

RESPECTING THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES #2

INSPIRATION FORBIDS US SPEAKING WHERE GOD HAS NOT SPOKEN:

Paul wrote, *“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think [of men] above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another”* (1 Cor. 4:6). We must not think of men (or any other subject or matter) above and beyond what God has revealed in his Word. We must not presume to know what God has not declared. We must not act, proceed, undertake or perform in realms or areas where God has not authorized (legislated) our actions. This verse clearly sanctions the silence of the Scriptures.

The apostle John declared the same thing, *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son”* (2 John 1:9). To either violate what God has said (transgress) or to not be restrained by what God has said (abideth not, goeth onward), is a violation of God's will. To do a religious act without Bible authority (book, chapter and verse) is not abiding in the doctrine of Christ. This verse clearly sanctions the silence of the Scriptures.

John also wrote, *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book”* (Rev. 22:18-19). If we ignore what God has specified (take away) or teach and practice (add to) what God has not authorized, we stand condemned. If we speak, allow, permit, grant, license or authorize on the basis of the silence of the Scriptures, then there is no end to the things we can teach and practice in the name of religion. These verses clearly sanction the silence of the Scriptures.

Many other passages forbid adding to or taking from God's word (Deut. 4:2; 13:32; Prov. 30:6; Gal. 1:6-9).

APPLICATION OF THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES:

Many simple observations have been used to illustrate the principle of acting on silence. For example:

If a mother sends her son to the grocery store and tells him to buy a loaf of bread and a gallon of milk and he returns with bread and milk along with bananas, candy and a magazine, he's got some explaining to do. He may argue that he was not told he couldn't buy those things, but his mother's silence about them forbids his

purchase of them. A mother does not have to go through the list of the hundreds of items in the store and tell her son not to buy those things. Her silence does not give him liberty to buy what he wants. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

What would you think if you gave the pharmacist a prescription to fill and he included another medicine or two? He's in big trouble! He may say the doctor didn't tell him not to include other drugs. But, everyone knows the doctor's prescription (by its silence) forbid any other drugs. The pharmacist has authority to act according to the prescription -- adding nothing and deleting nothing. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

What about water baptism? Some religious groups sprinkle and some include infants. They can argue that the Bible does not say "thou shalt not sprinkle," "thou shalt not pour," "thou shalt not baptize babies." However, the Bible authorizes immersion (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12) for penitent believers (Acts 2:38). Its silence on sprinkling and pouring and infants does not authorize sprinkling, pouring or baptizing babies -- its silence forbids it. However, the Greek word *baptidzo* demands immersion. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

The Bible authorizes singing and making melody in your heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). But someone says, "It does not say we can't play instruments." But, the Bible's silence on the subject forbids the use of mechanical instruments of music. People often argue that we are making a law God did not make when we forbid mechanical music since the Bible does not forbid it. However, the Bible does forbid it in its silence. By God telling us what to do (sing) and use (lips, Heb. 13:15; heart, Eph. 5:19), he eliminates having to tell us what not to do (play) and use (mechanical instruments of music). Those who contend for their use are adding to God's word. They are speaking where God (the Bible) has not spoken and stand condemned before God (Rev. 22:18-19; II John 9-11). They are allowing that which the Bible forbids in its silence. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

Many people count beads, burn incense and pray to Mary. They may argue that the Bible says nothing about these things. It is silent! But, does that fact allow their use or authorize their practice? If it does, then there is no end to the things that could be used or practiced in the name of religion. God authorizes what he wants and his silence forbids all he does not want -- it eliminates everything else. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

Many religious groups have synods, councils, conferences, high ranking clerics or even a pope. The Bible says nothing about these things. Does its silence grant men liberty to act as they so desire? No it does not. The Bible says Jesus is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:15). That eliminates everything else God did not have to specify every type of organization he did not want. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

When God authorizes a thing to be done, His silence on the subject forbids everything else. For example:

The authority for Noah to use gopher wood in building the ark forbid him using oak or pine or poplar (Gen. 6:14).

The authority for Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice forbids him offering Ishmael instead (Gen. 22:2).

The authority to use fire from the altar forbids using a "strange" or different fire (Lev. 16:12; Num. 16:46; Lev. 10:1-2).

The authority to use a lamb in the Passover meal forbids offering another kind of animal (Exodus 12).

The authority for Moses to speak to the rock forbids him hitting it (Num. 20:7-12).

The authority for Moses to hit the rock forbids him speaking to it (Exodus 17:6).

The authority for priests of the tribe of Levi to offer sacrifices forbid someone from another tribe doing so (Exodus 28:1; 28:43--29:1; Num. 18:21, 26; Heb. 5:1; 1 Sam. 13:5-14).

The authority for the high priest to be from the tribe of Levi forbid one from another tribe being high priest (Exodus 27:21--28:1; Heb. 7:12-14).

The authority for unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper forbids hot dog buns and orange juice (Luke 22:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25).

The authority to sing and make melody in our heart in worship to God forbids playing mechanical instruments of music, including humming, thumping, booming, whistling, booning or anything but singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The authority to give as we've been prospered on the first day of the week forbids giving on any other day and it forbids tithing, selling or fund raising (1 Cor. 16:2).

The authority to "preach the word" forbids preaching anything else (2 Tim. 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9).

Silence is not only important, it is essential!

CONCLUSION

The Bible clearly demands authority for all we say and do (Col. 3:17). To act without authority brings God's displeasure upon us (as seen in the many examples above). God's silence speaks volumes. We must not presume to speak where God has not spoken. We must not go beyond that which is written (1 Cor. 4:16). This is such a simple lesson that so many refuse to learn and heed. Respect Bible (God's) authority!

Copied: Bill Richardson