



# THE EXHORTER

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***“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40***

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**Matthew 21:16** *“and said to Him, ‘Do you hear what these children are saying?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself?’”*

The use of children in the Scriptures is interesting. Our verse today is another example. Following Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem, where people were covering the road with palm branches and their coats for Jesus to travel upon, Jesus goes to the Temple where three events take place. First, He cast out the money changers who were profiting on out of town people who needed to purchase an animal for sacrifice. Second, He healed the blind and lame that came to Him. Third, children in the temple were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Their sweet voices of praise towards Jesus was refreshing. The chief priests witnessing all these things were smoking mad. This is where our verse comes from. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" You'd think that the chief priests could care less about what kids say. They were grabbing at anything to make Jesus look bad. Jesus had a wonderful way of turning all of their darts into compliments.

Jesus responded by referring to the Scriptures. "Have you never read..." What a dig that must have been to the chief priests who felt that they had a corner on understanding the Scriptures. Have you never read? Jesus said that often. He quotes from Psalms 8 where this reference to children is first found. He connects the dots to the innocent praise of the children to fulfillment of God's plan and prophecy. Jesus left the temple and the chief priests whose mouths were probably hanging open in silence.

Out of the mouth of babes is a common expression today. Children, in their innocence, often see the value of things that adults don't. Children love coming to Bible class. Adults can drag their feet complaining about how tired they are and how busy they are. At the end of a prayer, you can often hear a child saying, "Amen," real loud. It's sweet.

Children do not understand church fights and division. They get caught in the ugliness of those things and are often pulled away from their friends because "they are on the wrong side" of things. Kids don't understand. I expect God doesn't understand, either. Ask some children to help out and with a little guidance, they will do it. I've seen kids down at the church house, pulling weeds, emptying trash cans, putting song books in the rack and just being busy as bees helping out. They like to be a part and it's great to include them.

Out of the mouth of babes: It's hard to find an answer when a child asks...

- Dad, why don't you come to church with us?
- You shouldn't say those words
- Why are you so mad?
- Why don't we pray before we eat?
- Can you read me the Bible?
- Is daddy going to go to Heaven?
- Why don't you like that family at church?
- Why don't we go to Bible class?
- Why don't you bow your head and close your eyes when we pray?
- I like church. Do you?

Sweet children. They love the Lord. They love goodness. They don't understand all the deep and complicated things of relationships, feelings and stuff that gets us worked up and bothered. I saw a report that compared how many times in a day children laugh to how many times a day adults laugh. The difference was huge. There may be many reasons, but we can't neglect the sweet, innocent trust that children have in the Lord. That keeps worry, doubt and fear at bay.

You'll often find me with the kids on a Sunday. I am a kid at heart and enjoy the wonderful company of children. Curious, sweet, positive, and happy-that's children. It sure beats tired, grumpy, complaining and bothered, that defines too many adults.

Out of the mouth of babes. Have you heard a child pray in a while? They'll thank God for the blue sky, the birds that sing, the dandelions, and name everyone in the family. We smile when they are finished, but think, it's been a long while since I thanked God for blue skies, singing birds and things like that. Out of the mouth of babes. I have a file folder in my desk of the artwork that children have drawn and given me. I save all of them. Often, they draw a picture of me preaching. It's cute. It's sweet that they took the time to do that and share it.

We can learn a lot from children. The chief priests should have in Jesus' days. We do well to learn some things from them in our days.

Out of the mouth of babes...

Roger Shouse

