

Unity In The Church

Mechanical Instrumental Music

(Col 3:16-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on “Unity In The Church.”
 - a. Last week we looked at some introductory remarks and had a specific reminder.
 - i. **Co 3:17** “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”¹
 - b. This week we are going to start getting into what we called “change agents” from last week. Specifically the change agents that have led to “Mechanical Instrumental Music.”
 - i. **Co 3:16** “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”
3. Historical Background
 - a. There is much detail we could go into concerning the history of this particular idea as far as church history is concerned however I want us to focus on our topic at hand “Unity In The Church.”
 - i. As such there is no place better to consider than the split that mechanical instruments brought the church.
 - b. The introduction of the mechanical instrument in the church of Christ after/during the “Restoration Movement.”
 - i. In 1859 Dr. L. L. Pinkerton, the preacher at the Midway (KY) Christian church, decided on his own to bring in the melodeon. (<http://goo.gl/3fjGoz>)
 1. He did this because he felt it could aide to correct the poor quality of congregation singing as he saw it.
 - ii. One of the elders at the congregation, Adam Hibler, took and destroyed the melodeon.
 1. Later we would take and hide the second one as well which is now displayed at the Midway College.
 - iii. With the third melodeon installed the congregation split.
 - c. Over the next few decades there were many heated debates over the issue.
 - i. It wasn’t until 1906 however until there was an official split over the mechanical instrument.
 1. This was done at the behest of brother David Lipscomb. (Ibid)
4. Thus we find something that has divided the brotherhood in the past.
 - a. However this is not just a historical event in the past but rather has surfaced again in the church.
 - i. Due to this we will be examining what the Bible says on this topic.
5. With that in mind let us now look at our lesson today.
 - a. Keep in mind that when I’m talking about the use of mechanical instruments I’m dealing with its use in worship to God.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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I. Modern Forms Used To Introduce The Mechanical Instrument

- A. There is only one method but it takes on different “forms”
 1. The method is commonly called “new hermeneutics.”
 - i. The idea here is that everything is subject to personal interpretation and nothing (really) is a matter of fellowship.
 - a. The NH motto is in essence “There is one law, love the Lord your God and everything else is just a suggestion.”
 - ii. This NH started picking up headway in the 1980’s and continues strong to this day unfortunately.
- B. Some forms used to introduce mechanical instruments in worship today
 1. The most common form is the introduction of the praise team.
 - i. It starts, usually, by having certain members with good voices sit strategically throughout the congregation.
 - a. In other words you will have a group of bases sit in one place, a group of tenors in another, and so on and so forth.
 1. Keep in mind that tenor and base are men while soprano and alto are women.
 - ii. It then moves into having the best of each vocal group i.e. soprano, alto, tenor, and base move to the front of the auditorium.
 - a. Sometimes they will get microphones right off sometimes they hold off for a bit but they will eventually all get microphones.
 - iii. It then progresses to having the four singers or praise team move up to the stage.
 - a. Here they will either backup the song leader or replace him.
 - iv. From here there is no leap to mechanical instruments.
 - a. It will not be long before the mechanical instrument is brought in.
 - v. This usually is a drawn out process taking upwards of 15 to 20 years though it can move much fast but rarely slower.
 2. The second form is the introduction of the mechanical instrument in a “test” environment.
 - i. It usually starts with the youth group.
 - a. You get the kids the rest is just a matter of patience.
 - ii. It then moves to “special” worship services.
 - a. These could be things like Christmas, Easter...
 - iii. From here there is no leap to continuous usage.
 - a. People are used to it now and those opposed have left usually.
 - iv. This method takes far less time.
 3. Thus...
 - i. As more preachers and elders start believing and teaching New Hermeneutics the time laps from start to finish will continuously decrease.

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II. Excuses Used To Justify The Use Of Mechanical Instruments

- A. The three most common excuses giving
1. The Bible doesn't say I can't use them.
 - i. Tertullian 160-220AD, spoke of those who contended that "the thing which is not forbidden is freely permitted." (<http://goo.gl/rxujek>)
 - ii. Martin Luther of the Restoration Movement stated, "What is not against Scripture if for Scripture and Scripture for it." (<http://goo.gl/PO0aJc>)
 2. The Bible uses the word "psalo" which means with mechanical instrument.
 - i. Many will go to Strong's Definition which reads "1 to pluck off, pull out. 2 to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang. 2A to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate. 2B to play on a stringed instrument, to play, the harp, etc. 2C to sing to the music of the harp..." (Strong, J. (1996). The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order. (electronic ed.). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.)
 3. The Psalms were meant to be sung with mechanical instruments.
 - i. Many once again to go Strong's definition of the word psalm "a set piece of music, i.e. a sacred ode (accompanied with the voice, harp or other instrument" (Strong, J. (2009). A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.)
 - ii. They then go to Ps 150.
 - a. **Ps 150:1-6** "Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! 2 Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! 3 Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! 5 Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!"
- B. Examining these arguments for sound reasoning
1. The Bible doesn't say I can't use them.
 - i. One person went so far as to say ""an inherent fallacy in the CoC syllogism: (1) The Bible is silent re: the proposition that musical instruments are wrong; therefore the proposition musical instruments are wrong" must be prohibited also. (2) The Bible is silent on the fact that silence is prohibitive; therefore this "silence hermeneutic" is self-refuting. For if it is true it is false, and if it is false then it is still false." (<http://goo.gl/pzd556>)
 - ii. Is the Bible really silent on the fact that silence is prohibitive?
 - a. One needs to look no further than the Bible.
 1. **He 7:14** "For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests."
 - b. Here God was silent and that meant Jesus could not be an earthly priest.

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- iii. Thus...
 - a. We can clearly see that God has spoken and stated clearly that where He is silent we are not authorized to go.
- 2. The Bible uses the word “psalo” which means with mechanical instrument.
 - i. One person wrote “Put another way, no lexicon teaches what Exclusion [those who argue for exclusively a cappella singing] commonly asserts, that psallo had completely changed its meaning in the first century. The closest that selected lexicons come is to say that the meaning in the New Testament might not demand accompaniment.” (<http://goo.gl/975ihp>)
 - ii. Notice this statement is actually false.
 - a. “to sing songs of praise, with the **possible** implication of instrumental accompaniment (in the NT often related to the singing of OT psalms)—‘to sing, to sing a psalm, to sing a song of praise, to sing praises.’” (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains. New York: United Bible Societies.) (emphasis mine)
 - b. “primarily “to twitch, twang,” then, “to play a stringed instrument with the fingers,” and hence, in the Sept., “to sing with a harp, sing psalms,” **denotes, in the NT, “to sing a hymn, sing praise”** (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.) (emphasis mine)
 - c. “1 to pluck off, pull out. 2 to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang. 2A to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate. 2B to play on a stringed instrument, to play, the harp, etc. 2C to sing to the music of the harp. **2D in the NT to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song.**” (Strong, J. (1996). The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order. (electronic ed.). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.) (emphasis mine)
- iii. Thus...
 - a. As an one can see by the time of the church the word “psalo” did not mean with mechanical instrument.
- 3. The Psalms were meant to be sung with mechanical instruments.
 - i. Like the word “psalo” the word “psalm” had changed definitions by the time of the N.T.
 - a. “Emphasis is given in v. 19 by the verbs “singing and making melody” (cf. Ps. 27:6). psállontes does not **now** denote literally playing on a stringed instrument, and the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs hardly refer to different kinds of texts.” (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.) (emphasis mine)

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- b. “Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; the phrase ἔχειν ψαλμόν is used of one who has it in **his heart to sing** or recite a song of the sort” (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti. New York: Harper & Brothers.) (emphasis mine)
- ii. Thus...
 - a. It is very evident that the word psalm did not mean accompanied with mechanical instruments during the N.T. times.
- C. Thus...
 - 1. What we find is all three popular “excuses” used to bring mechanical instruments into the church which always leads to division are without any logical conclusions.

III. What God Said Concerning Mechanical Instruments In Worship

- A. God is a God of logic and thus order
 - 1. **I Co 14:33** “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace...”
- B. God authorized the use of mechanical instruments under the Law of Moses
 - 1. **Nu 10:10** “On the day of your gladness also, and at your appointed feasts and at the beginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. They shall be a reminder of you before your God: I am the LORD your God.”
 - 2. **II Ch 29:25** “And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, harps, and lyres, according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king’s seer and of Nathan the prophet, for the commandment was from the LORD through his prophets.”
 - 3. **Ps 150: 3-5** “Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! 5 Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!”
- C. God never authorized mechanical instruments under the Law of Christ
 - 1. Look at every verse in the N.T. and one will not find one time where a mechanical instrument is used in worship.
 - i. **Ac 16:25; Ro 15:9; I Co 14:15; Ep 5:19; Co 3:16; He 2:12; Ja 5:13; Rv 14:3; 15:3**
- D. Thus...
 - 1. We can see clearly that God has not authorized there use and as such we must be wary of anything that even “could” lead to people thinking this is ok to do.

CONCLUSION

- 1. Brethren let us strive for unity in all matters.
 - a. Let us strive for “Unity In The Church” even on this issue but let us not compromise the Word of God to do so but rather teach and pray that all come to truth on this issue.
- 2. Question: Are you guarding yourself from all things that even “could” cause you to stumble.
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?

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3. Invitation

- a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**