

# New Wineskins for New Wine

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[ 0 : 00 ] You can turn with me to the gospel according to Mark, Mark chapter 2, for our sermon passage this morning.

Mark chapter 2, and we will begin reading in verse 18. Mark 2, verse 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?

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. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

No one sews a piece of untrunk 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. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins.

[ 1 : 06 ] 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. Let's hear the word of God preached.

Well, it is good to be back with you and to worship our Lord together. We've been working our way through the Gospel of Mark, just kind of beginning.

We've come to chapter 2 in our study of Mark's Gospel, account of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus went about doing good, preaching the good news of his Gospel.

He was the most loving, humble, gentle man that ever lived. And yet, as chapter 2 records, very early on in his three years of public ministry, he's met with stiff opposition from the religious leaders of the Jews, namely the scribes and Pharisees, especially from them.

Charging him, as we've seen so far in chapter 2, with blasphemy for forgiving sins, and then accusing him for eating and drinking with sinners.

[ 2 : 21 ] Yet, it is the sick that need the doctor, and that is the reason he came to seek and to save sinners. Well, now Mark is going on in chapter 2 to show us three other instances, going over into chapter 3 as well, of this hostility only increasing, until we'll find in chapter 3 and verse 5, that they began to plot how they might kill Jesus.

He's barely out of the gate, and already there are plans to murder him. Now, the issue that we see today that stirred up the conflict was that of fasting, going without food or drink.

We're going to see, first of all, the carping question, and secondly, Jesus' clear answer. The carping question is verse 18, Now, John's disciples 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? Now, if you remember where we were weeks ago, Jesus and his disciples have just been feasting at the party at Levi's house that he threw for his tax collector friends, as he's just been converted and wants them to meet his Savior.

And it appears that during this time, perhaps on the very day, the Pharisees were fasting. So some come to Jesus with this critical spirit and want to know why his disciples are not fasting, but feasting.

[ 4 : 08 ] So we need a time out. We need to realize something about fasting. In the Old Testament law, God only commanded fasting to take place once a year.

It was the year or the day of atonement, Leviticus 23, 27, the tenth day of the seventh month. And on this day, they were to humble themselves and to deny themselves for their sins against God.

So fasting and going without food was an outward sign of an inward grief of sorrow for their sins.

Because a blood sacrifice needed to be made to atone for their sins on that day once a year.

So only one time were they commanded to fast. But as you read on through the Old Testament, you find that many other fasts were practiced in Israel.

Some were from sunrise to sunset, others for seven days, others for three weeks, some for 40 days. The prophet Zechariah speaks of fasts that occurred on the fourth month, the fifth, the seventh, and tenth months.

[ 5 : 24 ] And it could be for different reasons, not only grief and sorrow for sin, but many of these fasts were memorials to lament the events of the Babylonian exile.

The day when Nebuchadnezzar's army laid siege to Jerusalem, that very day would be kept as a fast. Fasts on and on as a tradition.

And again, the day that the army broke through the walls and burned the temple, that day was thereafter celebrated or remembered as a fast.

And these fasts then continued, carried on to grieve the sad events in their history. You remember Nehemiah was one of the Jewish men that had been carried away into captivity.

And some of his brothers came from Judah and told him about the condition of things back home. The people are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire.

[ 6 : 28 ] Nehemiah says, when I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. So, by the time of our Lord Jesus on earth, there were many of these such traditional fast days being kept to mourn the sad estate and history of Israel.

Even then they were under the Roman rule. And in the hands of the Pharisees, these fasts easily became mere outward rituals, pretending humility, while all the while priding themselves for how holy they were.

You remember our Lord in his parable of Luke 18 of the Pharisee and the tax collector that went into the temple to pray. We find the Pharisee despising, looking down his nose at the tax collector, confident of his own righteousness.

And one of the things that he boasts of before God is, I fast twice in the week. As if God were to be impressed. But that was the practice of many of the Pharisees and those that followed them.

Mondays and Thursdays of every week were fast days. In his sermon on the mount, Jesus exposed the hypocritical fasting of the Pharisees and scribes when he says in Matthew 6, when you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting.

[ 8 : 04 ] And so they would put on perhaps ashes on their face. They would look haggard and gloomy and go around all day looking like that. And the important thing to them in fasting is that you noticed that they were fasting.

That was the whole reward for them. And that's all that they would get, Jesus says. It wasn't done for the unseen eye of God in heaven, but their whole religion was done for men, including their fasting.

Matthew Henry points out how common it is for those who live stricter lives than others to make their own practice the standard of holiness for others so as to judge and condemn all who do not measure up to their practice practice.

That was the Pharisees and their traditions. They're fasting twice a week. But you know, the same thing can be done with other things besides fasting.

Anything that is stricter, more difficult perhaps in religion. Maybe some get up at 5 a.m. to pray and they look down their noses at others that don't.

[ 9 : 19 ] Maybe some homeschool and they scorn those who don't. Maybe some never buy a new car and they think those that do are less holy for doing so.

Many other examples could be given. Things not commanded, but judging others by our own practice. practice. And so while the Pharisees and others were fasting with all these traditional fasts of the Old Testament, Jesus' disciples were feasting.

And so they challenge Him, why aren't your disciples fasting as others? We come then to Jesus' clear answer and it's in two parts.

He first explains the reason and then He illustrates His point with two parables. Notice His explanation, verse 19. Jesus answered, how can the guests of the bridegroom fast while He is with them?

They cannot so long as they have Him with them. Notice His answer is couched in the form of a wedding feast, a time of great rejoicing and celebration.

[10:32] And so as it was mentioned yesterday, there was a wedding here of Daniel and Megan. A beautiful ceremony, a wonderful day. And the ceremony here was followed by a wedding reception in the fellowship hall.

And the mood was light and joyful. It was a festive celebration of God's good gift of marriage to Daniel and Megan. And we, the guests, were celebrating along with them in God's goodness. What if I had gotten up on the stage of the reception and took the mic and with a somber face said, why aren't you people fasting as others are today? What would you say? I'd probably have cake in my face and you'd say to me, oh, pastor, there's a time for everything under heaven. But this is not the time.

This is not the place for fasting. But rather for feasting and rejoicing. The bridegroom is with his bride at last.

[11:46] And to call them to fast now is totally inappropriate to the situation at hand. And you see, that was the situation at hand. Whether or not they yet realized it, Jesus himself is the bridegroom of his people.

And now, throughout the Old Testament, the testimony or the message was, he's coming. He is coming. God is going to send him to us to crush the head of the serpent, Satan. He's coming to save us, Isaiah 61. He's coming to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted. He's coming to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God for his and our enemies.

He's coming. He's coming to comfort all who mourn, to provide for those who grieve in Zion, to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of the spirit of despair.

The message of the Old Testament is this messianic bridegroom is coming. He's coming. And what a difference he will make when he comes. The difference from grieving and mourning and sorrowing and despair to comfort and joy and gladness and praise.

[13:23] But now, here we are in the New Testament. The message has changed. No more is it he is coming. Jesus, the bridegroom, now stands in their midst and says, I'm here.

I have come. Something new has happened. He is now with his disciples on earth. Notice verse 19. He says it twice for emphasis.

How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? And again, they cannot so long as they have him with them.

You see his point. The presence of this long-promised messianic bridegroom with his people is the great difference maker. This is the new situation that makes calling on my disciples to carry on the sorrowful traditional fast of the Old Testament is totally inappropriate and inconceivable as if my coming, my presence here on earth means nothing, makes no difference.

With the bridegroom present then, this is not the time for them to mourn. But he hastens to add in verse 20, but the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them and on that day they will fast.

[14:47] They will grieve. For in less than three years these same disciples would see Jesus taken from them, arrested, hauled off to a mock trial, falsely condemned, beaten, whipped, and tortured, nailed to a cross to be further mocked until taken down dead and buried in a tomb and on that day no one would need to tell them to fast.

They would naturally lose all appetite because of the knot of grief in their stomachs, because of the sorrow and sadness of their hearts. Now we're not saying that the disciples understood all this at this point for his death shocked them as you'll remember though he had told them often of it and even now he's referring to it at the beginning and that day did come.

As on the night of his arrest Jesus told them in John 16, in a little while you will see me no more and then after a little while you will see me. I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices.

You will grieve but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.

Isn't that the way it is moms? The presence of the baby changes everything even the pain and the travail. Then Jesus goes on to say so with you disciples now is your time of grief.

[ 16 : 29 ] This is on the eve of his arrest. Now is the time of your grief but I will see you again and you will rejoice and no one will take away your joy. And it all happened just as Jesus said it would.

No sad traditional fasting now but rather feasting and joy with Jesus in their presence with them. But then in that day when he's taken from them in death grief and fasting will happen but only for a little while because three days later the resurrected Christ was with them again and their grief ended and their joy was restored and this time restored with a promise that no one will take away that joy that they have.

That means not even after Jesus' ascension back into heaven will they lose that joy. Luke describes the scene in this way as Jesus is there with his disciples in the vicinity of Bethany and while he was blessing them he left them and was taken up into heaven and then they went back to grieving and fasting?

No that's not what it says. Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Jesus is physically ascended into heaven but this time his absence does not create grief and sorrow but joy continues to roll on with no one taking it away because now they understood that he had to die in order to save us so his death was not the end of our hope and joy but the very reason for our hope and joy continuing on forever and ever.

Furthermore he rose again and ascended into heaven to do what? To intercede for us and he's coming again never more to be separated from his bride for as they were looking intently up into the sky as he was going suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them and said why do you stand here looking into the sky this same Jesus who's been taken from you into heaven will come back in the same way you've seen him go into heaven and that happy hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior the joy of that day spills over into this life of waiting in hope so even Jesus physical absence did not rob them of their present joy for Matthew tells us that he had just said to them before he ascended lo I am with you always even to the end of the age physically bodily absent but spiritually with you to the end of the age he was with them and their joy was unabated as in his presence is fullness of joy always with them that they might rejoice in him always now this all has important implications and applications for our present joy who are

[ 19 : 53 ] Christ's disciples saved by grace through faith in Christ alone and we'll return to that in a moment so Jesus is saying to fast or not to fast well it determined it's determined by the situation and the situation right now he's saying is not the time or place for my disciples to fast as others are now there's many other reasons to fast given in the New Testament and that's another study but Jesus now illustrates his answer about fasting with two parables that also point that this principle has broader applications than just fasting yes that but much more his coming has brought about a new situation that demands certain changes from the past in other words New Testament Christianity is not the same as Old Testament Judaism Christianity cannot be preserved in the clothing and in the ritual of the Old Testament the Old Testament cannot be preserved unchanged simply by patching Christ onto it if you try to mix these two things they don't mix and you'll have disaster and he points that out very clearly in homespun illustrations both parables are pointing out that this idea of the old and the new and showing what happens when you mix and try to preserve either one of them by mixing them first of all we have the parable of the old clothing and a new patch verse 21 no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment that's a new cloth on an old garment if he does the new patch will pull away from the old making the tear worse now here the aim is to preserve the old garment let's say it's an old pair of jeans and they fit just fine but they're threadbare and thin and one day as you lean down to get something the knee splits open and now there's a huge hole and in our day what you've got is designer jeans and they cost a lot more than the other ones but in my day and in Jesus day that that needed to be patched it needed to be fixed and so he says if you take an unshrunk new piece of cloth and put it over the tear of the old garment what happens as you wash that pair of jeans pretty soon that new patch is going to shrink and as it does it's going to pull away from that old pair and the tear will be worse than the beginning you see you can't preserve the old by adding something a patch of something new the religion of the old cannot remain unchanged and preserved simply by adding

Jesus to it no the new situation of Jesus coming of necessity brought important changes to the old the old testament it's the difference between promise in the old and fulfillment in Christ in the new that demands changes be made well the second parable is a parable of the new wine poured into old wineskins it's similar but from a different angle verse 22 no one pours new wine into old wineskins if he does the wine will burst the skins and both the wine and the wine skins will burst burst

no he pours new wine into new wineskins now here the aim is just the opposite it is now to preserve the new wine and trying to preserve the new wine you pour it into old continues to ferment it swells and the old brittle wineskins cannot stretch to accommodate the new wine so they burst under the pressure and the new wine is lost new testament christianity of fulfillment in christ cannot survive by maintaining all the old testament rituals and practices it will pervert and ruin the new wine of the gospel of christ and this is just what the pharisees were trying to do some of them even professing christ as you see later in the new testament to pour jesus into the old mold just just carry on the old situation as it's always been but the problem was jesus wasn't just carrying on the old he didn't conform to all their old ways he didn't keep his distance from sinners there he didn't keep their traditional fast days he didn't keep their ceremonial washings of hands and pots and pans he didn't keep their additional man-made sabbath laws that we'll see in the next couple weeks their whole long list of taboos and so they hated him they murdered him they did not know who jesus was that he was the promised messianic bridegroom of his people coming with salvation and eternal life to offer the gospel of god's grace and so they failed to see that a new situation had arrived the fulfillment of the old testament promise he's here and that demands new wineskins for the wine of the gospel of jesus you can't simply go on as usual as if christ coming meant nothing to the true religion and makes no difference christ presence you see is the great difference maker now demanding changes changes as different as fulfillment is from promise as antitype is from shadow or from type and as reality is from shadow because christ coming is the fulfillment of the old testament promises things must change they must change new wine skins are needed for the new wine christ was bringing and so this newness of christ's presence in the new time demanded a new spirit of joy over grief but it's not just that one issue of fasting and the traditional fast of sorrow no the newness of christ touches all the differences between the Old and the New Testaments. There are similarities, but there are also important differences. With the coming of the new covenant in Christ, the old covenant was made obsolete, Hebrews 8, verse 13.

With the new covenant came a new people of God, with unbelieving Jews pruned out of the olive tree, and believing Gentiles grafted in, as Romans 11 says, so that here there is neither Jew nor Greek, for we're all one in Christ Jesus, so that if you belong to Christ, be you Jew or Gentile, you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise, Galatians 3.29.

Christ's coming fulfilled all the Old Testament mediatorial offices, a prophet, priest, and king. In Christ, the great prophet has come with God, God's final word to his people.

[ 27 : 10 ] With the coming of Christ, the great high priest has come and made the once for all sacrifice for sin, so there's no more need of a priesthood to offer sacrifices to take away sin.

Christ has come as the promised king of David and has inaugurated God's kingdom on earth. Christ now reigns wherever his rule is acknowledged and submitted to, in his law, his gospel, by faith and repenting and obeying, there his kingdom, his common power.

Well, these are some of the new realities, the new wine of Christ's presence and his coming that cannot be poured into the Old Testament ritual and ceremonies. Jesus' coming is brought about a new worship, no longer to be held in one place in Jerusalem and toward Jerusalem when you pray. As Jesus said to the woman, the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, believe me, woman, a time is coming when neither on this mountain, Mount Gerizim, nor in Jerusalem will we worship God.

A time is coming and it has now come. Come with me as I've come. That time has come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

[ 28 : 29 ] A new worship. Worship in all the nations, wherever his people meet and worship him in spirit and in truth. A new day of worship.

No longer the seventh day, the Old Testament Sabbath day, but the new Christian Sabbath, the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, the day of resurrection and the joyful celebration of the new creation that's begun in Christ.

There's a new simplicity to worship after the coming of Christ. No longer do we see all the Old Testament types and shadows and rituals. No longer all the feast days and the priesthood with their special garments and many different kinds of sacrifices, elaborate temples with altar, incense and so on.

No, in the New Testament, Christ fulfills all those types and shadows. So it's a more simple worship that we have. Christ coming has made a change to our worship. He has instituted now two

ordinances for our worship.

No longer circumcision of all male infants, but baptism of all believers. No longer Passover, celebrating Israel's redemption from Egypt, but the Lord's Supper, remembering the true Lamb of God and that sacrifice of himself for sin to redeem his people from the coming wrath of God.

[ 29 : 54 ] Remember how he said in the institution of the Lord's Supper, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. His coming made these changes.

There's a new degree of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the outpouring. Jesus, having lived the perfect life, died the atoning death and risen over sin, death and hell, ascends into heaven, receives from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and pours him out on his church on the day of Pentecost.

And there's this new fullness of the Spirit in the body of Christ. These changes, you see, these new realities that were brought about by Christ's coming.

Now, they were very difficult for the first, the early Christian church to sort out. You remember that as you read on after the Gospels and the Book of Acts and the Epistles.

You have the Galatian heresy. What's that all about? Well, it's the old wineskins of circumcision.

You want to be saved? You need to be circumcised. There we are. Let's pour this Gospel into the old wineskins.

[ 31 : 00 ] So they hold a council at Jerusalem. What does the Bible say? And they realize, no, we can't ask the Gentiles to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses. We have a new covenant. Remember, the length to which Peter had to be instructed with visions of the cloth coming down, with the messengers come from the Gentiles' house to come and to preach the Gospel to them.

And all of this to do what? To convince Peter that God is now receiving Gentiles into his people on equal footing with the Jews.

That was a new thing that Christ come. And the early church struggled with that. You remember in Galatians 2 that even Barnabas was drawn aside by Peter's hypocrisy for a while until Paul rebuked him publicly.

So I say this newness that Christ has brought created some problems for the early church until it was sorted out. The book of Hebrews was written.

The Hebrew Christians being tempted to go back to Old Testament Judaism to escape the persecution and social ostracization. But to do so would be to reject Christ and the gospel of grace won by his perfect life his cross and empty tomb.

[ 32 : 18 ] You can see the Roman Catholic air continuing with their priests and their altars and their sacrifice and their incense. You see, that's Old Testament.

No, the reality is in Christ. He is the great high priest. We need no other. He is the one sacrifice. We need no other. Calvary is the altar.

The coals of that sacrifice are black. They're cold. There's only one sacrifice. It's the finished work of Christ. So, you see the troubles. There are even Protestant movements today for Christians to practice Old Testament rituals to enhance their relationship with God.

I'm not saying preaching on it and explaining how they prefigured Christ but to think that by keeping these Old Testament rituals that our relationship with God can be more than it is without them.

You see, that's going backwards. That's trying to pour the new wine of the gospel into the old wineskins. No, the new wine is to be poured into the new wineskins he's given us.

[ 33 : 27 ] And I want to end then on the note that Christ's coming brought about a new joy. And that's where we started, right? Why aren't your disciples fasting with grief?

Because it's totally inappropriate. It's unconceivable for them to fast while the bridegroom is with them. A new situation results in joy instead of gloom.

And this new joy is heard from the very outset. The angel's message when Christ came to her. You remember the announcement. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord. How does he introduce the gospel? Good news of great joy.

Have you received this Savior of great joy? He's lived the perfect life that you couldn't but that God demands? He's died the death under God's wrath that you should have died that second death in the lake of fire and brimstone forever.

[ 34 : 36 ] He's risen and ascended and now invites you to receive him and his salvation as a free gift. So why will you not? Why will you not take this Christ?

Renounce your sinful past life of living for yourself not for him. Doing your own thing rather than following his way. Trying to save yourself with your good religion your good deeds instead of coming with nothing in your hands to offer and receiving Christ and with him eternal life and every other saving blessing.

Believing joy you see and not grief is the fitting response to the new wine of the gospel. And believers is it not significant that Jesus describes his relationship with his people in terms of the bridegroom being with the guests.

In terms of the joy of a wedding feast and it's just a privilege that we had a wedding feast here yesterday and a joyful time of celebration to give sense even clear perception to what Jesus is saying.

It's a joy to belong to Christ as his bride. It's a joy that no one and no thing can take away the assurance that all of your sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake.

[ 35 : 59 ] My sin not in part but the whole was nailed to his cross and I bear them no more. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Oh my soul. Is that not worth some joy splashing into your everyday life to remember I'm not in hell today.

If I got from God today would I just I would be weeping and wailing forever and ever in hell.

I'm not there and I never will be because there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why not? Because Jesus was condemned in my place.

He drank the cup of God's wrath to the bottom when he could say it is finished. There's nothing left for me to drink. There is no wrath of God awaiting me because I'm in Christ by faith.

All the curses that I deserve fell on him and all the blessings that Christ deserved fall on me forever and ever. Is that not worth some joy today?

[ 37 : 09 ] The fact that the one who knows you best loves you most. the fact that you get to have fellowship with this eternal God who existed before anything was made and he is now in Christ brought you into that Trinitarian fellowship for you to enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit so that when you pray the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ear is attentive to your prayer.

What is the joy of that? to take all of our sins and our sorrows to the Lord Jesus in prayer to know that whoever and whatever is against you God is now for you and he's working everything in your life together for your good.

The joy that Jesus is coming back to physically be with you forever in a new heaven and a new earth the home of righteousness where all things will be made new and everything broken will be redeemed and put right and the thing that kicks off the eternal state will be a joyful wedding feast. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory for the wedding of the Lamb has come. Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb and there we will see the King in all his beauty.

We're at a wedding though and we see the bridegroom King but where's his bride? There we are as his guests. I don't know that we'll be asking that but if we are what we'll learn is that the guests are the bride.

[ 38 : 48 ] We are the bride of Christ. He is our bridegroom. He's laid down his life for us. And as the bridegroom rejoices over his bride so the Lord will rejoice over you and his joy in you then will only increase your joy in him forever and ever.

Just as when Daniel stood at the front and saw his bride come through the doors. There was joy in Daniel's eyes and the joy in his eyes for her created a reciprocal joy in her seeing his joy in her and it will be that way in heaven.

We will look upon our Savior face to face and then we will be made like him and there will be nothing in us that is ugly and made difficult because of sin.

No, it will be gone. We'll be righteous and he will look into our eyes and his delight in us will just thrill us with our delight reciprocated in his.

The coming of Christ has brought about a new joy and that joy of that day is to splash its happiness back into this life as we're going there.

[ 40 : 11 ] That's our destiny. So even now the prevailing climate of the Christian life is to be joy. That's the main point I want you walking away with.

Yes, there's other days. There's cold days but the prevailing climate in Arizona is hot and yes, they have their cold days and yes, the Christian has their losses and their days of grief and sorrow and

yes, the Lord said the blessed are those that mourn for they will be comforted and yes, there are songs of lament that we lament in this fallen, cursed world as we look forward to the Redeemer putting it all right but the prevailing climate of the Christian is joy.

Jesus has come. The prevailing note of the Christian life is not the minor key of sadness but the major key of gladness and joy for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice. You see, joy is not just encouraged, joy is commanded as much as any other command and if we're commanded to rejoice in the Lord always then it's because there are always sufficient reasons for joy to be found in the Lord.

The more joyful you are, the more God-like you are for He is the ever-blessed, the ever-happy God, Titus says. So, is joy the prevailing note of your life?

[ 41 : 51 ] When have you last confessed your sin of not rejoicing? Breaking that commandment. Not serving the Lord with joyfulness and gladness of heart. Deuteronomy 28, 47.

Christian, what message are you sending to the world? Would anyone watching you for a month conclude that Jesus Christ makes His people happy? Oh, there's far more to enjoy of His presence than what we presently have experienced and known even now, even in our trials.

Peter says, though you've not seen Him, you love Him. And even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him. And you are being filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

The old King James, joy unspeakable and full of glory. That's present tense right now in the midst of your trials. 1 Peter 1, 8 and 9.

How much of that kind of joy do you know? And why? Because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. You're already in the process of receiving it.

[ 43 : 05 ] And that is to cause this inexpressible and glorious joy. Billy Bray was a rough and tumble coal miner in the mid-1800s in England.

A contemporary of Spurgeon. He was known for his blaspheming foul mouth and his fistfights with his fellow miners. And then he was gloriously converted and changed by the Lord Jesus.

Became a preacher of the gospel. A happy preacher of the gospel. He was filled with inexpressible and glorious joy. He would go hopping and skipping down the road.

And one day someone asked him, why do you do that? And he said, I can't help it. My left foot says hallelujah and my right foot says praise the Lord.

inexpressible and glorious joy. Well, let's do some rejoicing in the Lord right now.

[ 44 : 15 ] The Bible says, sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous. It is fitting for the upright to praise him. You know, it's not fitting to fast and grieve while the bridegroom is with us just with this traditional grief.

Oh, it's Monday, it's Tuesday, it's Thursday, let's grieve. No, no, that's not fitting for the new situation. What is fitting for the righteous is to sing joyfully to the Lord.

Pray with me. Father, we thank you for this day to draw aside from the cares and sorrows and griefs of this world and to fix our eyes upon you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and see all the reasons that we have to lift up our hearts and to lift up our voice and praise to you.

Let the joy of heaven spill into our hearts here. Our hearts might be in heaven before our feet get there and that even now we would taste this inexpressible and glorious joy for some, Lord, who are weighed down with burdens.

You are the one who lifts up those who are bowed down. Do that. There are others that are burdened with the weight of sin. Bring them this day to trust in the Savior and to lose that burden forever and to know the joy of knowing Christ and his so great salvation.

[ 45 : 38 ] So fill our hearts. Forgive us that we no more live up to this present reality and privilege that Christ has come. He's accomplished the work of salvation.

He's on his throne. He's interceding for us. And he's coming again in glory. Help us then. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name with thanksgiving.

Amen. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may be filled with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.