

I play the piano—not well like Alice and Doug, but I can read music and play a song
When I play the piano, I play the whole song—it sounds ok without other voices
Yes, others can join—either with voice or other instruments
But the piano can play music which sounds complete within itself
Years ago I joined the handbell choir at Reedwood Friends Church
In a handbell choir there are individual bells, each with a different note
For a 3 octave set, there are 37 unique bells
I played F and G, plus F# and G# —everyone had assigned notes
Everyone had to play together for it to sound like anything
Individually, it sounds incomplete as you just play a note here and there
The other trick with handbells is the importance of playing in rhythm with everyone else

When we think about God stories—sometimes we are a full "song"
We're aware that others are a part of the picture, but we have a complete place in it
Other times, we just play a note here and there and it doesn't feel complete or even significant

1 Corinthians 3:5-11 from the Message Bible

Recently one of us was asked if this "Fear Not!" button meant we were part of a movement
The truth is that, yes, this is a God movement telling us that we don't have to live afraid
Our first record of it is in scripture—Genesis 15:1 in a message to Abram about his descendents
More than 60 times, the words "fear not" occur as a phrase in scripture
Even in our current season—the message is much broader than us
Yet, we have owned it as our message for this season
But we are helped by stepping back and noticing the bigger picture—to see what God is doing
In that, we see that we are joining the God movement

Truth is that God is at work all the time—speaking to people and enacting reconciliation that's global
All this is from God, who reconciled us to God's self through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to God's self, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 NRSV
God is doing something big and world changing—but God has also given us place in the middle
God trusts this work to us—sometimes it's the whole song—sometimes it just a couple of notes

Sometimes it is good to pause and ask, "What is God doing?"—"Where do I notice God's presence?"
"What is the bigger picture of God movement?"
How God packages the God story is different from how we receive it
The larger God story is much more complex and integrated than we see
—there's more to the story!

I'm only responsible for my piece of the story and not the whole thing—especially not the outcome
Paul talked about planting, Apollos watering, and that it is God who makes things grow
I'm only responsible to play the 2 notes I'm given
Sometimes we've received the message that we are responsible to make the outcome happen
NO—that is God's work, we are only responsible to be faithful to our Leadings

It deeply helps to image that God is doing something bigger than I can see—and to be conscious of that!