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The Parables of Jesus Christ: Facts on Fasting and Feasting

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THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

PARABLE SIX: Facts on Fasting and Feasting (Mt. 9:14-15; Mk. 2:18-20; Lk. 5:33-35)

SURVEY

Jesus was criticized for not always instructing His disciples to observe the various fasts as did the disciples of both John the Baptist and the Pharisees. Jesus defended His action by pointing out that wedding guests feast and celebrate when the groom is present with them, and fast and mourn when he is removed from them.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the first of two occasions where Jesus refers to Himself as a bridegroom (see Mt. 9:15 and 25:1).
- On a previous occasion John the Baptist had referred to Him as the bridegroom.

"Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." (Jn. 3:28-29)

- Paul would later employ this analogy:

"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)

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:23-27)

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- Jesus was not at this point discouraging fasting.
 1. He Himself once fasted for forty days (Mt. 4:2).
 2. He laid down rules for fasting (Mt. 6:16-18).
 3. He indicated that fasting on certain occasions was necessary to experience the power of God (Mt. 17:21).

4. Following His ascension, His followers would fast (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5).
- However, as long as He was with the disciples (right up to the very hour of Calvary), the main priority of the Savior was to teach and train them.
 - In reality the Bible presents three kinds of fasting:
 1. Temporary abstinence from food (Acts 14:23)
 2. Temporary abstinence from sleep (2 Cor. 11:27)
 3. Temporary abstinence from sex (1 Cor. 7:5)