

Lenten Series: Sounds of the Passion—Lord of Life, Westfield, IN—Wed. 3/9/05

Theme: Sounds of a shouting crowd

Matt. 27: 20-25

Intro: When it would be easier to fit in with the crowd and compromise our faith, Jesus' gift of life in his death calls us to a brave confession of him before others.

Ills.: Bull horn theology

When the world shouts distract our view of Jesus

1. The not so subtle spiritual numbing by the world's "***shout downs***"
 1. Pilate was worried about riots, political repercussions, personal inner conflict
 2. We worry about popularity, job/academic success, persecution, feeling loved
 3. The world shouts down the righteous life of Jesus by telling us we won't be liked
 4. **Ills.: Deceptive packaging**
2. Would you like to "***be liked***" or to "***be loved?***"
 1. World's affections are short lived and manipulative —Pilate/Barabas case in point
 1. **Ills.: Beaten into submission by the crowd**
 2. God's love for us in Jesus is an everlasting love for our eternity
 1. "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3: 16*
 3. Jesus' love voice speaks loudly to our heart to drown out world's guilt babble
 1. **Ills.: White Noise**

Having a heart and eye and mouth for Jesus

3. Rekindling your hearts fire of devotion for Jesus
 1. ***Confess it*** — sins of wanting to be liked rather than loved
 2. ***Stoke it*** — know the truth, believe the Truth, block out your ears to the lie
 1. "*What is truth?*" *John 18: 38*
 2. "*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*" *John 14: 6*
4. Build up your courage to stand up for the Truth
 1. **Read 1 Timothy 6: 12-14**
 2. Motivated by your eternal calling to heaven
 3. Based upon Jesus' love and example
 4. Lived out with a passionate living for Jesus and your witness
 5. *Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Titus 2: 14*

Beaten into Submission by the Crowd

It's easy to see why people like the sea gull. I've sat overlooking a craggy harbor and watched one. He exults in freedom. He thrusts his wings backward with powerful strokes, climbing higher and higher until he's above all the other gulls, then coasts downward in majestic loops and circles. He constantly performs, as if he knows a movie camera is trained on him, recording. In a flock, though, the sea gull is a different bird. His majesty and dignity melt into a sordid slough of in-fighting and cruelty. Watch that same gull as he dive bombs into a group of gulls, provoking a flurry of scattered feathers and angry squawks to steal a tiny morsel of meat. The concepts of sharing and manners do not exist among gulls. They are so fiercely competitive and jealous that if you tie a red ribbon around the leg of one gull, making him stand out, you sentence him to execution. The others in the flock will furiously attack him with claws and beaks, hammering through feathers and flesh to draw blood. They'll continue until he lies flattened in a bloody heap. **Citation: Phillip Yancey, as quoted in *The Strong Willed Child* by James Dobson (Tyndale House, 1995); submitted by Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, IL**

White Noise

A company by the name of Healthy Environment has on its website a device called *LifeSounds* that it advocates which will produce a healthier and happier life style by producing "white noise." They say, ***"Scientific studies dating back to the early 20th century have proven that children, as well as adults, go to sleep faster and sleep more deeply when exposed to these natural LifeSounds. Research also demonstrates the calming effects these sounds can have on irritable and colicky babies. LifeSounds can be a real lifesaver for moms and dads.*** If only life was that easy. However, when we let Jesus' voice become the white noise our life. Many if not most of what is disrupting our peace, joy, and security goes away.

Matthew 27:20-25

²⁰But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. ²¹"Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. ²²"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" ²³"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" ²⁴When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" ²⁵All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

1 Tim. 6:12-14

¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.