

Matthew 9:14-17

27 September 2020

ICE BREAKER: Describe an unspoken rule in your house.

LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

(Read verse 14) John the Baptist's disciples came to Jesus complaining that in **comparison** to them and the Pharisees, His disciples did not fast. When used under the control of the Holy Spirit, comparison can be a powerful motivator for good. But when it is not, comparison becomes a **thief of joy**.

Rather than enjoying the blessings from fasting, John's disciples **forfeited** this joy when comparing themselves to others who did not fast.

1. How does **comparison** operate like a **thief of joy** in your life or in that of your families?

(Read verse 15) Jesus informed John the Baptist's disciples they had failed to discern both the **time** to fast and the **object of their fast**. John's disciples could not see the object of their prayer and fasting, who was the Lord, was standing right in front of them.

Our success or failure in life depends on whether we are operating with the **presence** of the Lord or in His **absence**. The **key** is **knowing the difference**.

2. How have you been able to tell whether you are **working with Jesus** or **just on your own**?

(Read verse 16) Jesus identifies a major error in the thinking of John's disciples. Jesus says their faulty reasoning is likened to patching a **new** unshrunk cloth onto an **old** garment. When the old garment is washed, the new patch will shrink and create a **worse tear**.

Jesus explains that following Him will not be like following other religious systems. You cannot just apply the new Christian life only to parts of your old life. The consequences will be **disastrous to both**.

3. Why can't it work to apply just a **part** of the **Christian life** to your **old life**?

(Read verse 17) Jesus says to be His followers means a total replacement of the **old self-centered life** with the **new Christ-centered life**. If anyone tries to become a new Christian, yet still maintains the old lifestyle, Jesus likens this to putting **new** wine into an **old** wineskin. When the new wine ferments and expands, the old, already expanded wineskin will burst, **spilling out** all the new wine.

Our new Christian life cannot be contained in our old thinking, habits, or relationships. Being a **Christian** will **explode all those self-centered forms** of our old lives. Jesus calls us to adopt new forms—new thinking, new habits, and new relationships.

4. To **follow Jesus faithfully**, what **new** forms of **habits, relationships, and thinking** must you **adopt** or what **old forms** must you **throw away**?

Cut along Dotted Line & use Notes as Book Marker

PRAYER GROUP TIME

(Make a list of people whom those in your group plan to witness Christ to this week.)
