. So, why in the world would there be a time of pressing in to talk to God and stuff like that? But in a greater sense, this comment here that Jesus makes is really nonsensical unless you believe that Jesus is God in human flesh, because think about it, when we fast, who are we trying to talk to? Who are we connecting with? We're talking to God, right?

What Jesus is basically saying is, why would they fast when God is right here? I am among them, right? They can just talk to me. They can talk to me right now. Why He, now He used a wedding illustration to make it a little more parabolic, but the point is, what he's saying is I'm right here, why do you need to go fast? Okay?

Now He does go on to say in verse 35, "*there's coming a time when the people will fast."* When is that time*? "When the bridegroom is taken away from them."* When was the bridegroom taken away? At the ascension, right? Christ's ascension, when He ascended into heaven the bridegroom was taken away. So you know what that time of fasting it's now.

We like to think about the fact that Jesus is here. Jesus is in my heart. He is through His Holy Spirit, but personally, I mean, physically, Jesus has a physical body. The body He took on is the one he still has today. Remember when He showed him His risen self to the disciples, He said, feel, touch, and He even ate a piece of fish in front of them. A phantom can't do that.

He has a physical body. It is a glorified body. It's one like you're and I are going to get one day, but it's still a physical body. The Bible says that Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father. People, He's been taken away.

Now is the time of fasting. Now is the time of seeking the Lord, focusing our attention, denying the demands of the flesh that we might focus on the needs of the Spirit. Last parable. It says He also told them a parable and it has to do with garments and wineskins and you guys should be fairly familiar with this. He basically uses a little illustration to say it'd be really dumb for you to take a brand new piece of cloth and sew it on to an old shirt to cover up a hole because first of all, it wouldn't match and second of all, when you go to wash it, that patch is going to shrink and it's going to pull away from the area where you sewed it.

And then He talks about wine skins. Back in those days, they used to take grape juice and they would put it into leather skins that they called wine skins and they would tie it up and they'd hang it, and they'd wait for it to ferment. Do you guys know what happens during fermentation? It gives off gas, and so the wine skins expand and they know that it's fermented when it expands beyond. But and the neat thing about leather is that it can stretch. But it only stretches to a point. When it's done stretching, it won't stretch anymore. If you take, if you get done taking using this wine skin for this fermentation, and then you say, well, I'm going to use this again.

Yeah, I know it's all stretched out, but I'm going to use it. I don't have another one so I'm just going to put your wine in that old wine skin, tie it up, put it up there. When that gas begins to give off in the fermentation, it can't stretch anymore. What does it do? It bursts. I really don't know much about this because I've never done it. The only thing I've ever done is found a juice bottle one of my kids left under a couch for three months, and that was bad enough. And it was just apple juice for heaven's sake. It was my oldest daughter who's now 35. But I remember we were moving and we moved this couch and my daughter was like, ah, and she ran over and grabbed her juice bottle and popped it in her mouth, and I'm going, goodness gracious, and I pulled that thing.

I pulled the top off. It was like, oh, that thing had fermented. I mean, if I let her keep drinking it, she'd be drunk. I mean, that's all I know about it. But the meaning here isn't about fermentation, or wine, even. The meaning here is about mixing the old and the new. That's the point. Jesus is talking to us here about merging the old and the new, and he's basically saying that doesn't work. And what he's saying by that, people is, I didn't come to start the first reformed church of Judaism. See, that's what reforming is all about. You take something that already exists and you reform it.

That's not what Jesus did. Jesus came to start something brand new. Do you understand that? Brand new. And that means it's going to be really difficult for a lot of people because there's a lot of personalities that don't do new. They like old.

In fact, just like the very last verse of this chapter, verse 39, it says*, "no one after drinking old wine desires new for,"* he says, oh, the old is good. I like the old, and that's our attitude usually about new things. We'd rather not get into new things because the old is familiar and comfortable. But Jesus came to do something new. In fact, the word, new is a key word to the Gospel. It was a key word even before Jesus started talking about it.

See, can I just share something with you guys really quick? What I'm sharing with you here this morning is a truth that there are a great many Christians that don't get, and what I mean by that is they're doing exactly what Jesus said not to do. They're putting new wine in old wine skins, and what they're doing is they're taking the Gospel and they're trying to make it conform to the Law. To the Law. And it doesn't work. It was never meant to work.

In fact, God prophesied hundreds of years before Jesus was even born that this new Gospel, this New Covenant was going to be completely different. On the

screen from Jeremiah chapter 31. I've shared this with you many, many times. Look at this. Powerful passage.

**Jeremiah 31:31-32 (ESV)**

*Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.*

*Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,* (And look at this phrase here, people, and don't miss it) *not like the covenant that I made with their fathers* (What covenant is He talking about? He says it right here) *on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt,*(He says) *my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.*

This is one of the most important Old Testament passages for you and I to understand, that you can't put new wine in old wineskins and yet churches try to all the time. Some of you were raised, attended, or know someone who, and I'm just going to bring up one example, a church that is involved in Seventh Day Adventism. People, that's taking new wine and putting it in an old wineskin. And I'm not throwing stones, I'm just telling you, this thing, the reason Jesus gave us this teaching is because He knew it was going to be an issue. He knew it was going to be a problem.

Here you are taking this Old Testament idea of keeping the Sabbath. It doesn't work, but I'm going to try. We're going to make, and still today you hear Christians putting the Law on people. Responding about things by quoting from the Old Testament Law. Boom! Sort of a thing. You've got to be careful you guys, let me share with you just a quick comment that the apostle Paul made related to this whole issue. He said,

**Romans 7:6 (ESV)**

*…now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.*

*…now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive,* (And so somebody says, well, does that mean, can we do anything we want to

do then? And now he goes no, no. Now) *so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.*

We're not under the written code anymore. We're under the leading of the Holy Spirit. The One who gave the Law is now living within you. Follow Him. To ignore Him and to go back to the old written code is ridiculous. You have the Lawgiver living inside of you for heaven's sakes. Listen to Him! But you know why we go back to the law? It's comfortable. Nobody who drinks the old wine thinks, well, I'm going to have the new because I like the old. The old is good. It's good. I'm comfortable. I like people telling me what to do. I like hard and fast rules.

People come up and they'll ask me questions about something in their life and I know what they're saying. They want me to give them a rule. Pastor Paul, what should I do about this? Had a situation come up, and dah, dah, dah. What should I do? And I can tell what they want. They want something from the Law. Boom! And they probably hate my guts when I tell them, well, you need to pray about it and follow the Spirit. Pastor, can't you just give me a passage and I'll just do it.

No, that's not how you and I are supposed to live. We're not living according to the old way of the written code, we're living according to the Spirit. Now, can it get weird? Yeah, I suppose. But you know what? The Spirit's never going to tell you to do something that is contrary to the Word. You know that, right? So, you can't just dance off in your little fairy dust and go, God told me. I had a lady tell me many, many years ago, God told her to divorce her husband. He still wanted very much to be married, loved her, but no, God told me. That's not the kind of spirituality we're talking about here.

God is not going to tell you to do something that violates His own Word okay? We can still test everything according to the Word of God, but we are to be led by the Spirit, not by the Law, and it's a very difficult thing but the point is what we are in right now, this whole Christian faith thing, this is new. This is new. It's a New Covenant and it's not like the Old Covenant. God told us it wouldn't be like the Old Covenant, nothing like the Old Covenant. We have a common frame of reference with Judaism, but it's not reformed Judaism. This is the Christian faith. This is following Jesus, listening to His Spirit, learning to abide in Christ.