

WHEN YOUR PREACHER LEAVES: Interim Services for Churches Between Ministers

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“Preacheritis”

Often when people are fondly recalling their former preacher – repeating something he said, or telling how he did something, someone will say, “They have preacheritis.” Certainly Paul addressed the harmful allegiance to men that was causing division in the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:1-15). It is not right to follow a human instead of Jesus. It is not right to cause division in the church because of personalities.

However, it may be that some people are dealing with the loss of a preacher, a brother in Christ, a friend, in a normal way.

Does a woman who is depressed, angry, disoriented, sad, and crying have “husbanitis” after her companion of twenty or more years is buried?

Did Job’s wife have “oxenitis,” “donkeyitis,” “sheepitis,” “camelitis,” and “childitis” when she said to her now very sick husband, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!” (Job 2:9)? Years ago, I was critical of Mrs. Job for this statement. But I have never attended the funeral for all my children in one day in addition to going from being one of the richest persons in my community to losing every investment and the health of my companion in a short time.

Did Mary and Martha have “brotheritis” when they individually said to Jesus when he came to visit, ““Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” (John 11:21, 32)?

The normal human reaction to loss is grief. To deny people the right to work through their feelings of sadness, anger, fear, and jealousy or their feelings of joy, guilt, and frustration (depending on whether that person is the one who wanted the preacher to go or stay) is to create an atmosphere to act out in an unhealthy way what could have been talked out in a mutually beneficial exchange. It may be that listening and asking questions to allow more talking would be more helpful than being critical and assigning a negative label to the person talking about their recently departed preacher.

This is one of the benefits of interim ministry. One who has been trained in this work would see these comments as a normal part of the transition process. Also, he would not be threatened. The interim preacher does not come to replace the previous preacher. He is working in the congregation in the in-between-times. Part of the service of an interim is to “be there” to allow time for grief and adjustment after a long ministry or during a time of conflict.

Smile of the Month

‘Twas Ever Thus

It’s impossible for a child to outgrow one parental worry without growing into another. Consider the following:

Old worry: 2 a.m. feedings.

New worry: 2 a.m. dates

Old worry: Child will never graduate from high school.

New worry: Child will want to go to Harvard

Old worry: All too soon he will grow up and leave home

New worry: He won't (*Reader's Digest*, August 1989, page 130)

Mustard Seeds from Favorite Books, Jerrie Barber

Old Light on New Worship, by John Price

But the overwhelming consensus of the church has been that these instruments were an integral part of that ceremonial worship fulfilled and abrogated in Christ. We sing in the Psalms of the hyssop (51:7), the altar (43:4), the sack-cloth (69:11), the evening sacrifice (141:2), the goats and bulls (66:15), the cherubim (80:1), the ark (132:8) and the new moon (81:3). No one applies these with a wooden literalism to the church today. On what grounds, then, can we place the musical instruments of the temple in a different category than other ceremonial elements? (page 8).

In this chapter we will see that God has always regulated His public worship even in regard to the specific musical instruments used. There is no record in Scripture of a musical instrument every being used in public worship without an explicit divine command. We will then establish the following three basic theological principles of worship: (1) The Old Testament Temple worship in all of its outward ceremonies and rituals has been abolished; (2) We must look to Christ and His apostles alone for the worship of the church; and (3) With no command, example, or any indication whatsoever from the Lord Jesus that He desires musical instruments in His church, we have no warrant for their use (page 21).

As with every other element of the Tabernacle worship, musical instrumentation was regulated by specific divine command. We see the trumpet commanded in Numbers 10 and regulated in the following three ways: 1) The trumpet (including the number of them) was the only musical instrument authorized for use in the Tabernacle worship: Number 10:1-2, "The Lord spoke further to Moses, saying, *'Make yourself two trumpets of silver, of hammered work you shall make them. . . .'*" 2) The priests were the only persons authorized to use the trumpets: Num. 10:8, "*The priestly sons of Aaron, moreover, shall blow the trumpets; and this shall be for you a perpetual statute throughout your generations.*" 3) The occasions were specified when the trumpets could be used, including worship during the appointed feasts:

Num. 10:10, "Also in the day of your gladness and *in your appointed feasts*, and on the first days of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings, and they shall be as a reminder of you before your God. I am the Lord your God." (See also Lev. 23:24.) (page 22).

The instrumental musick used of the old church of Israel was an institution of God: it was (2 Chron. 29:25) the commandment of the Lord "by the prophets." And the instruments are called "God's instruments" (1 Chron. 16:42) and "instruments of the Lord" (2 Chron. 7:6). – Cotton Mather, *The Great Works of Christ in America*, Volume 2, page 266 (page 26).

Under the Old Covenant, the Levites were distinguished by God from the rest of the people and set apart with special privileges of drawing near to Him in worship (Num. 8:14-16, 16:8-9; Deut. 8:10). It was based upon this distinction that they were later used for singing and the playing of musical instruments in the Temple (1 Chron. 16:4; 23:1-5; 2 Chron. 29:25-26, 35:3-10; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:27, 44-47). Under the New Covenant, no such distinction exists any longer. There is no designated group set apart from the rest of the people to sing and use musical instruments in worship. Yet this is precisely what happens whenever musical instruments are used in the worship of the church. In the New Testament, we have all become priests unto God with equal access into His presence, and, therefore, we are all commanded to sing His praises (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; Heb. 10:19; Col. 3:16). We have no authority to set apart any group for the playing of musical instruments in the church (pages 53, 54).

Church historians agree that the first recorded example of a musical instrument in Christian worship was an organ introduced in about 670 in a Roman Catholic Church in Rome by Pope Vitalianus. In France, in 757, nearly one hundred years after the first organ appeared in Rome, Emperor Constantine V sent an organ as a gift to King Pepin. This organ was to be used in the king's court and not in a church. The organ was still so uncommon in Europe at that time that when this gift arrived it was regarded as a great novelty. The second occasion of an instrument's being used in church worship occurred in 812, when Pepin's son, Charlemagne, had a copy of this organ made for the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle. By the 9th century, only two organs had been used in Christian worship. In the churches of England, the organ probably made its first appearance in the 9th century, and through the influence of St. Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, it became more common by the end of the 10th century. The organ, however, continued to face strong opposition and remained only isolated in its use for hundreds of years. There was no general acceptance of it in the churches until at least the late 1200s (pages 83, 84).

Spurgeon comments on Ps. 42:1,

David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettinesses of a quartette, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it. – Charles Surgeon, *The Treasury of David*, Volume 1, Part 2, pages 272 (page 137).

In 1889, Dabney wrote,

Christ and his apostles ordained the musical worship of the New Dispensation without any sort of musical instrument, enjoining only the singing with the voice of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Hence such instruments are excluded from Christian worship. Such has been the creed of all churches, and in all ages, except of the Popish communion after it had reached the nadir of its corruption at the end of the thirteenth century, and its prelatial imitators. – Robert L. Dabney, *Presbyterian Quarterly*, July 1889 (page 139).

In 1880, John Spencer Curwen wrote of how churches of various denominations that had once opposed musical instruments had yielded to the popular demand for the organ,

Men still living can remember the time when organs were very seldom found outside the Church of England. The Methodists, Independents, and Baptists rarely had them, and by the Presbyterians they were stoutly opposed. But since these bodies began to introduce organs, the adoption of them has been steady and unchecked. Even the Presbyterians are giving way, and if we read the future by the past, we can hardly doubt that, in a few years, unaccompanied singing will very seldom be heard. – John Spencer Curwen, *Studies in Worship Music* (John Price, pages 140 141).

The meaning of *psallo* must ultimately be determined from its usage in the New Testament. When we consider how this verb is used in other passages in the New Testament, it becomes clear that its meaning must be “to sing” and not “to play on a stringed instrument.” If we take the earlier meaning of *psallo*, “to play on a stringed instrument,” and place it in the verses where this verb is used, we begin to see that this cannot be its New Testament meaning. For example, Eph 5:19 becomes “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing on a stringed instrument with your heart to the Lord.” 1 Cor. 14:15 becomes “What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall play on a stringed instrument with the spirit and I shall play on a stringed instrument with the mind also.” James 5:13 becomes “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him play on a stringed instrument.” We see what absurdities this leads us into (pages 190, 191).

Barber Clippings

We continue to enjoy the time we are being allowed to work in Eddyville, Kentucky. We had another Family Meeting Sunday night with a time to criticize the preacher. This is an exercise I especially enjoy. I have learned much from this practice. This coming Sunday night will be graduation time for our *Learning to Love my Friend(s)* class. Ten classes are designed to teach and encourage us to appreciate Jesus more as our Friend, become a friend to others as Jesus is a Friend to us, and to tell others about our Friend, Jesus. All elders, deacons and spouses have participated in all the classes. If you would like to see a summary of our work at Eddyville, you can visit my web site: <http://www.barberclippings.com/26071.html> .

One of the most helpful learning experiences for me during the past twenty-one years has been a workshop that I have had the privilege of co-leading: *Leadership Dynamics for Dynamic Leaders*. It is a leadership workshop where we learn by doing. The thirty-second session of this workshop is scheduled for January 24-26, 2008 at Kentucky Dam Village State Park, Gilbertsville, Kentucky. For more information: <http://www.barberclippings.com/10175.html> .

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