

Message Transcript

**DISRUPTED BY GRACE | THE KINGDOM BREAKS IN
AARON BROCKETT | FEBRUARY 14 & 15, 2026**

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Hey, pray with me.

Father God, we come to You in this moment in the space where we look forward with eager anticipation for Your return. God, as we look around at the craziness and the brokenness we see all around us in this world, may our eyes continue to stay fixed upon You, the One who was and is and is to come.

God, we ask that You would be very present in these rooms and spaces where we may be gathered right now, that we would have a living encounter with you in these next few moments would You please speak very clearly and may we listen and may we have the faith to put into practice what it is that You're asking of us. We ask this in the power of King Jesus. And everybody says: Amen and Amen.

It's so good to be with you today. Feel free to grab a seat. I want to welcome everybody gathered across all of our locations, those of you who may be joining us online. Happy Valentines weekend, by the way. How many of you are happy and grateful for your Valentine? Go ahead and throw up those hands. Yeah, happy with your Valentine.

How many of you are looking for a Valentine right now. Raise up those hands. Keep them held high. Look around the room. Somebody's whose hand is raised right now, if they look interesting you know who to talk to after. Trying to help you out, man.

Hey, man. If you are joining us for the very first time, we are in a year-long study in the gospel of Mark. What we're doing is we're just going through chapter by chapter, verse by verse taking our time through this fast-paced, action-packed biography of the life and ministry of Jesus.

And one of the defining characteristics about Mark is that as he is telling us about Jesus, he is just filled with an air of breathless excitement. He's like a little kid all hyped up on Mountain Dew telling you about his day at the water park. Except, instead of describing the wave pool or the aqua coaster, Mark cannot wait to tell you about King Jesus and His urgent Kingdom that is rapidly coming upon us.



And He has come to do a new thing so that we might have access to God. Aren't you grateful for that? You should be grateful for that. It is not good advice. It is good news. And we're going to see that in our text today.

Now, last week we finally made it through chapter 1. It took us five weeks to do it. And we got in to chapter 2. By the way, weren't you grateful for Pastor Carl's message? Wasn't that so good? So, so good. I've asked Pastor Carl to come back a couple of times this summer. So look forward to that.

Today, we're going to pick it up in chapter 2, verse 13. If you have a Bible, go ahead and find chapter 2, starting in verse 13. We're going to go through verse 22 together today.

And as you are finding that, not long ago I was with a friend of mine and we were driving somewhere. And I used a word in a sentence in the wrong way and he very annoyingly pointed that out to me. How many of you have that friend? How many of you are that friend? Alright. We love you and we love your big, annoying thesaurus brain. Alright? That's what we love.

Now, here's what I said. I used the word interrupted but I used it in reference to some new road construction. I think we were driving around 465 and there is always something going on on 465. In certain places of it they are actually re-routing the whole road and changing it completely. And I said, "Man, they really interrupted the flow of traffic." And my friend said, very annoyingly, said, "You mean disrupted." And I was like, "No, I meant interrupted."

And he was like, "I know what you think you mean, but it's the wrong word." And some of you are like, "Yeah, pastor we see what you mean." And others of you are like, "Get a new friend."

And so the lesson that my old, used-to-be friend—I'm just kidding. He's still my friend, barely. So, what he gave me was this. The term interrupted emphasizes more like a pause, it's a break, it's usually temporary and things are going to resume like they were after the interruption.

Disrupted emphasizes a disturbance that changes how things work permanently. Oftentimes it's more significant. It's something that is lasting. The original plan or system is being reworked or replaced.

For those of you are like, "I'm not following you," here's a simple way of looking at it:



Interrupted — paused
Disrupted — reshaped

Interrupted is a pause, disrupted is a reshape. So, some of you are like, "Pastor Aaron, thanks for the English lesson. Where are you going with this?" Here's where I'm going with this:

Jesus didn't come to interrupt our religious traditions, preferences, and practices; but to disrupt them, reshaping our access to God forever

That is the primary meaning of the passage we're going to walk through together today. Listen. I want you to hear this. Somebody needs to hear this:

God is passionate to save anyone who doesn't think they're worthy

And maybe that is you. Maybe you came here today because you're always here. Maybe you came here today because you're like, "It's been a while since I've been in church. Maybe I'll come."

Maybe you came today because somebody forced you to come. You are not really into it, and you are sitting there and you are thinking, "This sounds all fine and good, but you don't know what I've done. You don't know the history of my search engine. You don't know the people who I've been with. You don't know the thoughts that I've had."

Listen, man. This God is passionate to reach anybody who does not think that are worthy of Him. And:

God is excited to do new things to reach them

The Scriptures say that God is the Ancient of Days. He never changes, but He does new things in new days to reach new people. So, look with me at verse 13. It says:

"Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him and he began to teach them." (NIV)

Now, it's easy to pass by this, but I don't want to do that. I want to make just a quick observation. Mark did not have to tell us what kind of a crowd it was, but he chose to use the adjective of large. He could have just said, "Hey, people showed up to hear Jesus speak. And we might, in our western society, say, "Well, what was the attendance, Mark?" And he could have said, "Not important. We're not going to focus on the numbers."



But he uses the adjective of large. Why? Like, is it to validate Jesus? Is it to impress us? "Oh, man. Jesus is really killing it." I think that answer is no to both of those. I think the reason why Mark uses the word large—and here, in just a minute, you're going to see that he uses the word many two times. He uses it to demonstrate the vast numbers of people in the world then, and today, who are lost and hurting and without hope and in need of the light that only Jesus can give.

It is important to point that out because I think that oftentimes in the very cynical society in which we live, we have sort of an allergy to anything large, especially when it comes to a church. So, we say, "Well, if the church is large then what are they watering down, or what are they doing to entertain people to draw large crowds?"

Now, listen. While that could always be the case, which is why we need to continually guard our hearts and examine our motives and ask God to search them, but we shouldn't automatically throw that out because the movement of Jesus began with something small and grew to be quite large.

Jesus did not just come to start a Bible study. Jesus came to start a movement—a movement of His Kingdom. In the book of Acts we see the very first church started with a handful of believers but it did not take long for it to explode to thousands. Jesus told Peter, in the book of Acts, "I've come to," very specific words, "build my church." He didn't say, "I've come to gather it."

So, I think this is important. Here's just an observation. I've been in full-time ministry for about 26 years. The first three churches that I served were all pretty small. They were all under 200 people. Two of them were about 108 people. One of them was 12. It stayed 12 for the whole four years I was there.

Here's the deal. Oftentimes in a smaller church I could kind of pick out the people who were brand new. So, I would follow up with them. And oftentimes a very common thing that I would hear from people who would visit my very small church is they would say, "Hey, you know, we appreciate that, but it's too small. We're looking for something bigger. We're looking for some kids' ministries," or quality worship, or whatever it was, "We just need something..."

And it always frustrated me, as a young pastor, I never said this to them, but it always frustrated me because I was like, "Well, we're not going to get any bigger if you don't come back."

So, anyway, over the years, by God's grace, here at Traders Point we've grown to be quite large. And you want to know a very common thing that I often hear? It's too big. So, at some point we were the perfect size and I missed it. Alright?



I don't really know what the perfect sized church is. But, listen. There is no such thing as a perfect sized church. And, by the way, Jesus' goal was not to grow large crowds. And neither is mine. Jesus' goal was to develop resilient disciples. In fact, Jesus, if He perceived that the crowds were there for wrong reasons, He would say things to thin the crowd out.

And sometimes... Don't tell anybody that I said this, let's just keep this between you and me. Every now and then, I may say something, not in a sinister way, but I might just say something, if somebody is out there just thinking, "Well, he's just there to grow a large church," I'll say something so that they would go, "If that was his motivation, he wouldn't have said that because that is wildly unpopular."

Large crowds is not the goal, guys. Listen. The bigger the church is, the more complicated my life becomes.

Have you ever played that game Jenga? As the tower gets bigger and bigger and you're pulling out the support system, the thing gets taller and it gets more and more unstable. The same thing with a big church where we're not developing resilient disciples. Large crowds is not the goal, man. In fact, large crowds of self-absorbed people who are only in it for what they get out of it, is not bringing heaven to earth. That sounds more like hell on earth.

However, large crowds of selfless, Jesus loving, Bible reading, godly, grace filled people—do you know what that is like? There is a word in 2 Corinthians 2 to describe it, the aroma of Christ. The aroma of Christ. That is attractive to people even if they do not yet believe.

I was listening to Joe Rogan a couple of weeks ago and I don't think he is yet a believer, but God is doing something in that brother's life, man. You need to be praying for him. I remember when he hosted Fear Factor and he was a militant atheist and now he's going to church. And he said something on his podcast to somebody a couple of weeks ago. He said this:

"If there was a pill that could make you as nice as the people I go to church with. Everybody would be on it."

And I thought, "Wow." And he went on to talk about the parking lot at his church, "They are like so nice. Everybody is kind of like waving people in front of them." And I thought to myself, "Oh, please God. I hope that our parking lot is that way." And then he went on to say, "Hey, the UFC fight and at a concert it is not that way. People are like yelling at each other and flipping each other the bird trying to get in front." And he goes, "Something is just dramatically different about that."



Listen, guys. I just want that to be a good reminder to us that if you are always on mission, (whether you ever make it on this platform or not) people decide whether or not they are going to come back to church within 20 minutes of pulling into the parking lot. That's well before they ever hear the sermon. It's because of the experiences that they have with the people. It's the aroma of Christ or it's the stench of something else. Listen. I'm trying to, come on.

Big is not the goal. Big is not unhealthy in and of itself. Small is not the goal. You can be small and healthy or big and healthy. The goal is to be Jesus focused and on mission. And we let Him do what He is going to do. We pray that there is a move of God that sweeps through Indy and thousands get saved. And when they do they are going to need a church. So, we press on to take more ground for the Kingdom.

Every now and then after the it's too big comment somebody will say, "Well, how much bigger are you going to get?" Guys, I don't know. How about this? Just one more. Just one more. If the church is too big and you come to Christ..

Tell me, who are you going to turn away? Your prodigal son or daughter? Your agnostic neighbor whose been divorced three times? The lady in your moms' group who is looking for hope? Who are you going to turn away? I'm not hanging a no vacancy sign out front. I do not know the perfect size church but I do know that people matter, life is hard, and somebody is lost. Jesus loves them and hope can be found.

Listen. Every now and then I'll read google reviews from people who are looking for churches and they are trying to order a church like they are trying to order a meal, "Well, I need it to have quality kids' ministry and great worship, but not too big. It needs to be the right size." Literally, I read this. This was last week, "The pastor needs to be between the age of 35 and 50." And I thought, "I'm about to age out, man!"

It's not about that. It's not about that. The minute you come to know Christ, this church continues to be for you, but it is no longer about you. And the minute we begin to get that is the minute your church experience gets that much richer. So, look with me at verse 14, which is an example of the principle that we just laid out:

"As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth." Shortest conversation ever, "Follow me,"

Not, "Hey, my name is Jesus. What's your name?" Just, "Follow me."



"...and Levi got up and followed him." (NIV)

Now, Levi, here—whose name eventually gets changed to Matthew—would write the gospel of Matthew, he would have been a descendant of the Levitical priestly line. You kind of see it in his name, Levi. And because he collected taxes, he was one of the most hated and despised dudes in all of the Roman Empire.

Now, the reason why isn't just because he collected taxes, but because of the way in which he did it. He was a Jew and he was hired by leaders of the Roman Empire, who were unclean—ceremonially, unclean Gentiles. And it was a system called tax farming.

So, what you would do is you would bid for a tax collecting contract from Rome over a region, the Jewish region that you occupied. You would prepay Rome for the contract and then you would get wealth by overcharging your own people. You would get wealthy at the expense of your people. And as a result of that they were hated for their dishonesty, their use of intimidation. Sometimes they would even use force. They were considered ceremonially unclean due to, not only their associations, but their business dealings with Gentiles.

I say all of that to say this. Levi is the least likely person you would think that Jesus would put on His team. He's already called a couple of other disciples in chapter 1. They were fishermen. No big deal. Now he's calling a despised tax collector. You know that there is going to be fireworks in Jesus' small group because they hated each other.

You've got to ask yourself this, man. What qualified Levi for this? What had he done to deserve to be called of Jesus? Levi was not looking for God. He wasn't trying to be saved. Jesus showed up and chose him. And he gets a new name, Matthew. He gets a new identity; he becomes a disciple. He gets a new purpose; he no longer collects taxes.

Regardless of whether or not you are looking for Jesus, I just need for you to hear this, He is looking for you, man. He is looking for you. You may have come here today looking for something, He's looking for you.

Romans 8 says God is calling us out of our sins to be conformed into the image and likeness of Jesus. And you may look around and go, "Pastor, I don't think you would want me in your church because you don't know where I've been, who I've been with, what I've done with them. You don't understand my mindset, the way I think. I've got a lot of stuff going on in my life. I think if you knew everything about me, the roof would cave in."



And I just want you to know that you are giving yourself far too much credit because Jesus is a much, much better Savior than you are a sinner. And we've got some people here with some wild backgrounds, man. Nothing is going to surprise me. We've got people who have been divorced multiple times. We've got people who are addicted to different things. We've got people who have done some time.

We have people who are wearing probation anklets. They are some of my favorite baptisms because we have to pick them up in the air and tip them into the baptistry like a chocolate strawberry. I love that. We have people who have alcohol issues. Listen. You will fit right in. This is a church for Levi(s).

Understand. Levi hadn't done one thing to move toward Jesus. Jesus moved toward him, while he was still living in sin Jesus showed up. He's in the middle of the very thing that would have made him hated among that culture. And Jesus called him out of that. It reminds me, very similarly, of Jesus' conversation with the thief on the cross.

And if you are here and you are a little bit cynical of all of this and you look around and you are like, "Why are all of these people so happy and clappy? Why are they raising their hands in worship? I don't get it."

Here's why. Because they realize what Jesus called them out of and what He delivered them from and they refuse to forget it. They are extra grateful for the fact that God set them free, that they were released from prison, maybe both literally and figuratively, that they were addicted and now they are no longer, that they have been set free from self-harm, depression, or that eating disorder. And so they are refusing to forget what God saved them from.

I love Levi's heart, man. As soon as Jesus calls Levi to follow Him, he's like, "This is too good to keep to myself." So, verse 15:

"While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many," there is that word again, "tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

"When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' On hearing this, Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'" (NIV)



So, the first thing Levi does is he invites Jesus over to his house, to have a meal with all of his shady, tax-collecting buddies. And the teachers of the law and the Pharisees are not happy about it, to say the least.

Now, in this culture, very similar to ours, but in the first century even more so, eating together at somebody's house would have symbolized friendship, relationship, and acceptance.

You remember another conversation that Jesus had with a guy named Zacheaus. Jesus invited Himself over to Zacheaus' house. It was a scandal in and of itself. And the Pharisees would not associate with sinners in any way, shape, or form. They were the original cancel culture.

Now, I just want to go ahead and acknowledge something. It is very easy to read something like this—I think oftentimes the Pharisees get a really bad rap in the gospels. And much of the time it is deserved, but not always. I think it is easy to punch down at the Pharisees. I've certainly done it. But understand, we at least have to give them this. They at least knew their Bible and they were passionate about it.

"What do you mean?" Well, the Law of Moses was very, very clear that you should not associate with sinners. Not in a self-righteous way, but in a, "I'm going to participate with you in this way."

So, the summary of the law, we could go to Leviticus 11, we could go to Deuteronomy 7, Psalm 1:1, Proverbs 23 among a host of others—the summary of the law says: Do not associate—eat, drink, partake in the things that sinners are doing. Like: Don't associate with sinners—you might be drawn into that.

Here's the problem. We've got to hand it to them. They were passionate about the Law of Moses. Here's the problem. They knew the letter of the law, but they applied it absent from the Spirit and the heart of our God.

See, without Jesus drawing near to us, guys, nobody stands a chance. You cannot fulfill the law. The only way to be righteous in God's eyes is to fulfill every one of the laws—over 600 of them. And Jesus even says, "Well, congratulations if you can live by all of them but you violate one of them then you are guilty of all of it." And all of our righteous acts are like filthy rags in God's sight.

You've got to think, "Well, what is the purpose of the law?" Well, understand the law, in and of itself, is really good. The law represents holiness and perfection in God's eyes. The problem is, in following the law you can never do it. And even if you accomplished most of the law, it would either result in one of two things. It would result in an arrogant, sort of self-righteousness or you would begin to wallow in shame and say, "I will never get there."



So, what is the purpose of the law? The law is a mirror, not a bar of soap. The law is a mirror. So, the law basically shows you your need for a Savior. If you were to walk into the bathroom and look in the mirror and go, "Man, I need a shower," you would never talk the mirror off of the wall and begin to wash yourself with it." That would be stupid. You would take a bar of soap, and Jesus is the bar of soap.

We've got to understand the law is good, you just can't be saved by the law, nor can you apply that to other people. And this is where, as Christians, we've got to be really, really discerning and wise and not fall into one of two ditches.

One ditch would be rigid legalism, where we take the letter of the law and apply it to others outside of the Spirit of Christ. Or, we take matters of conscience, things that are not necessarily necessary or essential for salvation and apply them to everybody else.

We could give a bunch of examples of this. I'll give a quick one. Your conviction about alcohol. The Bible does not prohibit drinking, it prohibits drunkenness. Now, if you have a proclivity to addiction to alcohol, you shouldn't partake at all. You shouldn't even be associated with it. However, if you take your matter of conscience and apply it to everyone else and say, "Well, if you're having a glass of cab then you are a sinner," that's self-righteousness. That's rigid legalism.

The other side of the ditch would be moral relativism where it's kind of like, "Well, who am I to say?" And we just kind of excuse sin. We're kind of like, "Well, nobody is perfect. Who are we to judge?"

See, listen. Don't misunderstand or falsely represent Jesus from this passage. It's easy to do from this passage. In our relativistic world, we can look at this and say, "Well, Jesus ate with sinners so we're going to go to the nightclub." Here's the big difference. Jesus didn't go to the nightclub to get His groove on. Alright? And Jesus is the sinless Son of God. You are not. You have desires of the flesh.

So, Jesus eating with sinners, some take that to mean, "Let's not make a big deal out of sin or call sin sin." People's favorite memorized verse, outside of John 3:16—you've seen guys, grown men who have this painted on their naked belly in the end zone, John 3:16, "God so loved the world..."



The next one is this, Matthew 7:1. That's the verse that everybody has memorized. And have you ever noticed that they always have it memorized in the King James? "Judge not that ye may be judged." I'm like, "Wow! When did you ever use the word ye except for that?"

This does not mean that Jesus doesn't care about sin or that evil is no big deal. Listen to me. Jesus was crucified for our sins. That's a big deal. So, what does this mean? Jesus is highly tolerant of sinners. He is highly intolerant of sin.

Jesus offers loving kindness and forgiveness to every repentant sinner no matter what he has done. You come as you are and He will change you into someone new. And He gives you a new name and a new identity. And you are no longer identifying with your sin. You are identifying with Christ.

I need you to look right at me. You are loved no matter what you have done. But you are also loved so much that Jesus will not accept or approve of any sin in your life or in mine. In Ezekiel 33, verse 11 it says this:

"Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.'" (NIV)

What that means is we need to look at sin the way the Bible does. Sin hurts people, so He calls us out of sin. And He says, "Come to Me you who are weary in your sin and I will set you free."

So, we don't want to look at sin the way the Pharisees do, sort of like kind of assess where we are at, feel better about ourselves like a spirit of comparison or like, "I know I'm not perfect, but I'm not like him." Or in the spirit of condemnation because we all need to be set free.

Jesus said, at the end of this passage, "I've not come to call the righteous." Meaning this. If you think you are righteous without Jesus, He can't really help you. And Jesus said that it's not the healthy who need a doctor, but it is the sick. What that means is, if you think you are healthy when you are sick, then He can't help you. What we surmise from this is that if you recognize your need and you cry out for His help, He delivers and He saves and He heals.

Now, verse 18 addresses the same issue but from a different topic. And in this section there is a tension between the way things used to be and the way things are meant to be with Jesus. Look with me at verse 18. It says:

"Now John's disciples," this is John the Baptist, "and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, 'How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?'" (NIV)



Alright. So the first thing we need to acknowledge here is that it says that they were fasting. So what is fasting? We are two weeks into a three week, 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting—how are you guys doing? Doing okay?

Maybe this is kind of a good time to remind you of what fasting is. Here are a couple of definitions. Fasting is:

Abstaining from food to advance your faith
Giving up physical comfort for supernatural closeness
Seeking a breakthrough instead of just coping with burdens
Rejecting escapism for a fresh encounter with a living God

We don't need to escape; we need to encounter.

Now, that's fasting. And fasting is a good thing. Fasting is not a requirement of faith, and it's not something that is mandated, it is a spiritual discipline that is used for our good. Meaning this. Jesus would say, "Fast, but don't tell anybody about it." "Fast, but don't hold that over people." You fast for your own encounter with God.

Now, Jesus and His disciples did fast. We know that because in Mark 1 He fasted 40 days and nights. But apparently people were beginning to notice that He and His disciples weren't doing it as much as John the Baptist's and the Pharisees were doing.

The Old Testament only required people to fast one day per year—the Day of Atonement. The Pharisees and John's disciples got into a routine of fasting two days per week and they let everybody know about it.

Now, it's not bad, in and of itself, to fast two days a week. But they were doing it with a wrong motive. They were turning tradition, preferences, or practices into requirements, which was a recipe for self-righteousness.

Listen guys. You can do the right thing with a wrong motive and still be wrong. And they were so focused on performing for God and for others that they absolutely missed the presence of God.

In fact, sitting across the table from somebody who you are having a meal with, whether it's your spouse, girlfriend, boyfriend, friend, or child you're sitting in their presence but you are on your phone, you are there but you are not there. That was the idea. They were fasting and missing out on the presence of God.



And Jesus responds to this in verses 19-22 using three metaphors to teach one lesson about how He wants to do new things. And this reveals the heart of God. Three is often associated with completion in the Bible. So, Jesus answers in verse 19:

“How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

‘No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.’” (NIV)

So, Jesus is using three analogies to make one point. The first analogy, if you are taking notes is this:

Analogy 1: wedding celebration

Jesus is oftentimes described in the Bible as the Bridegroom, Isaiah 54:5. And the church, the people of God, are the bride. Now, wedding parties were so important in Jewish culture. They are important today, but they were even more important in the first century.

If you go to a wedding now a days, it’s probably a few hours of your day, maybe half a day if you are part of the family of the married couple. And we feel like that’s a really long time—half a day.

In Jewish culture it would be days of celebration. And the Rabbis would grant temporary exemptions from ritual law so they could take part and celebrate the wedding—called Shabbot or Sabbath delight. And it was drawn from the Tora command in Deuteronomy 28:47 to serve God with joy, not out of obligation, not out of like a whoa is me kind of a thing, but out of joy.

And so Jesus is making this point. Weddings are a celebration and the best part of the wedding is the food.

My daughter is getting married in May and on Thursday—it was a long day for me. I had back to back meetings all day long. We had worship night. And so I went all day long, I didn’t eat anything. I was gone all day. And I get done with worship night. I go home. I felt like my face was melting. I was like so tired, so hungry.



I walked into the kitchen and my daughter is sitting at the table with her fiancé and they've got all of these plastic trays in front of them filled with different kinds of meat, protein, filet, and mashed potatoes and vegetables. And I was like, "What is this?" And they were like, "Well, we're testing out a caterer and they gave us a tasting menu and we're trying to put together a menu for the wedding."

And I thought, "I'm your man. And I think I'm paying for that."

Here's the point that Jesus is trying to make. He's like, "Weddings are no time to do a fast." Fasting is associated with somber meditation, mourning, connection, and encountering God. And here's what Jesus was saying, "Guys, I'm right here. I'm the Groom and you're missing me. You are so focused on this practice and the Son of the living God is standing right in front of you. And you are missing My presence. You feast while I am with you. Now is the time for celebration. But soon, I'll be taken away and crucified. You can mourn and fast then."

So, what's the takeaway for us?

Are you missing the presence of God?

He's like right in front of you. And one of the indications that we are following after Jesus is: Joy! Even in the midst of difficulty and hardship. Now, I'm not talking about denying problems. I'm not talking about being naïve, sweeping stuff under the rug, that's unhealthy. I'm talking about the difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is rooted in how I'm feeling. Joy is rooted in what God is doing. Happiness is rooted in my circumstances, so it's always up and down. Joy is rooted in God's character, which never changes..

Habakkuk 3, "Though the fig tree should not blossom..." it says, "Yet I will rejoice." Guys, do you know what that is? It's that even in the midst of pain, trial, and difficulty when you can worship with joy that is called defiant worship. That even in the face of difficult circumstances, He's a good God. Do not miss the presence of Jesus, that He may be standing right in front of you, even in your pain, to have an encounter. Don't miss Him.

Analogy 2: new patch on old cloth

The second analogy is a new patch on old cloth. Now, we oftentimes don't really get this analogy because we wear ripped jeans. or at least we used to, I don't know if that's a fad anymore.



But when I was growing up I was a clumsy kid. I tripped and fell all of the time and I'd tear holes in the knees of my jeans. My momma would sew a patch on my jeans that would stay for a while, but then when I would put them in the washer and dryer, it would shrink and then the patch would pull away from the jeans.

This is the same analogy Jesus is using. What does it mean? Well, when you give your life to Jesus here's what he does:

He gives you a whole new wardrobe

He does not just put a patch on your old identity. You are clothed with Christ. Your old threads are out of date and they will not work. In Isaiah, chapter 64, verse 6 it says:

"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away." (NIV)

But Jesus does not fix the sinner's wardrobe by placing new patches on filthy rags. He is not interested in bedazzling your sinful sackcloth. He wants to give you a whole new wardrobe, man. In Isaiah, chapter 61, verse 10 it says:

"I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." (NIV)

Jesus does not want to put a patch on your old identity. You are not who you used to be. You are now a royal son or daughter of the King, robed in His righteousness. So, refuse to put on those filthy rags anymore.

Analogy 3: new wine in old wineskins

Analogy number three: new wine in old wineskins. This might be a little bit confusing. Maybe you thought that wine came in a bottle or, if you're where I'm from, a box. But in the first century the way that they would get wine is that they would put new wine into an animal skin, maybe a pig or a goat, and it had to be new skin because as the wine would ferment it would let off gases and it would expand. And the skin needed to be new and malleable enough that it would expand with the fermenting wine because if it didn't, if it was put into an old, stiff skin, as the wine would expand the old, stiff skin would break and all of the wine would be ruined.



So, Jesus uses this as an analogy to convey that just like a rigid, brittle wine skin can burst and ruin the whole thing of new wine, a rigid, brittle mindset can ruin the new work that God wants to do in your life and in the lives of other people in our church.

So, it's like are you stiff and brittle or are you malleable and stretchy, understanding the grace of God and how you needed it in your life. Our God is described as the Ancient of Days never changing, desiring to do new things to reach people in this day.

Now, the longer that you've been a Christian, the thing that you have to guard against is an old wineskin mindset. What I mean by that is I've grown up in church in several different eras. I've gone in the 80s, the 90s, and the early 2000s and today. And one of the things that I have noticed is that this church is nothing like the church that I grew up in.

The church that I grew up in was probably three to five hundred (the biggest church I was ever part of was maybe 1,500 growing up). It was like traditional: wooden pews, and the piano and an organ and we sang out of hymnals. For some reason we sang verses one, two, and four. We always skipped three. I don't know why. You went to that church too? And the worship leader would stand up and direct music. That's the kind of church I grew up in.

And then I rapidly grew like a weed in my discipleship in the 90s where it was like a contemporary church. And the way that we would look at that, if you were to see that form, you would say that was kind of old fashioned if you were to look at that.

What we have a tendency to do, this is a theory, is that the church that you came to know Jesus in, the size and the style, or the church you grew as a disciple in, maybe it was in college, maybe in your 20s or early 30s—we have a tendency to elevate that and over spiritualize the style or the size. And it's understandable. Because God used wineskins to reach you.

So, it's like worship style: the worship wars—hymns, new songs—the church size, programming, Sunday school, VBS, Awana. I grew up Southern Baptist. Any former Royal Ambassadors in the room? Two of you. I remember all of that.

Listen: All great things that God used—wineskins. And when we elevate the good things God once did through them and dismiss the new thing He desires to do today to reach people, then our mindset has become too rigid.



Listen, guys. There is nothing sacred about worship styles. And some of us may be like, "Well, I really miss the old hymns. Well, Jesus and His disciples didn't write those. Those came much, much later like the 1950s. You know that the piano, which many of us may miss, that is a traditional instrument. The piano was a saloon instrument. You ever watch the westerns? There was a piano in there that they played in the saloon.

And somebody said, "We've got to create new wineskins to reach new people." So, they pulled the saloon instrument out of the saloon and into the church and set songs to Christian lyrics called hymns to reach new people. It's just a wineskin.

Guys, God loves to do new things. The Psalms say He's singing a new song. And so we'll sing a new song. We'll write new songs. We won't sing songs that are not theologically accurate. If it's proven to be theologically inaccurate we pull it. Rooted—that is an example of a new wineskin right now. God is using that in tremendous ways. How many of you have been through Rooted? We've graduated over 5,000 of you. It's gotten people into small groups. It's rooted you in your faith. It is a tremendous, tremendous thing. It's just a wineskin.

Multi-site. Many of you see multi-site at a distance or from afar and you think we're just doing it to franchise our church or to grow. Neither of those reasons are accurate. The reason why we go multi-site is to deepen the bench, develop leaders, and make disciples. It is being used of God in ways that I have never seen before. It is just a wineskin.

Can I just say this to you as your pastor? Because one day I won't be your pastor—15 to 20 years from now, please do not look back on these days and say, "Well, back in my day we did Rooted and I remember when we sang, "He who was and is and is to come..." I just remember that old glory song. It was just so amazing. Guys—wineskins. Wineskins.

We don't do church the way we did 800 years ago, eight years ago, eight months ago. The Word of God stays the same. The methodology must change. When I was in college I memorized this little axiom and it's been so helpful for me:

Methods are many, principles are few—methods always change, principles never do

Now, we hold onto orthodoxy and the message of the Scriptures with a fixed hand, we hold loosely to the methods with an open hand.

Anchored + Flexible+ Available = Used of God



To be used of God, we stay flexible, sensitive to His will, flexible in our preferences. We do not get stuck in our past. Do not go back to reheat yesterday's move of God. He wants to do a new thing. So, when you are anchored to the truth, flexible in preferences, available, "God, the answer is yes. What is the question?" You are used of God.

Listen. Can I just ask you two questions of application and then we will be done? Here's the first one:

What am I holding onto that I need to let go of?

Right now, what are you holding on to that you need to let go of? Can you identify that new patch on old clothing or the new wine in old wineskins in your life? Get really specific.

I don't know. Maybe right now you would feel like you drift a little bit toward self-righteousness or maybe self-shame. And you need to respond to Jesus who gives you grace.

Maybe you're still trying to earn it. Maybe right now you're not asking God to direct you. What you are doing is asking Him to bless the direction you want to go. Maybe the new patch or the wineskins, your desires, your preferences, your performance, your perspective... Guys if you are still attending church merely for what you can get out of it, maybe it's time to say, "You know what? Just like Jesus, I come here not to be served but to serve."

Don't be susceptible to rigid legalism or moral relativism.

Here's the second question:

What step do I need to take for God to do a new thing in my life that I've been resistant to?

What step do you need to take right now for God to do a new thing in your life? Now, here's the key—that you've been resistant to? And only you know what that is. What step do you need to take?

I said this last month. Discovering the will of God never gets revealed to you standing still. Many times our prayer is, "God, show me where to go and then I'll go." And God says, "Start moving and then I'll show you." So, what steps do you need to take right now that you've been resistant to, maybe for good reason, but you need to step out in faith and say, "God, I'll take my next step."



Maybe for some of you it's going to First Steps. You've been attending church for a while. You've been here for a year-and-a-half. You came precisely because it's big so you could hide and blend into the crowd because you needed to heal from some experience. And I get that. And you are more than welcome to do that. And I'm glad that you are here. At some point you've got to get well. At some point you've got to get back in the game.

Maybe for you it would be, "You know what? I'm going to become a difference maker and I'm ready to begin to serve." You ever just noticed that the happiest people are the ones who are serving others. Hey, man. It will radically change your perspective if you are just attending church for what you get out of it, instead of for what you can bring to it. It will change the whole dynamic.

Maybe your next step is that you need to begin to give. You've been tipping God, but you've not been trusting God. Maybe it is Rooted. Maybe you need to sign up for Rooted and you need to get into that group.

Maybe, right now, some of you, you are committed to Jesus, you are following after Him. And if you attend the 9:30 or the 11:15 you need to give up your seat in this hour and, if your campus has an 8 am or a Saturday night, and go to that to make room for more because we're rapidly reaching capacity in the 9:30 and 11:15.

What is your next move? You can scan this QR code. It will take you to our church app. There are a number of next steps for you in your journey. I want to encourage you to do that.

Now, for many of you, your next step right now is just like Levi's to begin to follow Jesus. If you are ready to give your life to Jesus, would you please bow your head and close your eyes with me right now. I just want to lead you in a very simple prayer of salvation.

Lord God, I come to You today and I realize that I've been trying to put a new patch on old clothing. And so, today, I confess my sin and I believe that Jesus is God and I give my life to Jesus. And would You please remove my sinful rags and clothe me in robes of righteousness?

God, I don't feel worthy of it. I don't feel like I know enough. But if anything that I've heard today is true, where You are pursuing me and that You can save me by Your grace, and that there isn't anything that I have done that would keep me separated from You, I want that.



So, I confess my sins and I ask that You would come into my heart and make me a new creation in Christ. And for the rest of my days, to the best of my ability I will follow after You, even if that means stumbling forward. Thank You for Your grace. Thank You for loving me enough to save me from my sins. I give my life to You and I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hey, right now can we just celebrate even if just one person prayed that prayer right now?

