



Sermon Discussion Guide
07.10.22 Message | Andrew Kovar

Key Scriptures:

O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.

- Psalm 59:17

I will sing a new song to you, O God; upon a ten-stringed harp I will play to you...

- Psalm 144:9

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

- John 15:1-2

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

- Philippians 4:4-9

Message Highlights:

- As followers of Jesus, we want to bring honorable worship to the one who is worthy of our praise!
- “Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us.” – Martin Luther
- *Zamar* means to play a musical instrument, to sing, make music, to pluck, to prune.
- As followers of Jesus, we *zamar* the things in life that bring him praise.
- “After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.” - Aldous Huxley

Conversation Starter:

Have you ever played or listened to an instrument that was just a bit off tune? How did that slight imperfection affect the song being played?

Discuss the Message:

1. Knowing that “pluck” in the context of *zamar* means to choose or pick out, how might Philippians 4:4-9 guide us to *zamar* the things in life that bring him praise?
 - a) What is something you have done lately that, safe to say, brought praise to God?
 - b) What can we gain when we choose to follow the Lord’s desires for our lives?
2. Living a life of worship means more than simply adding praise into our life; it also means eliminating things from our lives that are not praiseworthy.
 - a) Read John 15:1-2. Looking at your life, what are some examples of things you could “prune” from your life that could provide more space for bearing fruit for God?
 - b) Have you ever thought about pruning, or taking something away, as an act of offering praise, or *zamar*, for God? Discuss with your group.
3. The strings on a musical instrument require the right amount of tension to make a beautiful sound. The same is true in our lives; we need a good balance of encouragement and challenge if we are to thrive spiritually.
 - a) Why do you think we tend to avoid that tension in our lives?
 - b) What happens when we have a lot of challenges, but too little encouragement?
 - c) What happens when we have a lot of encouragement, but very little challenges?
4. How can listening to music that praises God help us to live a life that brings praise to him?

Pray:

God, it is a joy to offer you praise today both individually and collectively. You have gifted us such beauty in the art of music. We are in awe that we get to experience your presence on a deeper level and offer you praise through this art form. Thank you for opening our eyes to the things in our lives that may need to be plucked, pruned or leaned into more fully to experience your presence. When we lack clarity on what step to take next, would you give us discernment? Day by day, may we ultimately find delight and refreshment in your word as we continue to offer our praises to you. Amen.