



The Voice of Truth



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Instrumental Music In Worship: Right Or Wrong?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Generally, the world frowns on those who refuse to use mechanical instruments of music in their worship; but with those who truly follow Christ, it is a matter of principle, and respect for God's authority. Let us examine some reasons why people use music.

There are those who attempt to justify the use of mechanical instruments in Christian worship upon the grounds that they like it. But in worship unto God we must be concerned about what God likes, not what we like. In worship we are seeking to please God, not ourselves. In His book, He has told us what will please Him, and the only way we can please Him is to do what He says in the way that He says (**John 4:23-24**).

Look at this argument, all things which I like are things which may be used in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship is a thing which I like. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which may be used in Christian worship. Using this logic, I like Raisin Brand, toast and coffee, but I have no scriptural right to add these to the Lord's Supper just because I like them.

There are those who contend that if mechanical instrumental music may be used in the home that it may also be used in worship. Look with me at this argument. All things which are right to have in the home are things which are right to have in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music is a thing which is right to have in the home. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which is right to have in Christian worship. Many things are permissible and wholesome in domestic settings that would be out of place in worship. Paul recognized this when he prohibited a mixing and mingling of a common meal and the Lord's sup-

per (**1 Cor. 11:20ff**). Steak, potatoes, gravy, biscuits, tea and dessert are all right in a home setting on a dining table. They would constitute sin if placed on the Lord's Table, instead of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. Games, ping pong or playing video games are all right in the home setting but would be sinful if made into worship elements.

It is frequently claimed that we can have mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship because there is going to be instrumental music in heaven. *"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps"* (**Rev. 14:2**). Let us look at this argument. All things which John heard in heaven are things which may be used in Christian worship. Harpers harping with their harps is a thing which John heard in heaven. Therefore, harpers harping with their harps is a thing which may be used in Christian worship. In the first, place John did not hear harpers. The record says that John heard a voice; the voice was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps. John saw horses; what about riding horseback in Christian worship? *"And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection"* (**Luke 20:34-36**). There will be no marriage in heaven. Does this mean a Christian man or woman who is married can't be in the church here on earth? No faith, no hope in heaven; does this mean there is no faith or hope in the church?

Many contend that mechanical instrument music may be employed in Christian worship upon the ground that "David had it." Let us look at this argument. Mechanical instrumental music in worship is a thing which David practiced. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which may be practiced in Christian worship. David offered animal sacrifices to God. Can we offer animal sacrifices in our worship? David practiced polygamy. Is the Christian authorized to? What if a man would justify the use of instruments by the Law of Moses? Here is the answer from Paul: "*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*" (Gal. 5:4).

Many contend that mechanical instrumental music in worship is authorized upon the ground that the Bible does not say, "Don't have it." All things which the Bible does not specifically say "Don't have" are things which may be used in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music in worship is a thing which it does not specifically say "Don't have." Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing may be used in Christian worship. So, it's alright for me while preaching to hit a bucket of golf balls? Or put a basketball hoop up, and shoot baskets while preaching? The Bible does not say "Don't have it." What a silly argument. The Bible authorized by what it says, "NOT" what it does not say (1 Pet. 4:11). When God explicitly told Noah to build an ark out of gopher wood (Gen. 6:14), it implicitly excluded using any other kind. Noah would have been in violation of God's will to use pine, for God did not authorize it. It was sin that caused the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Israel's first high priest. The Lord had prescribed the kind of fire to be used in offerings (Lev. 6:10-13). This was no secret, yet "*Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD*" (Lev. 10:1-2). After God specifically designated the fire,

they could presumptuously say, "*But he didn't say not to!*" But that one case of logic cost them their lives! Since the New Testament, in several passages (Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 5:13), specifies singing in Christian worship, it would be a violation to offer any other kind of music (instrumental) in the use of spiritual songs. Christians are not governed by the idea that we can do anything and everything in matters of religion which the Bible does not specifically condemn. Rather, we are governed by the divine principle that we can do only that which is authorized by the Bible.

While it is true that the Law was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), some hold that this did not affect the Psalms; the Psalms were not nailed to the cross. All things which the Psalms authorized are things which may be employed in Christian worship. Can we practice the dance in Christian worship because it was authorized by (Psa. 150)? Can we offer animal sacrifices in Christian worship (Psa. 66:13)? The truth of the matter is, the word "Law" refers to the whole Old Testament scriptures, including the Psalms. Notice these verses:

"Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" (John 10:34). "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High" (Psa. 82:6). "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause" (John 12:34). "Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause" (Psa. 35:19).

The scriptures teach us to sing (Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Jas. 5:13). No scripture authorizes instrumental music in worship today; it cannot be found. Therefore, those who use musical instruments in the worship today violate the Lord's will. "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Rom. 10:17). "...For whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

Therefore, those who use instrumental music in worship are sinning! *

Has "The Salt" Lost Its Flavor?

By Jonathan L. Perz

In the great Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples saying, *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men"* (Matthew 5:13). The intent of these words was to promote the need for faithful living and good examples from those following Christ. Unfortunately, many making a profession of Christianity today have lost sight of the Lord's teaching.

As the salt of the earth, Christians are to be distinct—set apart—not only by their proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ, but by the faithful lives they live. Just as salt, they are to have a distinct flavor and to be a preservative against the evils and woes of society. When they lose that distinct flavor—the soul preserving power of Christ—they are good for nothing.

To make the application more specific, simply look around at the world. Morality is in short measure these days. Things like immodest apparel, sexual immorality and lasciviousness are the "in thing." Sins of all sorts are declared good and acceptable. Homosexuality is embraced as an alternate lifestyle. Abortion has made wholesale murder legal and acceptable. Lying is commonplace and, in some places, expected. "Anything goes" is the standard for most. The unlimited vices that Hollywood and television alone have brought into the home are enough to vex any righteous soul who falls prey to their temptation. These are just the prominent sins of the world, the list of sins is endless! While conditions such as these have existed for centuries, and will continue to exist, the Lord expects better from His disciples. He says, "you are the salt of the earth."

We have lost our flavor when we are unfruitful in the Lord. When we stop growing by study and meditation of God's word, we are unfruitful (2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Timothy 4:12-16). When we are not rich in good works, we are unfruitful (1 Timothy 6:17-19). When we stop manifesting our love for our brethren and our neighbors, we are unfruitful (2 Pet. 1:5-8). When we grow weary in well doing, we are unfruitful (Galatians 6:9). Such Christians are "good for nothing."

We have lost our flavor if we no longer cry out and fight against the evils of this world and those who seek to justify such evils. Things such as abortion, homosexuality, sex outside of marriage, and the vices of Hollywood need to be fought, resisted, spoken against, and denounced for what they are—sin—condemnable in the sight of God (Ephesians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 5:9-11). Does this mean we must make every battle a big one? No. We simply need to use every opportunity afforded us to teach God's word and be a good example (James 5:19-20; Matthew 5:16). If Christians fail to do this, they become "good for nothing."

We have lost our flavor when we turn a blind eye to wrongs being perpetrated in this world. I can't help but think of how easy it would have been for John the Baptist to simply turn his back and ignore the sin of adultery between Herod and Herodias (Matthew 14:3 ff). Yet, John understood the leaven of evil, spoke against it and lost his head for his faith. The safe and easy choice was silence, yet John the Baptist was "the salt of the earth."

We have lost our flavor when we defend error. So many professing faith in Christ would never practice homosexuality or consider having an abortion, yet they want to defend the right of others to choose such an option. In the sight of God, the consequences of such thinking are one and the same as having become a homosexual or having an abortion. Consider the teaching of Romans 1:26-32. Yet, the more subtle the error, the easier it is to defend. Even those who I would call brethren have come to the

defense of those who teach that divorce and remarriage for any cause is acceptable in the sight of God (**Matt. 19:1-9**). Friends, we implicate ourselves by so doing (**2 John 9-11**) and should be "thrown out and trampled underfoot," that we might be saved in the end (**1 Cor. 5**). What grave damage this little bit of heaven can do!

Finally, we have lost our flavor when we become the sinner ourselves. Such is often the case. The damage done to the cause of Christ by those who teach error, commit iniquity, live immorally, drink, gamble, lie, and manifest every conceivable wickedness in the eyes of a lost and sinful world have caused many to esteem Christianity as nothing more than a hypocrite's religion. These ungodly examples, when left unchecked and

undisciplined by the church, can virtually render a church useless in a community. Friends, such is despicable and will not go unpunished.

When Christians lose their flavor, the world loses its taste for righteousness. Whether in the home or in the workplace, amongst neighbors, family, or friends, we must always strive to be the seasoning, preserving, flavorful salt of the earth our Lord expects us to be. If we find our own lives to have lost that soul preserving flavor, let us confess and repent of our error, restore the old and straight ways, and strive never to lose our flavor again, lest we find ourselves thrown out and trampled underfoot as good for nothing (**Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; cf. Revelation 21:7-8**). Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

"Do My Sins Affect My Soul?"

By Jarrod Jacobs

Those who believe in the impossibility of apostasy argue that sins of the flesh, the outer man, do not affect the condition of the soul, the inner man. Hence, the inner, spiritual man, the soul, cannot be lost because of the deeds or sins performed by the flesh. A number of passages show this type of thinking is false (**Matt. 15:18-19; II Cor. 7:1; Col. 3:5-6; Eph. 5:3-6; Rom. 8:12-13; Gal. 5:19-21, 6:7-8**).

However, two are especially simple, useful and easy to be understood. "Abstain from

fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11). Sins of the flesh do affect the soul. They "war against the soul." Further, in **II Corinthians 5:10**, the Spirit saith, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Could language be plainer? How, then, can Calvinists argue that sins of the flesh do not jeopardize the destiny of the soul?

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3**

Believe - **Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24**

Repent - **Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30**

Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21**

Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27**

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17**

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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