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Get one of these, just always carry a notebook to these things down in order to focus my thoughts on the present moment and decide what to do next. By keeping my part of my brain

Has Your Focus Changed Enough?

Luke 5:37: (NASB) *And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined.*

Sometimes change is in order. Sometimes it becomes evident that the path we are currently following is not leading us in the best direction and a decision is required to alter not only our *direction*, but our *thinking* as well. This is what we are faced with when we profess Christianity. This profession requires us to observe, perceive and follow through on a *different* life. So, are you ready for that?

Our conversation will be based on a very short and simple parable that Jesus spoke: Matthew 9:14-17, Mark 2:18-22, Luke 5:33-39: (The consolidated, "Gospel 3-in-1 Rick Version")

Mark 2:18: *And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they (John's disciples) come and say unto him, why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast often, and make supplications; but thy (Jesus') disciples fast not?*

The basic question asked by John's disciples was sincere and sensible: Why did they fast and live a certain way but those who follow Jesus did not?

John the Baptist was a very radical example to follow: Mark 1:6-8: The last prophet Israel had was Malachi about 400 years earlier. The people wondered why Jesus was doing things so differently. **So, Jesus explained why things would from now on be different:** Mark 2:19-20: Once the bridegroom arrives, it is a time of great celebration and not fasting. **The practical, logical answer is given. But now Jesus will teach the lesson:** Luke 5:36-38:

These are two very natural and common examples of their day:

- *Old garment / new patch:* The inevitable shrinking of the new will damage the old.
- *Wine and wineskins:* Fermentation must be done in a sealed skin - it forces expansion and the stretching of the skin. Once stretched, the skin can no longer be used for new wine.

The answer challenged those listening to see an elevated way of thinking of the old and the new. Today we would call this "making a paradigm shift."

What is a "paradigm?"

(Source: *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey) p. 23: For our purpose, a simple way to understand paradigms is to see them as maps. We all know that "the map is not the territory." A map is simply an explanation of certain aspects of the territory. That's exactly what a paradigm is. It is a theory, an explanation, or model of something else. p. 29: Thomas Kuhn introduced the term "paradigm shift" in his highly influential landmark book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn shows how almost every significant breakthrough in the field of scientific endeavor is first a break with tradition, with old ways of thinking, with old paradigms. For Ptolemy, the great Egyptian astronomer, the earth was the center of the universe. But Copernicus created a paradigm shift, and a great deal of resistance and persecution as well, by placing the sun at the center. Suddenly, everything took on a different interpretation.

Jesus was telling the followers of John it was time for a different interpretation, a different meaning of the things happening. Jesus was THE Deliverer, the one everyone looked for in the future. But now the future had arrived! One acts differently during the waiting period compared to when the deliverer finally arrives.

What was the paradigm of the disciples of John? Mark 1:1-4: By definition, John's would be a short term work of preparation.

John's disciples notice the attention has shifted to Jesus and they complained to John: John 3:28-30: It was clear that John understood what was happening and what his role was. Jesus had to become the center of attention. John uses the illustration of the bridegroom that Jesus continued in Mark 2:19-20.

What was the paradigm of the Pharisees? Mark 12:13 John 5:16

Definition, Steven Covey, Explaining Paradigm Shift

- *A paradigm comes from the Greek root “paradeigma.” It basically means a pattern, a model, a representation, something that stands for something else. It comes from the mental image you have in your mind of the way things are out there. And the images we carry in our heads of the way things are - of reality - come basically from our own backgrounds, our own experiences. All of us think we see the world as it is. In fact, we see the world as we are.*

With Jesus, everything was dramatically different from both the Pharisees and John: His **OBJECTIVE**, his **MESSAGE** and his **METHOD**. All of this difference constituted new and uncharted territory, needing a new map - a new paradigm!

Do we need a wakeup call? Does our way of thinking follow after Jesus or something or someone else?

Galatians 4:1-7: (NRSV) ¹My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; ²but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. ³So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. ⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father! ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

What was Jesus’ objective and how was it so different?

Today’s parable teaching of Jesus is focusing on the “new.” The Gospel of the kingdom required a different mindset from the previous Jewish thinking. Could this Gospel also require us to readjust our mindset, even though we already have Christian thinking? Our Christian thinking has to grow and develop so we can make sure we are doing what we are supposed to be doing.

If you don’t know you have the wrong map, you will follow it thinking you have the right one. It will not lead to where you want to go. Sometimes we have the wrong map in our minds, like John’s disciples.

The previous objective: Announce, prepare and demonstrate that Messiah will come

Paradigm Shift to Jesus’ OBJECTIVE:

Fulfill the Law (not destroy the Law) Matthew 5:16-18: This fulfilling would provide release from the Law for his followers. He was not taking away from the integrity of the Law, so he should not have been a major threat to those he was speaking to.

Pay the ransom price - open the door to salvation for all Mark 10:42-45: This ransom would be paid through humble sacrifice - an example for all disciples to follow. It would also bring the kingdom that his life proclaimed. Instead of trying to keep up with atonement for sins as required by the Jewish Law year after year, his ransom was the sacrifice to replace the need for all of those other sacrifices. This was a huge paradigm shift!

Call out a people for his name 1 Peter 2:5-10: This called “people” will be many who walk the walk of sacrifice, in the likeness of the chief cornerstone, which is Jesus. This “people” stand apart from the masses that will be ransomed... but not without trial! This “people” will be spiritual guides and witnesses to those masses who are stuck in sin. The benefit of Christianity to all will become evident in the future.

Am I following Jesus in the way he would have me follow him or the way I feel comfortable in following him?

Paradigm Shift to Jesus’s MESSAGE:

The previous message: Repent and prepare for the coming forgiveness and deliverance - get ready to be delivered. Matthew 3:7-10

Paradigm Shift to Jesus’s MESSAGE (continued):

I am the way, the truth and the life - the Law was there to lead us to Jesus.

John 14:5-6: Jesus is the map! Follow what he says! He is the way to eternal life.

Galatians 3:23-26: Make the shift from what was to what should be. We were imprisoned under the Law, but now a paradigm shift - a new map - servitude has ended and sonship has begun because of Jesus.

...Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me

Luke 9:22-24: The willingness to follow and live sacrificially is the first test...

Love one another as I have loved you

John 15:8-14: We are to affirmatively *bear fruit*. Faith must be productive. We are to love as we are loved, even towards our enemies.

We know Jesus’ objective and message - but how does he carry those things out?

Paradigm Shift to Jesus’s METHOD:

The previous method: The sacrifices, rituals and tithing of the Law

Mark 7:3-4: They were all about doing the things that outwardly would show they were pious. This was a mentality filled with the Law and tradition. That was fine but it missed the main point of the Law - to prepare your heart for the coming of Messiah. When Messiah came, their hearts were not ready.

From our perspective, what we think can really be something entirely different. It is a wakeup call for us to understand just what is the call of Christianity. What is required of us? How am I responding to it? (And not how it is responding to me!)

Paradigm Shift to Jesus’s METHOD (continued):

Prophecies both fulfilled and spoken Matthew 21:4-7 Matthew 24:32-35: The sure word of prophecy serves as a direction for us to follow without fear! The fig tree represents the nation of Israel. At the time of his return, we were told to expect to see Israel blossom. In 1948 (against all odds!), Israel became a nation again.

Jesus relied on the Old Testament prophecies as a guide and then fulfilled those Scriptures and furthered them.

Miracles Luke 6:17-19: The miracles serve as great inspiration for us. They are a preview of what Jesus came to do but did not finish when he came the first time. The bigger picture is the future in the kingdom when all will be resurrected and healed. Does this make us want to follow Jesus in his footsteps?

Parables Matthew 13:13-17: The gift of understanding cannot be minimized! Do we appreciate this knowledge? The vast majority of people are not going to understand.

You are blessed because your eyes are open and ears are open. Are we “getting in our own way” of that understanding by following our own interpretations and not that from Jesus?

Love John 13:13-14: We should be serving others and not judging others.

Paradigm Shift to Jesus’s OBJECTIVE:

Are we “shifted” to understand what Jesus did?

- Fulfill the Law
- Pay the ransom price - open the door to salvation for all
- Call out a people for his name

Paradigm Shift to Jesus’s MESSAGE:

Are we “shifted” to hear what Jesus said?

- *I am the way, the truth and the life* - the Law was there to lead us to him
- *Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me*
- *Love one another as I have loved you*



Paradigm Shift to *Jesus's* **METHOD**:
Are we "shifted" to learn the way Jesus taught?

- Prophecies both fulfilled and spoken
- Miracles
- Parables
- Love

Back to this program's opening question asked by John's disciples of Jesus as to why things were being done differently.

Here is the next thing that happened to illustrate the point Jesus was teaching them:
Luke 8:40-56: Jairus fought through the crowd and begged Jesus to heal his young daughter. Jesus immediately sets out to heal and to show them that the kingdom of God was among them. On his way to this emergency he stops, for someone exhibited faith in their trials of life. We can imagine the distress of Jairus! This delay - an apparent misuse of time - cost his daughter her life! Couldn't this woman have just waited? His paradigm knew hope was lost because they did not act fast enough. So, Jesus shows his power over illness (sin) as he is on his way to reverse death!

We are in a situation where our paradigms can be very wrong in relation to our own Christianity. **Make sure your paradigm - the map you use inside your own mind - is a map of pure spirituality from the Scriptures and not from tradition or what is comfortable.**

Jesus came to save the world.

*So, has your focused changed enough?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*