

Psalm 144:9-15 “Sing Unto the Lord”

In 1 Samuel 16:18, Israel’s King Saul was being tormented by an evil spirit. So he called on his servants to find someone who is “skillful playing the lyre” who could play when the evil spirit tormented him. One of Saul’s servants, Samuel, found David and described him in this way -- “I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a warrior, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence; and the Lord is with him.” That’s the first we ever hear of David in the Bible. One who is skillful on the lyre and possessing the qualities of being a great leader. And of course, he eventually became the greatest King of Israel ... the one who became the model and example for any other king who followed him. Even Israel’s understanding and expectations of the Messiah was of one who was like King David. Strong. Chosen by God and committed to God’s agenda. We don’t talk a lot about David’s skill as a musician though and why that is every bit as important as all these other more “royal” or “kingly” characteristics.

Here’s why I appreciate King David -- He was the first person in the Bible who incorporated music into Jewish worship services. Many of the songs he wrote were ones taught to the people of Israel to sing during festivals, high holy days, and other times of worship. In fact, seventy-six of the 150 songs in the Book of Psalms are attributed to King David. And these songs of the Jewish faith and tradition carried over into the Christian Church as well and is alive and well today.

Statistically speaking though, what do you think the cause of most church conflict centers around? Doctrinal issues like, how salvation is obtained or lost? Cultural issues like who is or should be welcome in the church and who is not? Nope! Worship style and preference is up at the top of the list. Why is this?! Because matters of music are matters of the soul. Music is by nature soul-stirring. But do we all like the same kind of music? Is there a universal style of music that everyone likes or everyone thinks is the best? No way. We all gravitate to different

styles. Even those of us who think we're diverse in our musical tastes aren't aware of our preferences. I was bragging about how my musical preferences is so eclectic to a friend of mine who is a professional musician in Seattle. She took my Ipod (this is before I had an Iphone), scrolled through my music, laughed and said, "No you're not. It's all about the melody for you. Yeah, you've got classical, country, rock, pop, metal, grunge, sacred, gospel and all these other genres on here, but all of them have similar melodies."

Music stirs the soul. But sometimes it stirs the soul in ways that grate on the nerves. And yet ... the church is made up of many people who have many different preferences. We are also, as God's people, called to "Sing unto the Lord a *new* song." That phrase shows up a number of different times in David's psalms. And he wrote so many different kinds of psalms too. Psalms of repentance, praise, reflection, admiration for creation, thanksgiving, lamentation, love for others ... you name it, he wrote it. "Sing unto the Lord a new song." Here at this church, we try our best to have a mix of old and new. We lift up the talents of those who provide special music, whether it's the Upbeats, Noteworthy's, the choir, Ron, Becky, RJ, John or any of our other folks who write original songs. We try to mix it up a bit with special guests from other faith communities like the Joyful Hosannas, Holly Taylor, Warren Haskel, Maya ... just about anyone from Nina's family, and other friends of First Christian. We know we're not going to be everyone's cup of tea, but we encourage each other, like King David, to make a joyful noise unto the Lord.