



Out of the Mouths of Children

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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PM Assembly

Introduction:

In **Matthew 21:14-16**, after Jesus had cleansed the temple, He healed many blind and lame, as if to show beyond doubt that He was the Son of God and had the right to cleanse His Father's house. When the children saw the amazing works of Jesus, they cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David." When the scribes and priests saw what was going on, instead of being amazed at the wonderful things of Jesus and praising God for Him, they could only complain about the children. "Do you hear what they are saying?" They didn't rebuke the children, after all, children can hardly be expected to get it right. Instead, they were rebuking Jesus, "Why aren't you stopping them? They shouldn't be saying this." But Jesus' response put the scribes and priests in their place. "Have you never read the eighth psalm? Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise" (quoting from the Septuagint translation). Jesus didn't need to stop the children. What the children were doing was right. They needed rather to be encouraged. It was those who would stop the children that needed to be rebuked. Tomorrow we begin an important focus on our children. Our Vacation Bible School, "Digging for Bible Answers," kicks off tomorrow night at 7pm. Too often, many Christians can take important opportunities like this for granted. I'd like to consider three lessons from **Matthew 21:14-16** that I think will help us see how important our VBS and all of our children's classes really are.

Discussion:

- I. It is appropriate for children to praise God.
 - A. I'm not completely sure if the scribes and priests were upset because it was children saying this or simply because of what they were saying. In either case, Jesus' response demonstrates it was appropriate for the children to cry out these praises. Their cry was accurate and right. They were allowed to shout it.
 - B. "Hosanna" they cried. This was a word adopted from the Hebrew. Originally, it meant, "Save us, I pray." Apparently, by the first century it had become a declaration of praise. "Son of David," they cried. They used the phrase to refer to the coming Messiah. Did they fully understand what they were saying? Probably not. They were children. Did they fully know what their claims meant? Probably not. But their claim was right, true, and they were allowed to say it.
 - C. We are using this week to focus on our children, to let them learn about and praise God. What a great opportunity for them. What a great opportunity for us. Like the scribes and priests, we may need to hear the kinds of praises and instructions the children will offer us in their praise. Too often we denigrate the songs and praises of the children. "Those are just kids' songs," we say. Or "That's just a camp song." But how often do their simple praises provide a profound teaching for us? Think of some of the songs we'll be singing with our children this week.
 1. "Oh Be Careful Little Eyes"—How many of us as grown-ups and mature Christians need to be reminded of the profound lesson that we need to be careful what we watch, what we listen to, what we say, what we do, and where we go?
 2. "This Little Light of Mine"—How often do we need to be reminded that we are supposed to be reflecting the light of Jesus to the world around us? How often do we need to be reminded that we are going to shine our lights all around our neighborhoods and do so until Jesus comes?
 3. "Jesus Loves Me"—Is there a more profound song than this one? I need to remember that Jesus loves me and I can know it not because of anything about me, but because the Bible tells me so. I can rest on that.
 - D. Let's not denigrate the praises from the children. Do they fully know what they are saying yet? Perhaps not. Do they fully understand what all of this means? Not likely. But it is appropriate for them to cry out these praises. Perhaps like the scribes and priests we need to hear what the children are praising. Maybe we can learn something just as the scribes and priests needed to.
- II. The children will learn to praise from the adults.
 - A. Why did the children choose this phrase? Why "Hosanna to the Son of David"? Why didn't they shout something else? Look back to the triumphal entry that had occurred earlier in the day. What had the crowd cried out? In **Matthew 21:9**, they cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The children learned by listening to the adults.

- B. We need to understand that is the way it will work today. All too often, the reason folks want to stop the children from praising God is because they are afraid they will get something wrong. Most of the time, however, the children simply repeat what they hear from us. If we want them to praise rightly, then we need to praise rightly.
 - C. The children are watching us and learning from us. What do they see? What do they hear? This is especially important among parents. What are our children seeing in us? What do they hear from us? Are they learning to praise God from us? Are they hearing praises of God from us? Are they learning to dig for Bible answers from us? Are they learning to glorify God from us?
 - D. During our VBS this week, will the children see and hear us praising God? Or are those “children’s songs” beneath us? Will they learn from us about shining lights, rolling gospel chariots, building walls, and slaying giants? We are also having teen and adult classes during this Bible school. What will the little children see from the teenagers and adults? We aren’t having a children’s choir, to which we can sit around and listen. We are gathering to praise God and the children need to learn how from us.
- III. We can provide the example for others who don’t have one.
- A. While our foundational text doesn’t really talk to us about other children, I can’t help but think about all the children out there who don’t have what these children had. These children had examples to show them how to praise God. They simply walked in the footsteps of their parents and the adults around them. Some children are not so lucky. At best, they simply don’t have someone showing them how to praise and serve God properly. At worst, they have actively bad examples showing them all the wrong ways to live.
 - B. We can provide that example for them. This week is not simply an opportunity for our children to work on praising God and serving Him. This week is not simply an opportunity for us to show our children our example of praising God and serving Him. This week is a great opportunity to get the message out and invite children who need to see the right example.
 - C. I especially want to speak to the kids right now. What a great opportunity you have to invite your friends. Who knows, but maybe one of them needs to see the right example. You never know who you may really be helping. Some of your friends need to see this example. Let them know about it. Invite them to come along and learn how to dig for Bible answers with you and learn how to glorify and praise God with you. This is not just for the little children, however. Teenagers and adults, we need to be setting the example for our children, inviting our friends and neighbors as well in case they also need to see this good example and learn to glorify God properly.
 - D. In **Matthew 9:36-38**, Jesus saw the crowds and recognized that they were like sheep without a shepherd. That is, they were people who had no one to guide and lead them in the right way. He asked the disciples to pray for laborers to go into that vineyard. You, no matter your age, can be a laborer in that vineyard. You can bring in that harvest and help someone meet the Shepherd who can lead and guide them. You can bring them here and let them see an example of folks who are praising and serving God properly despite those who would want us to be quiet.

Conclusion:

This week, we will be learning to dig for Bible answers. We will be focusing time on letting our children learn about and praise God. We will be providing time for us to set the example for them. We are providing opportunity to bring in those who don’t have the good example we have here. Don’t take this week for granted. What a great opportunity it is. Let’s use this time to its fullest.