

Hear us, Lord Jesus. We are shouting for you!

Rev. Erin Counihan

Preached at Oak Hill Presbyterian Church, St. Louis on August 17, 2014

Readings:

GENESIS 45:1-15

MATTHEW 15:(10-20) 21-28

“Lord, help me,” she cried.

Hey! Did you hear her, Jesus? Did you hear her shouting for you? Did you hear her call, no beg, for help? She needed you.

Did you see how she tracked you down, she ran to you, she found you? I know she’s not one of you. I mean, she’s a woman. She’s a Canaanite. She’s one of the pagan enemies of Israel. But, Lord, she recognized you and came to where you are and she called to you for help. Because she believed in you. Did you hear her?

You did. You did, but you didn’t respond. You were silent. And your people, they asked to send her away. Then, worse than your silence, then you responded and you were harsh and mean and you called her a dog.

Jesus, did you hear him? He needed you too. He put up his hands. He raised his arms in surrender. His blood had already been spilled on that street, but he still breathed and Jesus he needed you!

Jesus, did you hear them? All of them. So many of them. They look just like him. They've been stopped before. They've been held before. They've been beaten before. They've seen that look in an officer's eye. They came out and called to you. They were calling for justice. They called for the truth. They wanted answers. They needed answers. They needed to be treated with respect. They didn't need guns and smoke and gas pulled on them.

Jesus, did you hear them? The business owners. Neighbors. Mothers. Grandfathers. Praying for safety. Praying for the violence to stop.

Jesus, did you hear the media? Trying to show the world what was happening, to share the real stories, but instead getting arrested and shut down.

Jesus, did you hear all of them, on Facebook and twitter, in coffee shops and hardware stores, offices and beauty salons and libraries. They can't stop talking about this. Why don't their white friends understand? Why don't they stand up with them?

Jesus, did you hear them? All the way from Palestine and Egypt, sending messages of support, because they've been through it, too. Because they have tips to share of how to live through the tear gas.

Jesus, did you hear them? The other cops in this city. Good cops. Who do their job fairly. But who won't get a fair shake. Not now.

Jesus, did you hear him? The man who told the crowd that he was pulled over just this week, for driving while black, and his 5 year old son burst into tears when the cop spoke with his dad, because he was scared his daddy was gonna die. Do you hear how our children are learning from this?

Jesus, do you hear us!? Do you hear that we are sick of this? Do you hear that we can't live like this! With our police turned into military. With racism so long and deep. With trust so bruised. With death so close. With tension so strong. With fear so real it keeps us awake at night. With peace so far it's become hard to imagine.

Jesus, DO YOU HEAR US?

Because we are shouting. And like that Canaanite woman so many years ago, we are desperate for you, for the healing only you can bring. And like that woman, so many years ago, we are shouting to you because we believe. We believe YOU CAN HEAL THIS. So, like she did, we now run to you. We shout. Over and over again. We call to you, "Lord, help us." Please, heal our children. Heal our police force. Heal our history and our generalizations and our assumptions. Heal our community. Heal our own hearts. Throw us the crumbs of your love and peace.

And if an enemy woman in a foreign land can through her desperation, persistence, and faith, change YOUR mind, Lord, then maybe our minds can be changed too. Perhaps

there is hope for each of us. For those of us who are slow to listen, for those of us who've seen it all before, for those of us who are still singing the same protest songs after 50 years and who are sick that we still have to. Lord, let your healing enter our conversations. Use these tragedies, in Ferguson, in Iraq, in Maryland, in Staten Island, in Mexico, everywhere, to start conversations anew. Let the relationships formed in response to this violence be blessed with your name, Lord. Let us speak to one another in faith and hope, let us shout at the authorities in hope, let us respond to the teenager who calls to us from the Quick Trip in hope, let us walk together in your name in hope, Jesus. Because we believe in you. Great is our faith, now, even in our desperation. So we run to you. You, the one who heals the sick. The one who teaches the children. The one who helps the poor. The one who opens the eyes of the blind. We believe in you, Lord Jesus. So we run to you. And we shout and call out and beg. In faith. In hope.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Lord, help us.

Amen.