

Today's Message: Out of the Mouth of Babes
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Out of the mouth of babes come some incredible, unexpected, and insightful things. Sometimes you just don't know what will come out of their mouths! E.g., I recall seeing a video online called, "Kids say the darndest things" and they had some interesting things to say:

- One child says, My dad has a gold tooth; the other child says proudly, My dad has diabetes

- A mother is at the zoo with her child and points to a buffalo and says, "That buffalo weighs about 2,000 lb.!" And the child asks, "What about you Mom? How much do you weigh?"

- A little girl has some cheerleader pompoms and the parent says, Give me a C-- she says C!, give me an A-- she says A!, give me a T-- she says T!, what does it spell? "Dog!- A father tells his little daughter to say, "I promise Daddy that I will not have any boyfriends" but she cannot say "any boyfriends", and the father keeps trying to get her to say it, and she giggles, and then finally says a bit seriously, "I just want to look at them though!"

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- At what looked like a day school graduation the children were allowed to say in a microphone what they wanted to be when they grew up, and one boy said he wanted to be a "vampire cat", and another boy said emphatically, "I don't want to grow up!"

Children do say the darndest things, and sometimes they have even greater insight than adults. E.g., Sadie Robertson's parents Willie and Korie-- from "Duck Dynasty"-- said, in introducing her at Winter Jam, that their daughter would stand up on the table and preach at home, and here she was giving us a message at

Winter Jam, and the irony for the was profound. We do need to listen closely to what children are saying because they are often repeating things they hear from others or even their parents or give insight to things we have not seen, and Jesus Himself knew this.

READ Matthew 21:14-17 (p. 23)

CONTEXT: Jesus has just entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey like a King and received a thunderous welcome with people waving palm branches and laying their clothes on the ground for Jesus' donkey to trod on and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!" in v 9. Jesus enters the temple and drives out the money changers claiming that God's house will be a place of prayer, not a den of robbers.

"Jesus enters Jerusalem with great adulation by the people and a show of impressive authority by Himself which left people wondering who Jesus is. Do people still wonder this today?" Indeed they do. It seems we have two polarizing ideas happening with Jesus. If we raise his popularity then the recognition of His authority suffers; but if we raise His authority then his popularity suffers. And people today are often left very confused about Jesus. E.g., one woman years ago told me her view of Jesus was that we all had a "Christ" principle living in us, we were all in a sense divine, and we all had to get in touch with this Christ principle living in us. Our passage fills us in further on who this Jesus is.

READ vv 14-15. "Jesus' reputation interestingly brought out a diverse group of people to Him-- those who needed healing (cf. 2 Samuel 5:8), those who cried out praise of Him, and those who were angry/skeptical. Does this still happen today?" This text where Jesus heals in the temple is the only place in the synoptic gospels that Jesus does this. It is interesting that in 2 Samuel 5:8 it is

said that the blind and lame shall not enter God's house, and this teaching was continued in the Dead Sea Scrolls where in 1QSa 2.5-12 ("The Messianic Rule", ca. mid-first century BC) it is said no man with a physical defect such as blindness and being lame shall enter the assembly of the people of God. So what we see here is God's great reversal, where the people are healed and restored to the assembly of His people by Jesus' healing them. The children cry out praises to Jesus, "Hosanna to the Son of David"-- "hosanna" means in Hebrew "save now" and is connected with salvation, and here especially messianic Davidic salvation--, perhaps just repeating what they have already heard the crowd saying. The religious leaders, instead of inquiring whether this is true, just simply reject such praise of Jesus as inappropriate. People still come to Jesus for healing. E.g., I have been told by one lay person to always pray for healing for a sick person, because that is the desire of their hearts, even if all seems lost for their physical health. E.g., we should come to praise the Lord, and for some this will mean dancing in the aisles, and for others it will mean quietly standing with hands held up, and for others just simply with head bowed and eyes closed. But we are to praise Him-- that is the appropriate way to approach Jesus! But even religious leaders may be angered by such open praise of Jesus. E.g., I recall talking to the campus minister at a Louisiana campus ministry who was being evaluated, and he was criticized for mentioning Jesus so much-- unbelievable!

READ vv 16-17. "Jesus refers to Psalm 8:2 to defend the right of the children's words, yet Jesus' use of this Psalm probably only reinforced the religious leaders' anger, for this Psalm refers to God!" Interestingly, Jesus is quoting from the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT, the Septuagint (LXX), here in the phrase "you have prepared praise" where the Hebrew has "you have prepared/laid the foundation of strength"-- but this may be a correct interpretation by the LXX (cf. Psalm 29:1). What is prepared is for God, and Jesus is notably

applying this psalm to Himself. It is wonderful to see children praise God. E.g., when the children dance and sing during VBS it is a wonderful thing to see-- they are very free, and un-selfconscious, and we adults have much to learn from them!

“How can we encourage such praise of Jesus from our children, even in the face of a skeptical age?” (1) bring children to church regularly-- and make it fun, not a chore; (2) have bedtime devotionals with them-- like a picture book of the Bible, and then a chapter out of the Chronicles of Narnia; (3) sing with them, like playing our VBS CD when driving them around or Lifesongs radio or singing praise songs to yourself. I recall my Mom regularly singing as she drove me around as a child, “Sing praises to God, join us let’s sing, sing praises to God, for every good thing.” Indeed, He is worthy of our praises!