

## HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 1/31/2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

***ONE AT ONE*** – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, February 1 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for women in the world today. Ask that leaders work for greater equity for women. Pray that God might provide greater protection for women, especially the most vulnerable.*

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Having good, clear sound in worship services is always a challenge. There are many factors that contribute to the difficulties in that task: acoustics in a room, quality of equipment, volume levels, dead zones, and even the ability of the listeners to hear well. The pandemic has added to these with the requirement of masks that can muffle sound further. Streaming the service out over the internet also creates new hurdles. All this wonderful electronic equipment and we still may struggle.

Believe it or not, Jesus also had to deal with sound problems when He spoke to crowds. It's even recorded in the Bible. In Luke 5, Jesus is standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, also known as the Sea of Galilee, when a crowd gathers around Him. They want to hear what this famous rabbi has to say. But Jesus is not elevated as He would be on a hill so His voice won't carry as far. Even if He is able to get the large crowd to sit down, it's still going to be hard to hear, especially for those in the back. Jesus notices two boats on the shore and gets into the one belonging to Simon called Peter and asks him to put out a little way from shore.

Now you may wonder why Jesus does this. Is He feeling crowded in and wants some space? Is there some kind of threat or other issue that would cause Him to seek some distance? In fact, what Jesus is doing is taking advantage of the natural sound system available to Him. By going about ten-to-fifteen feet from shore, He now has the water itself off of which to bounce His voice. The reverberation of the water actually makes Jesus' voice louder so that everyone can hear.

We probably don't think about the sound issues that existed in other time periods. We may even forget about sound problems that existed in earlier times of our own lives. If you go to some of the hundreds-of-years-old churches that still stand in Europe, you'll note that many of them have no pews, but also that the pulpits have the feet of the preacher at a height of ten-to-fifteen feet above the ground. Because there were no pews, having the one giving the sermon at an elevated height above the heads of the listeners provided greater opportunity for everyone to hear the message.

Churches like ours regularly seek ways to improve the excellence of what we offer each week. Adding or changing equipment can help but, again, that has to be done with considerations about acoustics, finances, and other issues. (I've even considered—very briefly—flooding to the room to follow Jesus' lakeshore example.) It's always a blessing when we hear that we have made progress toward better worship experiences. And know that we never stop trying to improve.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey