



May 17, 2026

“The Uniqueness of the Gospel”

Luke 5:33–39

Context: Last Week

- Jesus calls Levi/Matthew
- He's a hated tax collector
- He's so overcome with joy that he throws a party for his despised tax collector friends
- The Pharisees are furious that Jesus's disciples would associate with such sinners
- They approach Jesus

To understand what happens next, you first need to know that there are only **two ways to be righteous, forgiven, and accepted by God:**

- By law or grace
- By human works or faith in God's grace
- By self-righteousness or God's gift of righteousness
- By flesh or by Spirit (**Galatians 5:17**: they are contrary to each other)
- Through works of the flesh or the work of the Holy Spirit
- By our human efforts or a gift of grace through faith from God
- Do or done

- The gospel of grace destroys any and all legalism/works righteousness

Amidst the thousands of world's religions, there are really only two:

The first group of works righteousness includes:

1. Judaism
2. Islam
3. Hinduism
4. Buddhism
5. Animistic religions
6. Zoroasterism
7. Confucianism
8. The pagan religions of the past
9. Greek and Roman mythologies
10. Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc

- All are a **series of works** that "try" to make us righteous before God/gods
- We are supposedly made righteous from the outside/in
- My obedience to "the law"/my good works make me righteous

The second group includes only one: Christianity

We are made righteous only by grace through faith in Jesus

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- We are made righteous from the inside/out
- First a heart change that then radically changes behavior
- Repentance from past sins
- You can't mix these two "religions" — they are contrary
- They are diametrically opposed to one another
- Nor can both be true
- Works or faith? That's the choice

- When we die, God's question: Why should I allow you into my eternity?
 - There are two and only two possible responses
1. Because of my works that show I'm a good person or...
 2. Only because of the work of Jesus on the cross

Back to the Pharisees coming to Jesus — who believed in a righteousness only by the Law:

Luke 5:33

And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink."

1. They point to John the Baptist's disciples who often fasted
2. The Pharisees often prayed
3. According to Jewish Law, fasting was only required on one day per year: the Day of Atonement (**Lev. 16:29, 31**)
4. Over the centuries, the Pharisees required more laws about fasting: two days per week to prove their righteousness
5. Prayers too during this time were required
6. John the Baptist's followers practiced this discipline (John's in prison)
7. He was an ascetic...his disciples were as well
8. **Question to Jesus:** "But your disciples eat and drink" (with tax collectors and sinners), actually touching them and their food
9. Jesus's disciples were enjoying Levi's party! Reclining at table. Eating from the same table
10. Scandalous! Their righteousness was forfeited by disobeying the Law

Luke 5:34

And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?"

Jesus answered, emphasizing these points:

1. There's a seven-day period of feasting and parties before a wedding
2. The bridegroom and his buddies especially enjoyed these days together
3. Jesus is the bridegroom to his disciples then and now

4. While the bridegroom is here, they need to enjoy having parties with Jesus

Luke 5:35

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

1. But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from his friends
2. This is a reference to Jesus's arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, forcibly arrested and taken away by Roman and Jewish authorities
3. Then crucified the next day
4. For three days they will fast/not be able to eat because of their grief
5. They will not have his presence at that time
6. Then, for 40 days, he will be resurrected and with them again
7. Their joy will be restored
8. Only to leave them again at the Ascension, promising to return again
9. Until then (over the next years) Jesus's friends WILL want/need to fast
10. The primary purpose of fasting: **to enter deeply into his presence**

Then Jesus gives two parables/examples to make his point:

Luke 5:36

He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old."

You can't put a new patch on an old garment:

- It will shrink when washed
- And tear the old garment to pieces

Luke 5:37-38

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.

You can't pour new wine into old wineskins

- If so, the gaseous emissions expand and tear the old wineskins apart
- The wine falls to the floor and is useless
- The wineskin is torn apart and useless
- New wine must be put in new wineskin

Luke 5:39

And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'"

1. The Pharisees are like people who drink old wine and are satisfied
2. They don't want the new and they don't want change
3. It is easy to fall into comfortable religious legalism
4. Just keep doing those religious acts and motions
5. Checking the box of religious duties
6. And then you think you are righteous because of your works
7. That's what every world's religion believes but one

Application

Jesus's new wine is the new birth: the Holy Spirit poured out in our hearts

John 3:3

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

- God's kingdom has now come to earth: an already/not yet tension
- His Spirit rules in the hearts of those who have received his grace
- A new heart that is loved, forgiven, and declared righteous by the gift of grace through faith
- From an old covenant of works to a new covenant of grace
- This regeneration/new life leads to repentance
- Yes, desiring to keep God's moral law
- **BUT (and this is key) we want to obey God's law not because we have to earn God's favor but because we have already received God's favor**
- Old staid forms and styles resist the Spirit's new wine
- **Illustration:** George Whitefield, John Wesley and the Church of England

(The movie: A Great Awakening formed our Constitutional freedom)

- Both were kicked out of the Church of England and went into the fields/coal mines
- They both came to America and especially Whitefield preached up and down the eastern seaboard
- They taught that our rights come from God, not government
- When self-governed, we need less government
- Which helped form our Constitution
- The three Great Awakenings in America
- How I would love to see another Awakening before Jesus's return
- His return is getting closer and closer by the day
- A pouring out of God's Spirit of grace and new wine all over our nation and the world
- God's Spirit of grace poured out on our nation

Do you desire this as well?

1. Do you know the new birth of Jesus? You must be born again
2. "Sleeper awake!"
3. Live each day guided by the Holy Spirit in you and through you
4. Look for ways to advance Jesus's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven (mobilization next week)
5. Knowing he will one day establish it fully all over the world. BTW: Grace answers these three questions: a) Can I lose my salvation? b) Don't I have to go through the Great Tribulation to prove my salvation? c) How do I handle fear and anxiety?
6. Lord Jesus, have your way in your Bride named MOHC: a new wineskin ready to imbibe your new wine

I really believe the Lord Jesus is getting ready to do something very special in our midst and in our church

Do you want to be a part of it?

Our primary battle is for the souls of people (texting this week with Hikmat)