

## **“Making Noise”**

Acts 2

Pentecost

Profession of Faith

Gordon S. Wiersma 5/31/09

Carolyn, Spencer, David, and Bethany – I’m going to talk to you today as you’ve made profession of faith today – and I ask the rest of you to listen in. I was thinking this week, about the 4 of you – and I was trying to guess how many times I’ve told you to “be quiet”?! How many times in GIFT class with Clark – in Fish Club and High Hopes – how many times I’ve said “be quiet” to you?! – “shhhh” – “keep it down.” It’s been a lot of times. I’ve yelled at you a few times too – on retreats or on the A.T. - “BE QUIET” - ...you probably mostly deserved it – you guys need some help sometimes knowing when to talk or not. But I do think for you all it’s got to get a bit tiring to hear “be quiet” so often – not just from me – but from parents and teachers and youth group leaders (especially Larry!) – everyone telling you to “be quiet”?! But guess what? – I’m not going to tell you to “be quiet” today – in fact, I’m going to tell you just the opposite - I’m going to tell you to make some noise – to find your voice – or better yet, tell you there’s a voice that has been given to you that no one can keep quiet. That’s what I’m going to tell you today – but to do that – I have to tell you 2 stories: one from my life, and one from the early church.

The first story has a harsh word in it, so be prepared. I was at a summer music camp when I was about your age – tooting my French horn – fun camp activities – I liked it. I was in a cabin with about 8 boys – all the kids were white, except for one black kid – let’s say his name was Frank - we all got along pretty well. A couple days into camp, a few of us were standing around talking – but our African-American cabin-mate Frank wasn’t there.

One of the boys said, in kind of a cool, knowledgeable way: “you know that kid Frank is OK – my Dad says most blacks are niggers, but that some of them are OK; Frank’s OK – he’s not a nigger.” The other boys kind of nodded and grunted “yeah” and the conversation moved on – but I didn’t move on - my mind was reeling and heart was racing – I knew you weren’t supposed to say that word about black people – ever! – I didn’t agree at all with what had been said – I knew I had to say something “hey – don’t use that word – you’re saying Frank is OK but you’re really just putting black people down – cut it out!” – but I didn’t – I didn’t say anything – I was quiet. I wish I could go back and change what happened, how I responded – but I can’t – I was quiet - I couldn’t find my voice. That’s the one story.

In the book of Acts today we heard the story of Pentecost – when the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Risen Christ – is revealed to and given to the followers of Jesus in a dramatic way – in a noisy way as a matter of fact. It’s that mood of noisiness we’ve tried to express with some of the music and sounds we’ve used today in worship to tell that story from Acts chapter 2. When the Holy Spirit is made known – it is noisy: ‘a SOUND like the rush of a violent wind’ it says – something loud, something powerful; and ‘tongues of fire’ – is that loud? – well, a roaring fire is loud, right? We’re going to call them loud roaring tongues of fire. And with all this noise of the Holy Spirit, the followers of Jesus start making some noise too – they start expressing the good news of Jesus Christ in all sorts of languages....and as people there in Jerusalem hear them, they wonder what this is all about: and Peter gives a fine little sermon about the Spirit of God blessing all people – every age, every stage of life – with this promise: the Spirit of God will give you a voice to prophesy – which simply means, a voice that points to God’s ways of love

and justice and peace, to the good news that in Jesus Christ, God saves us – gives us that love and peace for us and for all.

OK –that camp story about me – that Pentecost story about those followers of Jesus. If you remember – I said I was telling you those stories to say to you something very different than “be quiet” but instead about making some noise. And here’s how I think those are connected... All those times over the years when I told you to “be quiet”, well, that was one thing – I hope I had some good reason to say that to you...but there’s another kind of voice in life that tells you to “be quiet” - that says “be quiet” not just to you but to me and to everyone here at some point – it’s the voice of fear; the voice that tells you that what you believe and feel and know is not important; the voice that tells you not to trust in love and peace, but to settle for self-interest and self-preservation. It’s not a good voice – this “be quiet” voice – it’s the voice of what is broken and wrong with this world – what is broken inside of you and around you. When I was encountered back at summer camp with that situation, it was fear that I listened to – and it kept me quiet. I know it was tough situation – it’s often tough to know what to do or to say – I know it’s tough for you and it is tough for me and all of us every day. I know you mess up like I did – like we all still do.

But you don’t have to settle for that – and today in making profession of faith – you are saying together with this church and with people who have followed Jesus for thousands of years that you are not settling for that. You are saying “be quiet” to the voice that tells you to “be quiet” about expressing the good news of Jesus Christ – the faith from God in your heart that life is about love and justice, about hope and peace. And the reason you can say “be quiet” to the voice that tells you to “be quiet” is because the Spirit of Jesus Christ is with you to give you your voice – to prophesy. That’s right – you –

prophecy – it wasn't just Pentecost back then – it is Pentecost today. The Holy Spirit is with you to give you the language you need – the language of your life to make some noise. The Spirit of Jesus is with you to give you the courage and strength and power not to be quiet in the face of what is wrong in this world, but with the gifts in your life (and you have so many gifts) to give voice to the love and hope God has given to you.

You see – those followers of Jesus there in Jerusalem on Pentecost day – they weren't so different than a boy at summer camp who was afraid to speak; they aren't so different than you who are expressing your faith today or any of us here today gathered in faith – than all of us here knowing it is tough sometimes to follow Jesus...because all of them in Jerusalem, they were afraid and uncertain too. Jesus had risen, but they weren't sure what to do, how to be – they were just a few people in a big world, and it felt like there was a voice telling them “be quiet” – “be afraid”.

And to them and to us comes the loud sound of a rushing wind – a roaring flame – the Holy Spirit of God. ‘I am with you and I am giving you a voice – a voice that will sound good to anyone who hears you because it will be a voice of love and hope, of forgiveness and peace – the voice of life for all people.’ Carolyn and Spencer and David and Bethany – you all have a voice from God – whether in your words or actions, loud or soft, obvious or behind the scenes – Jesus has called you to be a voice this world needs – it's your voice from God, and it is good. Don't be quiet – Jesus is with you to make some good noise (you'll mess up some times, but that's OK – just keep making better noise after that); and instead of hearing “be quiet” you will hear the voice of Jesus that says: ‘I love you, and I am with you always – now go make some noise.’ AMEN.