

NEVER ON SUNDAY **Luke 5:33-6:11**

TRADITION!

The dramatic musical "Fiddler on the Roof" repeatedly beats on us with the issue of tradition. Set in a typical contemporary orthodox Jewish community, the play points to the legalistic authoritarian role given to tradition for its own sake.

Evidence of Jesus' authority 4:31-5:16

Authority over demons, sickness, and nature

Opposition to Jesus' authority 5:17-6:11

As Jesus demonstrates His authority, the opposition to His ministry increases

The crowds following Him provoked jealousy and opposition from Israel's leaders

Jesus' Authority over sin challenged 5:17-26 5:21

Jesus' Authority over men (sinners) challenged 5:27-32 5:30

Third objection—the third "question" (implied) raising an objection:

Jesus' Authority over tradition challenged 5:33-39 5:33

The confrontation over fasting demonstrates that Jesus' mission and message is so distinct from the legalistic traditions of the self-righteous that the two will never be harmonized

They believe religious observance must be sober.

There was little room for joy in Pharisaic worship.

It's not suppose to be fun to worship God. So they complain.

Jesus' disciples are having too much fun!

The only O.T.-prescribed fast was related to the day of Atonement. It was related to sorrow over the sin which broke fellowship with God and looked forward to God's future dealing with sin.

Israel established a series of fasts, dealing with sorrow because of the captivity.

In Zech., when they ask God about the fasts (then 4), he tells them to do whatever they want with their fasts. He didn't establish them. He established the fasts to deal with sin (the reason for their suffering in the first place). Fasts deal with sin; not with sorrow over hard times!

They had established fasts for everything!—Two per week!

They even developed a way to look sadder so everyone would know they were fasting. It was a big show. A farce!

Jesus didn't go along with them.
His disciples were having fun serving God!
That's not fair. Serving God isn't suppose to be fun!

4 ILLUSTRATIONS:

1. The presence of the bridegroom 5:34-35

Jesus came to make life a wedding feast, not a funeral!

If you know the bridegroom, you share his joy.
This was not the time for sobriety and fasting. This was a time for joy!

I've been told that in a certain church on the east coast a scout troop was taking a tour of a church building. As they were going through the building, one of the scouts noticed a list of names attached at the base of a stained glass window and asked about it. When told that this was a list of people from their church who had died in the service, he asked the next logical question: "Which one, the 9:00 or 11:00 service?"

2. Patching old clothes with new cloth 5:36

Jesus did not come to patch up the old forms, he came to bring new ones.

If you cut a patch out of a new garment and sew it on an old one, you ruin both!
You tear the new cloth
You can't match the old

A new garment is needed.
Don't try to mix new with old—grace with cold religious ritualism

3. Storing new wine in old skins 5:37-38—a similar message

New "wineskins" are needed for His message—the old could never contain it.

If unfermented wine is put in old wineskins which have lost their elasticity, the reaction will burst the skins—both the skins and the wine will be lost.

Christ didn't come to renew the old forms. He came to give new life.

Swindoll: Our Lord is distinguishing between the essential (wine) and the useful but not primary (skins). Who needs wineskins if there is no wine? Wine, you see, represents the basics, the changeless, timeless, everpotent, always-necessary message. The gospel. The Savior. The truth of Scripture. And the wineskins? They represent that which is secondary. Stuff like structure, traditions and patterns of doing things which have grown up around and encased "the wine."

The wineskins are the point of contact between the wine and the world. As the surrounding pressure mounts from society, the skins tend to cease being inflexible. They are seldom replaced. They get thicker, hard, less elastic . . . and are ultimately unable to contain that vigorous vino within. They have reached the extreme of inflexibility. And, unfortunately, few can tolerate fresh, new, supple bags to contain the wine. We much prefer the old—even if it's brittle and leaks—rather than the new.

4. Preference for the old wine 5:39

They have rejected the new life Jesus brought—they prefer the old. **5:39**

Ironside illustrates this by reminding us of Aesop's fable about the eagle who was flying through the heavens when he spotted a stork down in a well feeding on frogs. The eagle asked the stork why he didn't come up and join him. The stork asked whether there were any frogs up there. The eagle replied that there were no frogs there but it was beautiful to fly up into the open heaven. The stork replied: "You can keep your heaven and I will keep my frogs."

The traditionalists were always saying, "The old is good!" Therefore they couldn't accept the new, life-giving teaching of Jesus.

The normal rule is wine gets better with age.
The problem is fermentation never stops—It keeps getting more fermented.
After sitting for too long it gets putred.
When does wine go from "best" to "too much?"—they couldn't distinguish! In Spanish:
"Pasado!"

They don't want the fresh wine because "Old is better!"
They don't realize the old has already spoiled.
So they refuse the new, life-giving wine Christ brought.

4th question—4th objection to Jesus' authority:

Jesus' authority over the Sabbath challenged 6:1-11 6:2

Two incidents:

1) A legalistic interpretation causes a confrontation over eating grain while passing through the fields (6:1-5).

Sabbath was not Sunday—Sabbath is the 7th day; Sunday is the first day.
Celebrated by the church because the resurrection occurred on the first day.

Paul: observing days has nothing to do with salvation (Gal. 4:1-11; Col. 2:8-17)

The Pharisees made Sabbath a burden rather than a blessing as God intended.

They added so many restrictions that they made obedience impossible.

It's almost amusing to read the list of regulations laid out in the Talmud.

Our Lord disregarded these man-made rules.

God made the Sabbath to be a delight, a source of gladness and help, not a burden, not a list of rules to trip them up every time they turn around!

They needed rest.
They needed to worship their Creator.

Those who refuse to take a day off; who insist on using everyday to earn a buck miss a blessing God intended them to enjoy. Their perspective is wrong.

Those who use the day for self rather than to worship God and encourage others miss a major opportunity God intended for spiritual development.

This was not the case with Jesus' disciples. He never justifies either attitude!

What did Jesus' disciples do that was illegal–
–according to the O.T.?
–according to the traditions of the Pharisees?

It was legal to eat from your neighbor's field as long as you didn't use a harvesting instrument or fill a container–or, by extension, to do it on the Sabbath

To the Pharisees, the disciples broke the law:

Talmud: "In case a woman rolls wheat to remove the husks, it is considered as sifting; if she rubs the heads of wheat, it is regarded as threshing; if she cleans off the side-adherences, it is sifting out fruit; if she bruises the ears, it is grinding; if she throws them up in her hand, it is winnowing."

Barclay: By plucking the corn they were guilty of reaping; by rubbing it in their hands of threshing; by flinging away the husks of winnowing; and the very fact that they ate it showed that they had prepared food on the Sabbath.

*The self-righteous leaders opposed Jesus–He claimed a more important mission and greater authority than their traditions. **6:5***

What did David's example teach them?

Lev. 24:9 => 1 Sa. 21:1-6

David's case was clearcut as far as the law was concerned:
No one but the priests were to eat the shewbread–David did it.

No Jew would condemn Israel's great king. He was the Lord's anointed!

That's just what Jesus was saying.

In fact, He was Lord of the Sabbath—that's a claim to be God!

If He is Lord of the Sabbath, then He is free to use it as He pleases.

Messiah didn't come to serve the Sabbath.

He is Lord. Sabbath was made to serve Him.

Jesus' case is more doubtful—the law has nothing to say about the matter.

They want to make a major issue out of it!

At times God's work is more important than strict legalistic interpretations of the law. –No one stood up to David 6:3-4

Sometimes the mission is more important than the law.

Man is more important to God than ritual observance.

God's anointed—Messiah—certainly is!

Jesus understood that the Sabbath was given for man's good—NOT to strap him but for good—for rest, for worshipping God. Anything that distracts from God's purpose should be secondary.

Sometimes people get so caught up in the forms they forget the substance—the motivation for our worship. It's not the form that matters!

We may attend a formal dinner party where every thing is done properly with 27 forks, knives and spoons to be used just so. Or, we can be starving to death in a poor country when emergency rations are distributed. Then you just grab and eat. When you're desperate for food, it doesn't matter *how* you eat it. The form becomes irrelevant. That's the way it is with worship. When you're desperate to be in God's presence, the form isn't so important. You just want to spend time with Him!

The Pharisees were so caught up with tradition they lost sight of the purpose. They were full, fed up, with lots of ritual. They didn't understand hunger or thirst to be in God's presence. The form had become the whole issue to them.

I read about an old saint in China who spent time with God each morning. Because basic food necessities were the most precious things the man owned, he began to place a stick of butter on the window ledge each morning as an offering to God. One morning his cat went after the butter so he tied the cat to the post of the bed. He began doing that each morning to keep the cat away from the butter. Years later other believers, observing the man's daily routine, began to imitate it. They went out and bought cats and began tying them to the bed as part of their worship experience. It was a meaningless ritual they never did understand. That's Pharisaic worship. *Do we get so hung up on the form that we forget what worship is all about?*

The Pharisees weren't concerned about worshipping God. They just wanted to be sure everyone went through all the right motions!

2) **A similar confrontation occurs because Christ heals a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath (6:6-11).**

Where was he? What is the significance of the place?

The Pharisees weren't impartial observers. They wanted to accuse Him.

It was a trap! 6:6-7

The self-righteous oppose Him–He places higher priority on delivering the afflicted than on observing legalistic traditions.
6:9

Legalists prefer to leave him in his condition than heal him on the Sabbath.

That attitude is totally absent from the O.T. instruction!

God gave the Sabbath law not to hurt man, but to help him.

They would rescue wounded animals, why not a person? Matt. 12:11-12

He gave them a chance to answer a basic question about what He was going to do. The great teachers of Israel had no answer. They were more interested in trapping Jesus, than in determining truth or in answering questions!

They became angry and discuss what to do to Him. They want to kill Him.

That's the issue Jesus raises: is it better to do something good or something evil on the Sabbath? Is it better to save life, or to take it on the Sabbath.

What did Jesus do on the Sabbath?

What did they do on the Sabbath?

The passage forces us to consider the answer to Jesus' question.

Which of the two demonstrate the "lawful" use of the Sabbath?

They prefer the old lifestyle. How about you? 5:39

Notice that Jesus performed no work on the Sabbath. He simply spoke a few words. He did nothing! He humiliated them and healed the man at the same time, while doing nothing. They had no real basis for accusing Him.

Swindoll: And what about you? Busy protecting and trying to preserve the wineskins? Working overtime carrying a torch of external tradition? Hey, I understand. I did that for almost twenty years of my Christian life. The wine got little of my attention as I patched up wineskins year after year. What a waste! Through a process of time and very painful events, I am breaking that nervous habit. The older I get, the less I care about the traditional skins and the more I crave the pure wine, the essentials, the external internals.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR–NEW WINE OR OLD SKINS?