**Mark’s Gospel:**

**Witness to the Son of God - #3**

**The Parables of the Gospel of Mark, Part 1**

**God, The Bridegroom of Israel – Mark 2:19-20**

*And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days".*

In the Exodus Rabbah, *“This world is betrothal, but the wedding will be in the days of the Messiah”* (15:31)

So we hear that also in the Gospel of John where John the Baptist says, “*I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent before him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom…”* (John 3:28:29)

**The Unrelenting Love of God**

Marriage between God and Israel was a well-known theme, for God is the one who established marriage early in the Garden, [so Isaiah](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Isaiah-54-5/)reminds the Jews, “*For your Maker is your husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.*” (Isaiah 54:5).

And after the exile God speaks through to Israel the unfaithful Israel by [Hosea,](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Hosea-2-19/) *“And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forget me, says the LORD. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. .. and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, says the LORD, that you shalt call me Ishi;(my man) and shalt call me no more Baali. (master)*, (Hosea 2:14-19).

That marriage is the unrelenting love of God which still is part of the relationship according to Jeremiah, “*The word of the LORD came to me: "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: "This is what the LORD says: "'I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown.”* (Jeremiah 2:1-2)

The Love language is part of the covenant. God speaks as the Bridegroom, “*Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your naked body. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine.*” (Ezekiel 16:8) So also Hosea speaks of the time in the wilderness as the time where God still married to Israel.

This has defined sin as not only Idolatry but also “Adultery.” So the cry of Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, (1:2-3, 1:4,21, 2:32; 3:20, Ezek 16:15:22).

The Renewed Covenant in the OT is a renewed love; divine love of the divine covenant and this becomes very clear in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

**Jesus the Bridegroom**

Although this part of Mark (2:19ff) is very brief it has the core of the OT background and more was described in John 3:29 about the bridegroom and his “best man” John who prepares the way for the Bridegroom. We must notice also that Jesus himself did his first “miracle” in Cana during a wedding celebration and gave a good wine for the celebration.

The Theme continues in Paul, *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present [you as] a chaste virgin to Christ* (2 Cor 11:2) and was seen at the end of time as the final rest of the people of God in [Revelation:](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Revelation-19-7_19-9/) “*Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*” (Rev 19:7-9)

**The Bridegroom and Fasting – Mark 2:18-19**

1. This parable is in response to the fasting of the [Disciples](https://everything2.com/title/Disciples) of [John](https://everything2.com/title/John) and the [Pharisees](https://everything2.com/title/Matthew%2B23). While Jesus and his disciples were eating and conversing, the Pharisees and disciples of John withered under the weight of fasting. To this they asked Jesus why his disciples were exempt from the fasting.

2. This is time for celebration of the New Wedding as the Bridegroom came to take his place in the banquet. There is no time for fasting, which was unusually associated with sadness and mourning in Jewish history. Fasting was instituted as a sign of mourning (I Sam 31: 13; II Sam 1: 12), or when danger threatened (II Sam 12: 16; comp I kings 21:27), or when the seer was preparing himself for a divine revelation (Ex 34: 28; Deut 9: 9, 18; Dan 9: 3). But that individual fasting was common among the early Jews is evident from the provision made (Numbers 30:14) that a vow made by a woman "*to afflict the soul*" may under certain conditions be canceled by the husband. More frequent, however, were the occasional fasts instituted for the whole community, especially when the nation believed itself to be under divine displeasure (Judges 20: 26; I Sam 7: 6, where it is conjoined with the pouring out of water before the Lord; Jer 36: 9; Ne. 9: 1), or when a great calamity befell the land (Joel 1: 14 2: 12), as when pestilence raged or when drought set in; and sometimes also when an important act was about to be carried out by the officials of the land (I Kings 21: 12;  I Sam14: 24).

3. In Jonah 3:6-7 it may be seen with what rigor an official fast was observed, while in Isaiah 53:5 we see a description of a fast-day among the Jews.

4. The disciples were depicted as “sons of the bride chamber,” (Mark 2:19-20) which is a vided (*seen, visualized*) description of the time of the Messiah who will be crowned as Bridegroom (Songs 3:11) at his crucifixion on his wedding Day:

“Like a Bridegroom Christ went forth from his nuptial chamber. He came even to the marriage bed of the cross, and there ascending it, he consummated a marriage … He surrendered himself to the torment of His Body in a communication of Love” – Augustine, Sermon 120:3

**Cloth and Wine – Mark 2:21-22**

 *"No one sews a piece of un-shrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. And no one puts old wine into new wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins".*

The new cloth and the new wine are understood to be the Gospel and the old cloth and old wineskin to be those living under the shadow of the Law. Some think that the contrast of new cloth/new wine versus old cloth/old wineskin to be a wedge between competing [philosophies](https://everything2.com/title/philosophies) and the Gospel. In the end of Jesus states that new wine must be put into new wineskins. This would make sense if Christ were speaking of new way of life and the [adaptation](https://everything2.com/title/adaptation) to that new way. But how does this run alongside the idea of fasting?

1.   The kingdom has come with Jesus, and there is no time for mourning.

2. To mourn will be like what Jesus said in the parable: it would spoil the occasion by forgetting God’s gift.

**The Parable of Sower – Mark 4:3-8**

*"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty and some a hundred".*

The Types of Persons:

1.   On the wayside: those who neither accept nor refuse.

2.   The stony ground: those who have no roots for our purpose, meaning no root or the foundation on which all are to build in our inner life.

3.   The thorns: the kind of plant that does not give us back any fruit and is useless. Those are the things that we add to our life and grow up as needs but in fact suffocate us.

4.   The good earth: those who are ready to accept the kingdom.

This parable can be seen clearly in the history of the church where we can read about those who rejected the gospel and those who still deny its message, but also those who took it seriously and lived it even to Martyrdom.

**The Lamp – Mark 4:21-22**

*Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be put on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light."*

This is about the revelation of the Messiah himself. He says in Mark 4:22 that there is nothing hidden that will not be shown and that no secret will avoid light. The [light](https://everything2.com/title/light) is the Jesus himself who will shine like a [lamp](https://everything2.com/title/lamp) is spreading the good news.

1. Obstacles cannot hide light.

2. [False](https://everything2.com/title/False) teaching can stand up for a while but it is doomed.

**Note from Philemon**

**False Teaching**

False teaching destroys itself; it has the self-killing power that is the lack of the divine touch. How do we see the divine touch?

1. In the teaching of divine mercy;

2. Whenever mercy is absent God is not the subject but the fallen human perception.

Jesus is the Lamp that can’t be snuffed but His light comes from within and never was acquired from an outside source.

How can anyone hide Jesus?

1.   By changing his teaching, which is like putting the lamp under a basket.

2.   By false understanding of his work and his person.

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