

December 9

Daniel 2:22 (NIV)

He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

This Advent season, I have the privilege of doing something I love – playing the organ for Sunday church services. It was a significant part of my “past life” that I haven’t had the opportunity to do since moving to Concord about four years ago. There is something about each hand and foot functioning separately yet working together that I find very calming.

One of the first things my organ professor told me was “pay attention to the space between the notes.” Growing up playing piano, where you have a “sustain” pedal that holds the sounds out longer, there usually weren’t many spaces between notes. Especially in church music, the goal was often to make the chords run together – it felt awkward leaving silence hanging in the air. But since the organ uses wind through a pipe instead of a hammer striking a string, if you don’t put at least a little silence between notes, it can become one continuous sound. “Make sure you don’t short-change the silence,” Professor Zabel would always say. “It’s important for shaping the sounds.”

It wasn’t until reading today’s Scripture verse that I realized the deeper meaning of this advice. In our day-to-day lives, we have periods of darkness – silence between the chords of our existence. These are the hard things, the uncertain times, the places we feel most vulnerable and exposed. These silent moments feel hollow, so we tend to fill them up with noise. If we back up and look at all of Daniel Chapter 2, we see that King Nebuchadnezzar had ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon because they couldn’t tell him what he dreamed about – certainly a dark period in the land, an unnerving silence in the music of their history. Verse 22 is one part of a symphony of praise to God for revealing the king’s dream to Daniel so he could interpret it and save all of them. In this deepest darkness, Daniel didn’t try to add sounds. He leaned into the silence and appreciated it for what it was – a chance to pray and focus on God. Without that silence between the notes, he would never have

found the right chords to form a symphony of praise that saved so many lives. Daniel didn't short-change the silence. He used it to shape history.

As we consider our own lives, what awkward silences have we been avoiding, as individuals or as a church? What would it look like if, instead of running from the darkness, instead of making a clamor to fill the space between the notes, we sat in the silence and gave it the full measure it deserves? How would that shape the sounds and songs around us? There is no better time than Advent to sit in the silence so we can hear what music God has in store for us. "It is important for shaping the sounds." One thing is certain – I will never look at the organ the same again.

~ Aaron Lambert