

Lesson 7 | Wednesday, January 17, 2024

MIND YOUR KING, lessons from Doy Moyer's Book, Mind Your King.

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For the last lessons, we have tried to show that God has communicated to us the way He has made us to communicate with each other. We **tell** others what we want, we **show** others what we want, or we **imply** what we expect of others.

In this lesson, we want to address more specifically, and in application, the question of silence. If indeed God reigns, Christians need to know His will. "If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words" (1Peter 4:11). It is controversial with many and the controversy surges around two main ideas: 1) we can do what has not been forbidden, or 2) we can do what has been positively indicated as acceptable.

Let's make this first distinction, however. Though something is "unspecified" that does not mean that it is actually something about which God has been silent. For us, if we send our child to the store to bring home "bread," he will accomplish this when he returns with sourdough bread, even though it was not specified. If returns with cookies, he has not. The general request for bread is fulfilled without specificity. This is "general" law as some express it. But it is the nation of communication. But if there had been no request for bread, could he return with it?

Silence is silence. Can you cite an author as approving something, and we cannot demonstrate where the author as said so, are we not misrepresenting the author? An author can be cited on what he/she has said, not on what they never have. If the author has said nothing, it does not indicate that he disapproves, per se. But if the author is quoted as saying that "I am only approving of or promoting matters that I have spoken about. I approve nothing else," what would we be called if we cited him anyway?

What has God said – throughout Scripture:

- *"Be careful to do everything I command you; **do not add anything** to it or take anything away from it."* (Deuteronomy 12:32).
- *"The hidden things belong to the Lord our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our children forever, so that we may follow all **the words of this law**."* (Deuteronomy 29:29).
- *"Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully **the whole instruction** my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. This **book of instruction** must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe **everything written** in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do." (Joshua 1:7-8; c.f. Deuteronomy 5:32).*
- *"James responded, "Brothers, listen to me. Simeon has reported how God first intervened to take from the Gentiles a people for his name. And **the words of the prophets agree** with this, as it is written" (Acts 15:13-15).*
- *"Then the apostles and the elders, ...wrote: Since we have heard that some **without our authorization** went out from us and troubled you with their words and unsettled your hearts, we have unanimously decided..." (Acts 15:22-24).*
- *"Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying: "**Nothing beyond what is written**." The purpose is that none of you will be arrogant, favoring one person over another." (1Corinthians 4:6).*
- *"Anyone who does not remain **in Christ's teaching** but goes beyond it does not have God. The one who remains in that teaching, this one has both the Father and the Son." (2John 9).*
- *"I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone **adds to them**, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if **anyone takes away***

from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book.” (Revelation 22:18-19).

Just as Paul mentioned to the Corinthians above, *The purpose is that none of you will be arrogant.* If we engage in “interpreting silence” we engage in speculation that is based on presumption. We may make observations when hearing a speaker today and conclude based on body language or other considerations. And even this lends itself to being presumptive and speculative. However, with the subject at hand, we are dealing with Bible text – alone. And the only way we can speak positively about what God has been silent about – is to speak with arrogant presumption and speculation.

For an application, consider the question of the propriety of instrumental music in worship assembly. As God’s people, we are *“a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”* and as this *“holy priesthood, [we are] to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”* (1Peter 2:9,5). So as such, we know WHO regulates worship. Just as explicitly as God stated it to Israel (c.f. Deuteronomy 12:30-32) and Paul to Colossae (2:20-32), we are not to seek what others say please God – or what we say pleases God – but indeed, what God says pleases Him. *“And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”* (Colossians 3:17).

And the question of whether this is just a modern “Church of Christ” issue, it is not. See John Price’s book, *Old Light in New Worship*, where he outlines his own opposition as a Baptist to its use. See Powerpoint.

- **The New Testament shows God’s approval of singing** for Christians (c.f. 1Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15; James 5:13). God is in charge, is He not?
- **The history of Christians’ worship indicates singing was the musical praise they offered.** Catholic Encyclopedia: “Although Josephus tells of the wonderful effects produced in the Temple by the use of instruments, the first Christians were of too spiritual a fibre to substitute lifeless instruments for or to use them to accompany the human voice.” (Catholic Encyclopedia, CCEL, vol.10, 652). “Instrumental music had no place in the early Christian churches” (John Girardeau, *Instrumental Worship in the Public Worship of the Church*, 1888, 102-103). And even reformer John Calvin said, in his commentary on Psalm 33, “To proceed what we are there warranted by him [i.e. Paul] is not only, I must say, unadvised zeal, but wicked and perverse obstinacy.” And then says, “But when they [i.e. Christians] frequent their sacred assemblies, musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law.”

In Price’s book, he points out that Old Testament worship in all of its outward ceremonies and rituals have been abolished. For the worship of the church, we must look to Christ and His apostles to establish God’s will for Christians on this matter. With no command, example or any indication whatsoever that the Lord desires instrument music in public worship, we have no warrant for their use.

So silence. God has **nowhere commanded** Christians to worship with instruments. He commanded Israel to (c.f. 2Chronicles 29:25) but they were also commanded to offer many sacrifices. To do so, in worship of Christ, would be to fall under the judgment of Paul’s words (c.f. Galatians 5:2-4).