

REWRITING THE HYMNAL

Rightly Dividing Music & Its Function In The Church

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” – Ephesians 5:19

1. Music and Christianity

- a. Not unique to Christianity, but...most Islam forbids all music; the RCC strictly forbade it by laity; et al
- b. We learned Christianity has diminished ‘worship’ to music, hand waving, & passionate performance
- c. But ALL so-called Christian churches incorporate music, though variations are myriad:
 - i) Congregational/clergy; instruments/a cappella; traditional/modern; liturgical/improvised
- d. 2 reasons for why churches have the music they do: 1) Tradition/Doctrine; or 2) Retention/Attraction
- e. Clearly form of communication & part of human experience; both God’s creation & direct instruction
- f. A theological can of worms w/ greater impact than perceived, solved again by MADPRD – 1Cor 15:33

2. Music in the Bible (or Not...)

- a. From Gen 4 to Rev 18, music is referenced throughout scripture (over 850 specific musical words)
- b. Examples abound, but: God sings (Zep3:17); Jesus sang (Mk 14:26, Heb 2:12); God has instruments (1Ch 16:42); 24/7 music in the tabernacle (1Ch 9:33); Satan was created a musician (Ezk 28:13)
- c. Music involved w/ ceremony, swearing, signaling, memorials, celebration, tabernacle service, beauty, amusement, dancing, sign of luxury, seduction, solemnity, refreshment, comfort, bringing joy, resulting from joy, resulting from mourning/weeping, prophesying, praise, instruction, & commanded by God
- d. No instruction to play instruments in NT? (Church of Christ: “speak where the Bible speaks”)
 - i) Correct, except for “psalm” in 1Cor 14:26, Eph 5:19, Col 3:16. Psalm doesn’t always mean the *book of Psalms*; it can mean “song” or “accompanied song” – Psa 81:2, 83:1, 98:5-6
 - ii) Knowing Paul’s message, why would he instruct the body of Christ to sing the Book of Psalms?

3. Music for the Church Today

- a. A source of church contention then & now. *People become dispensational when it suits their agenda.*
- b. Context of Paul’s 4 music passages is edification of the body—Ep 4:16-5:21, Col3:9-17, 1Cor14:12-15,26
- c. Col 3 & Eph 5 are clear instruction for the church to engage in music (no different than 1Th 5:11-22)
- d. Despite clear instruction, there’s a familiar lack of detail about how to do it (2Th 3:10, et al)—1Cor10:31
- e. Musical sounds should help, not hurt – Titus 2:7-14, Phi 4:8, Rom 14:23
- f. Walking by faith, not by sight we know the biggest concern with music is knowledge, understanding; it’s of the heart of the Spirit (not of the flesh: circumstances, emotions) – 1Cor 10:26, Col 2:16-17
- g. We have changed 59/64 songs in the hymnal to be able to sing & admonish with understanding
- h. Music is a tool that God created. Used wrongly, a most deceptive and dangerous one, but used rightly with understanding, a most powerful means of instilling doctrine and causing it to work out of us.