

How Does the Bible Authorize, Part Three
The Silence of the Scriptures
Colossians 3:12-17

Topic: Silence of the Scriptures

Aim: To show that the silence of the scriptures is prohibitive and must be respected.

1. To say we are going to do things by the Bible is easier said than done. We must properly interpret, understand, apply, study, use the Bible.
2. Problem not unique to religion. There is an abiding controversy over the meaning of the second amendment to the US Constitution: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."
3. We today want, as Paul said, to do all by the authority of the Lord Jesus, Colossians 3:17.
4. In this final lesson on the authority of the scriptures, we want to look at a crucial matter, dealing with the silence of the scriptures.

I. First, some things to remember.

- A. God does not expect us to put our brains in neutral when we come into the church building.
 1. Acts 17:1-3.
 2. God is a logical and rational God, we are in His image. So we must think.
- B. God did not give us a set of rules to follow, but a set of principles from which to reason.
 1. To give us a set of rules to deal with every possible circumstance would have been impossible.
 2. But He gave us certain principles to guide us.
- C. We have to think to apply those principles.
 1. Even some that seem so straightforward require thought to apply: "Love one another."
 2. What is the loving thing to do if you know your best friend is doing something wrong?

II. What do we mean by the "silence of the scriptures?"

- A. Sometimes the Bible is clear.
 1. It gives us a command. No argument -- Ephesians 4:25, 28, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 16:1-2. This, you remember we called explicit teaching.
 2. Or there is an example, Acts 20:7.
- B. Then there is what we called implicit teaching, that is, an implication. Some have used the phrased "necessary inference."
 1. When someone speaks, they may or may not imply something.
 2. When we as listeners reason about what was said, we infer it.
 3. Many of the things God has asked us to do imply certain things.
 - a. The command to assemble, Hebrews 11:25, implies a place, time, order, etc.
 - b. The command to sing Ephesians 5:19, implies, a song, a song leader, pitch, etc.
 - c. The example of the Lord's Supper implies some means of distributing the emblems.
 4. A foundation principle: "Whatever God tells us to do, by command or example, authorizes what is necessary to the fulfillment of God's will."

C. But what about when there is no example or command? Or can we add that which is not necessary?

1. The Bible does not give a "thou shall" or "thou shall not" on many things
2. For example: While it does say observe the Lord's Supper, it says nothing about adding a little jelly to that unleavened bread.
3. But somehow we know that would not be right? Why?
4. Because that is not necessary! To do so would in fact add an element not authorized.
5. Similarly, the Bible says to sing, to add an instrument is to add what is not necessary and not authorized!

C. Another foundation principle: the silence of the Scriptures is exclusive, not inclusive.

1. It is regarded as so in life.
 - a. Suppose you send your teenaged son to the store with a \$10 bill and the following instructions: "Run down to the store and get a loaf of bread and a gallon of milk, and be sure to bring me the change." Then he comes back with the loaf of bread, a gallon of milk, some cold drinks, cookies and candy. Would you be pleased? What if he defended himself saying, "Yeah, but you did not say 'Don't get this other stuff!'"
 - b. Suppose you take your car to the dealer and instruct him to change the oil. The fellow not only changes your oil, but services the transmission, puts on new tires, lines up the front end and then washes and waxes it. Would you be obliged to pay anything other than the oil change? Suppose he defends himself saying, "You did not say don't do these other repairs!"
 - c. Simon says.
 - d. The same principle applies with God's word.
2. The Bible illustrates the use of this principle repeatedly.
 - a. For generations the Jews observed the Sabbath on the seventh day. Why not another day of the week? God was silent about them. Never a "thou shalt not" about the first or the second day of the week. What God commands authorizes only what it commands.
 - b. Nadab and Abihu offered what God had not commanded, nor forbidden, Leviticus 10:1-4.
 - c. The Hebrews got their priests from the tribe of Levi, not from another tribe, of which tribes Moses spoke nothing concerning getting priests. He was silent! Hebrews 7:11-14.

1. What should we say in closing? The Bible is silent on some things. But that silence is not permissive.

2. We must reason about what God has told us so that we know we are doing what He said in a way that is pleasing to Him, not us.