

You Pick It; I'll Preach It

Why Don't We Use Musical Instruments In Worship

(Colossians 3:16-17)

- Introduction:
1. The non-use of musical instruments in churches of Christ is considered an oddity by many on-lookers.
 2. In fact, it has become the primary identifying mark of churches of Christ.
 3. As for members of churches of Christ, there seems to be a growing number who view our acappella only as an embarrassing relic that needs to be given a burial.
 4. There also seems to be a growing number of members who are convinced that it really isn't an important matter. Why all the fuss over such a triviality?
 5. This lesson is designed to explain "why all the fuss," why we object to their use, and answer a few common objections to our position.

I. **We're Not Alone In Our Position**

- A. The information that I am about share is only intended to make you aware that we are not alone in this contention.
- B. However, we must keep in mind that truth is not determined by majority vote, but by the revelation of God's mind (Exodus 23:2).
- C. The Primitive Baptists oppose the use of instruments in worship.
- D. The Reformed Presbyterians oppose the use of instruments in worship.
- E. The Greek Orthodox Church opposes the use of instruments in worship.
- F. As little as 150 years ago, most protestant denominations in this country (i.e. Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians) believed and practiced the same thing.
- G. "Old Light On New Worship" - by John Price

II. **Why We Object To The Use Of Mechanical Instruments In Worship**

- A. It has nothing to do with any of the following:
 1. Aesthetic preferences.
 2. Preserving a long-held and cherished tradition.
 3. Expediency (or lack thereof) of the monetary investment required.
 4. A pursuit of some sort of distinctiveness that sets us apart from others.
- B. It is simply/solely a matter of authority.
- C. (Colossians 3:17).
 1. Whatever we say and do must be done "in the name of the Lord."
 2. That expression, "in the name of the Lord" means "by the authority of the Lord."
 3. (Acts 4:7) "By what name" (or by whose authority) are you doing these things?
- D. God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the apostles, and inspired men never authorized the use of instruments in Christian worship.
 1. If they did, this matter could be immediately laid to rest.
 2. Where is the Scripture wherein God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or any of the inspired men authorized the use of instruments in Christian worship?
- E. We do however, have authority for singing (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Heb. 2:12).

III. **Objections To Our Position Considered**

- A. David used them (Psalm 150).
 - 1. Would one affirm that everything David practiced in O.T. worship are things we may practice in Christian worship today?
 - 2. Remember this important truth: God can authorize something in the past, but reject it later on.
 - a. God commanded Moses to strike the rock to bring forth water (Ex. 17:6).
 - b. God punished Moses for striking the rock to bring forth water at a later time. (Num. 20:11).
 - c. Just because it was once authorized, doesn't mean it will always be authorized.
 - 3. The Old law under which David lived was abolished and we no longer live under its rules (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14; Romans 7:1-4).
- B. They are used in Heaven (Revelation 14:2).
 - 1. Would one affirm that everything done in Heaven ought to be done in the church?
 - 2. There is no marriage in Heaven(Matthew 22:30). Does that mean that we should have no marriage on earth?
 - 3. You see, heaven is a different realm, obviously governed by different laws.
 - 4. Remember, what we need to see is not what was practiced before the church, or what is practiced in heaven, but what does God authorize in the church?
- C. It doesn't say not to use them.
 - 1. Can you imagine how large the Bible would have to be if God had to specify everything we are not to do?
 - 2. This violates common sense and the way we operate in every aspect of life.
 - a. Would the pharmacist be allowed to give you medicine the doctor did not prescribe and use the defense, "But he didn't say not to give you those meds."?
 - b. Would the retailer deliver a truck load of goods to your house when you ordered an appliance saying, "But you didn't say you didn't want all these other items."?
 - 3. Why do you suppose we acknowledge this necessary principle of communication in every aspect of life, but we drop it when it comes to the realm of religion?
 - 4. Actually, God's word affirms that this principle of authority is binding in the realm of religion as well (Colossians 3:17).
 - 5. (1 Corinthians 4:6).
- D. Playing an instrument is my God given talent.
 - 1. The mere fact that one possesses a talent does not authorize it for use in worship.
 - 2. Whose talents or what talents would then be excluded from being called, "worship?"
 - 3. There would literally be no end to such an approach.

- E. Instruments are just an aid to our singing like songbooks and a p.a. system.
1. Don't confuse "aids" with "additions."
 2. Note the difference between generic commands and specific commands.
 - a. Using oak would have been an "addition" to the command to build an ark out of gopher wood, because it changes the specified type of wood God wanted. However, using a hammer and a saw would have been an "aid" because when they would have merely aided Noah in doing exactly what God wanted - "build an ark out of gopher wood."
 - b. Likewise, using an instrument would be an "addition" to God's specific command to sing because it changes the kind of music God authorized. Using a songbook and p.a. system is an "aid" to accomplishing exactly what God wanted - "singing."

- Conclusion:
1. This lesson may challenge the thinking and practice of some.
 2. I simply ask that you consider what you practice and what God commanded and make sure you are obedient.
 3. "For what man, dare go in a way which has neither precept nor example to warrant it? Can that be obedience which has no command for it...O, the pride of man's heart, that instead of being a law-obeyer, will be a law-maker! For my part, I will not fear that God will be angry with me for doing no more than He has commanded me, and sticking close to the rule of His word, in matter of worship; but I should tremble to add or diminish!" (Richard Baxter, 1615-1691).