

Matthew 9:14-17

A Discussion About Fasting



Verse	Details	Keywords	Revelation	Application
Matthew 9:14	John's disciples ask Jesus why His disciples do not fast like they and the Pharisees do.	Fast (nēsteuō) – to abstain from food for spiritual purposes; Pharisees – strict religious sect.	Questions about religious practices can reveal assumptions about how to relate to God.	Examine your traditions. Are they drawing you closer to Jesus or just keeping rules?
Matthew 9:15	Jesus answers, 'How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.'	Bridegroom (nymphios) – Messianic image of Christ; Taken away (aparthē) – a hint of His death.	Jesus identifies Himself as the Bridegroom. His presence is a time for joy, but fasting will have its place after His departure.	Celebrate Christ's presence with joy now, and practice fasting as a way to seek Him when you long for His return.
Matthew 9:16	He says no one patches an old garment with unshrunk cloth, because the patch will pull away and make the tear worse.	Old garment – old religious system; Unshrunk cloth – new kingdom reality.	Jesus' kingdom is not an add-on to old religious forms; it requires a new way of life.	Let Jesus transform you fully. Don't try to fit the gospel into old habits.
Matthew 9:17	Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins burst, the wine is spilled, and the skins are ruined. New wine is poured into new wineskins, and both are preserved.	New wine – dynamic, living work of the Spirit; Wineskins – life structures or forms.	The gospel brings new life that needs new structures, not old legalistic forms.	Be open to new moves of the Spirit. Let God reshape your life to carry His fresh work.

Cross References

Matthew 9:14

John's disciples ask why Jesus' disciples do not fast.

- **Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33** – Parallels with slightly different wording.
- **Zechariah 8:19** – Fasting turned from mourning to joy in messianic days.
- **Colossians 2:16–17** – Warning against judging others on food or religious festivals.

Theme: Fasting is valuable, but its purpose changes with the presence of the Messiah.

Matthew 9:15

The bridegroom is with them now, but will be taken away; then they will fast.

- **John 3:29** – John the Baptist calls Jesus the bridegroom.
- **Mark 2:19–20; Luke 5:34–35** – Direct parallels.
- **Isaiah 62:5** – God rejoices over His people like a bridegroom.
- **John 16:20** – Sorrow will come when Jesus is taken, but will turn to joy.

Theme: Jesus is the Bridegroom; His presence brings joy, and fasting finds new meaning after His death and resurrection.

Matthew 9:16

New patch on an old garment makes the tear worse.

- **Mark 2:21; Luke 5:36** – Parallel sayings.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** – Anyone in Christ is a new creation.
- **Galatians 3:23–25** – The law was a guardian until Christ; now a new way has come.

Theme: The gospel is not a patch on old religion—it brings an entirely new life.

Matthew 9:17

New wine requires new wineskins.

- **Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37–38** – Parallels.
- **Ezekiel 36:26** – God gives a new heart and new spirit.
- **Romans 7:6** – Serve in the new way of the Spirit, not in the old way of the written code.
- **2 Corinthians 3:6** – The Spirit gives life; the letter kills.

Theme: The new covenant of the Spirit cannot be contained within old legalistic structures.

Summary Revelation

Matthew 9:14–17 teaches that **Jesus inaugurates a new covenant**. Joy replaces ritual fasting while He is present, and the new life He brings requires **new forms and transformed hearts**, not just patching up old religious systems.