

Matthew 9:14-15 A Question About Fasting

Introduction: For the second time in Matthew Jesus discusses fasting. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus mentioned fasting in connection with prayer and warned not to be as the hypocrites and fast just to be seen of men, Matthew 6:16-18. In our text the disciples of John come to Jesus with a question about fasting. In the course of the message I will have a question for you of far more importance.

I. The question about fasting.

- A. In our text the question as asked by the disciples of John.
 - 1. In Luke the question is asked by the Pharisees.
 - 2. In Mark it is asked by both the disciples of John and the Pharisees.
 - 3. Apparently they came together and asked the question together.
 - 4. The Pharisees sought an opportunity to voice criticism while the disciples of John had an honest inquiry.
- B. John had many disciples.
 - 1. Some had been informed that Jesus is the Christ, but some had not.
 - 2. John and his disciples fasted often. (Once per year by the Mosaic Law, but many others by tradition.)
 - 3. The Pharisees fasted often also. (Law and tradition)
- C. The disciples of John now had a new reason to fast. (By the time of the text John had been imprisoned and possibly beheaded.)
- D. They did not understand why Jesus did not lead His disciples to fast as John had done.
- E. The news about the feast at the house of Matthew brought the question more sharply to mind.

II. The answer which Jesus gave.

- A. Jesus said that the children of the bridegroom do not mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them. (The children here are not offspring, but youthful attendants to the bridegroom.)
- B. The reference to Himself as bridegroom here has no reference to the Marriage of the Lamb to the Glory Bride. (The disciples in this illustration are not the bride but the attendants to the bridegroom.)
- C. The usual Jewish wedding consisted of the following:
 - 1. The bridegroom and attendants, led by musicians and singers to the home of the bride at night by torchlight.
 - 2. The bride and her young women attendants joined them and marched with them back to the home of the bridegroom.
 - 3. They were met along the way by friends who joined them.
 - 4. A wedding feast was given lasting about seven to fourteen days.
 - 5. All was joyous.
 - 6. Only in the event of an illness or death of the bride or groom was there mourning.
- D. Jesus used this to illustrate that His disciples need not mourn nor fast as long as He was with them.
- E. He said that the time would come when He would be taken from them and then the disciples would mourn. (He referred to His own death and ascension.)

III. The question for you today.

- A. The question for you is far more important than one about fasting. (It deals with the soul and your eternal destiny.)
- B. Have you ever trusted the Lord Jesus to save you?

1. There is no way to stay out of Hell without trusting Jesus Christ.
2. There is no way to go to Heaven without trusting Him.
3. All the forces of Hell cannot keep you from Heaven if you trust Jesus to save you.

Conclusion: I am going to ask you to trust Jesus right now.

I am also going to ask you who are saved to give yourself in service to the Savior.

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