

Why Instrumental Music In Worship Matters

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Clearly today a cavalier even flippant approach to the worship of God is prevalent in society. The Church of Christ has not been immune from this spiritual plague as informed people are aware. At least in the interest of younger people who have never had the opportunity to learn the Bible doctrine of worship because it is discussed less and less from the pulpit and the classroom, “why instrumental music in worship matters” ought to be presented to well balanced, open minded people who wish to learn, retain, and uphold the doctrine of Christ.

It Violates Four Divine Laws

The use of instrumental music in worship violates four divine laws. **One, the law of faith.** A spirit that is against law dominates the religious landscape. It is known as *antinomianism* meaning “against law.” Lest the reader think reference to this word and the concept behind it represents some deep, esoteric, theological concept unassociated with everyday, ordinary life, please take note of the dictionary definition of the word “antinomian”: “one who holds that under the gospel dispensation of grace the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is necessary to salvation.” That’s *Webster’s Dictionary* page 49. Today, sometimes we have to start with the dictionary before we can get to what the Bible teaches. The law of faith includes both God’s moral and spiritual law. Not only does the law of faith guide the practices of clean, wholesome, godly living morally and overt expressions of worship and service spiritually but it even trains the conscience in matters that are optional as discussed in Romans 14:23b where Paul wrote, “For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

The New Testament both makes and sustains the claim to be God’s complete law of faith for people living throughout the world today. A sampling of verses from one New Testament letter will demonstrate the high regard in which everyone should hold the Bible. 2 Corinthians 2:14, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.” 2 Corinthians 3:6, “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” And, 2 Corinthians 4:7, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” But, since people are so difficult to convince today because of the prevalence of the spirit of antinomianism by non-religious and religious people alike, please note the following as proof of the point: In the parenthetical statement Paul made to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 9:21 he said, “Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.” And, in highly complimentary fashion James wrote of the law and its attendant blessings when he said, “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (Jas. 1:25).

Now, in view of the fact that the New Testament is the law of faith for everyone living today, here is how the use of instrumental music in worship matters. It is unauthorized by the law of faith, and, resultantly, it is impossible to sustain its use in worship as being something that God wants or with which he is pleased. So, does it matter? Absolutely, provided a person or congregation of people has the desire to give God what he wants and what pleases him.

Two, the law of worship. Bear in mind “there is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy” (Jas. 4:12), and this lawgiver is Jesus Christ (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22-26). The lawgiver said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24). The imperative of the command is formulated into the word “must,” and the two-letter preposition “in” forming the parameters of authorized actions in the phrase “in truth,” shows that the lawgiver, Jesus Christ, commands that actions and activities in worship to God are confined to that which is presented or legislated in the New Testament because that which is “in truth” is in “the word of God” (Jn. 17:17).

Now, in view of the fact that Jesus Christ is the lawgiver today, and he has placed everything he requires of those who approach God in worship to be done “in truth,” here is how the use of instrumental music in worship matters. The law of Christ does not authorize the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church today. So, does it matter? Absolutely, provided a person or congregation of people has the desire to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Three, the law of unity. The Bible says, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). The law of unity is the word of God, for Jesus said, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17:20-21). The word of God is both the basis of belief in Christ and the basis of unity in Christ.

Now, in view of the fact that the New Testament is the law of unity for everyone living today, here is how the use of instrumental music in worship matters. It is unauthorized by the law of unity, and it divides those who are obeying the word of God from those who have added to it, and, resultantly, it is impossible to sustain its use in worship as being something that God wants or with which he is pleased. So, does it matter? Absolutely, provided a person or congregation of people has the desire “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” and to give God what he wants in worship and what pleases him in worship.

Four, the law of love. A funny thing about love is the more it is given away the more you get. The urging of the scriptures is “let brotherly love continue” (Heb. 13:1). Since some do not think of love as partaking in the concept of law, think again from the following statements: John 14:15, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” 1 John 4:20-21, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” Revelation 22:14, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Notice, that last verse makes honoring the law of God essential to entering into heaven.

Now, in view of the fact that the New Testament is the law of love for everyone living today, here is how the use of instrumental music in worship matters. Its use in worship cannot be found in the New Testament and, therefore, it is unauthorized by the law of love, and, resultantly, it is impossible to sustain its use in worship as being something that God wants or with which he is pleased. So, does it matter? Absolutely, provided a person or congregation of people has the desire to love God and to give God what he wants in worship and what pleases him in worship.

Summary

Instrumental music in worship matters because it violates the law of faith, the law of worship, the law of unity, and the law of love. Christians must ever remain content in the worship of God to be “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19).