

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 2/11/2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

Some years ago, my daughter Rebekah shared with me something she had learned in the military, and I have found it to be very helpful ever since. It's a thing called "situational awareness." It is a kind of cognizance that the military teaches so that their personnel know where the other members of their unit are at all times when on duty. Situational awareness is crucial when soldiers are on maneuvers in high-risk situations. It helps them to stay in proper formation with each other and helps to prevent them from mistaking each other for the enemy.

Civilians don't often have situational awareness. We tend to go about our business without much thought as to what is happening and who else is around us. A lack of situational awareness is what leads us to stand in the doorway and visit with someone else when others are trying to get through it or to block the coffee table after we've gotten our hot beverage, but others have not. Often it only causes inconveniences and mild annoyance, but occasionally, like when we're driving, the consequences can be more serious. We've probably all been cut off by a driver who didn't seem to know where we were, nearly or actually causing an accident, and, truth be told, we've all likely done the same thing to others.

Jesus had very good situational awareness. Repeatedly, Jesus noticed those who might otherwise have gone unseen. Jesus saw Zacchaeus up in a tree when He was walking into Jericho. In the midst of a large crowd, He saw the widow who put her last two coins in the poor box in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus saw the infirmed, the outcast, the lesser in society, and many more who would otherwise have been ignored. Certainly, Jesus' ability to see everything around Him was part of His divine nature. Still, it set an example for all of us.

Situational awareness is an important skill for Christians to develop. Far beyond not blocking the aisle in church or the refreshment table during fellowship, it is important that we become sensitive to what is happening around us. We need to become more aware of those individuals who are in need of assistance or care. We need to work on recognizing those who might be blessed by a word of support, a prayer shared, a defense made, a meal offered, or help provided.

God saw us in our need and came as Jesus to offer us those things which were needed most. Jesus elevated us by recognizing us and providing us the direction and purpose that was lacking in our lives. In response to what we have received, we are called to do the same for others, and a good skill to develop in helping us to answer this call is greater situational awareness.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey