
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Are individual cups in communion sinful?**

Last week we discussed instruments used in worship. We pointed out the church of the first century operated by the teachings of the apostles:

Acts 2:42

⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Colossians 3:17

¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

This means: Everything taught and everything practiced had to be authorized by either Jesus or one of His official representatives – the apostles (2 Cor 5:20). Furthermore, that authorization was eventually reduced in written form (2 Tim 3:16-17). If there was no written authorization instructions for instruments of music in worship, no one was permitted to add them.

Furthermore, we pointed out all the “do not add” passages of the NT forbade adding anything which was left out of NT scriptures. In other words, the silence of the NT scriptures is significant – it is authoritative. This is called “legislative silence.” According to 2 Tim 3:16-17, when God was silent about either a doctrine or practice, He was purposefully silent.

A male caller to the Bible Talk program called and left the following message:

“This is the most ludicrous message I have ever heard in my 38 ½ years of existence! The idea that if the NT is silent about something means we can’t do it?! Why ... what would eliminate things like tithing, youth ministry, clothing ministry. You guys are so far out there, I’m not even going to begin to respond.”

This caller is correct. Anything not authorized by the apostles in the NT scriptures is UNAUTHORIZED and therefore forbidden. Silence does not permit. Silence forbids.

COMMUNION

Now we come to the question of using individual cups in the communion service. The question we are asking is this: ***Are individual communion cups authorized or are they not authorized?*** Furthermore, ***Does it even matter?***

1 Corinthians 11:2

² Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

Here the apostle praises the church at Corinth because they kept the traditions delivered by the apostles *"just as they were delivered."*

Why is it important to keep the ordinances *"just as they were delivered"*? What difference does it make? Notice:

1 Corinthians 11:23

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: ...

The reason the ordinances must be kept exactly as they were delivered is because what the apostles delivered came from the Lord Himself. Let's keep reading and observe carefully:

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;
²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁵ In the same manner He also took **the cup** after supper, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant** in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Here we learn three simple and undeniable truths:

- 1) **Jesus took only one cup when He instituted the communion.**
- 2) **When Jesus said, "This do," He was issuing a command.**

"This do" means, "Do what I have done."

The usage of individual communion cups is wrong because Jesus explicitly commanded His disciples to do what He did. He did not use a plurality of cups. He used only one.

- 3) **Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant."**

In other words, the cup itself represent or symbolizes the NT which God made with His people. Since God made only one new covenant with His people, it is fitting that a singular object should symbolize that covenant. Jesus said the cup was a symbol of that covenant.

The usage of individual cups originated with a Presbyterian preacher named J. G. Thomas, the founder of the Thomas Communion Company in 1894.

The NT scriptures are silent concerning the usage of individual cups in communion. However, the NT scriptures are not silent concerning the usage of one cup. Churches which use individual cups must look to an uninspired man for their practice. Churches using a single cup look to the inspired apostles for their practice – it's that simple.

Individual cups are forbidden by the silence of the NT scriptures. The NT scriptures contain every good work a man or church could possibly do (2 Tim 3:16-17). If something is done which the scriptures are silent about, it is not "*good*" – it's that simple.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.