

Address before the Children's Program, December 13, 2015

Matthew 21:16

“Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him.

“Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read,

**“ ‘From the lips of children and infants
you have ordained praise’ ?”**

It was the kids that really got to them.

When Jesus was born, it's like he had didn't want people to know he was there. Jesus came into the world almost as quietly as a snowflake. You know, when you look out at the streetlight and the air is filled with those big fluffy snowflakes that look as big as snowballs, and there is not a whisper of wind. Gently they drift to earth. If you are hearty enough to step outside, and you are silent, and there is already some snow on the ground, and if you don't worry what your neighbors might see and think and you put your head down to the ground—if you do that—you will just barely hear it: the snowflake touching the ground. “How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given” sings one Christmas carol. That is how Jesus came.

But that is not how things stayed. Thirty-three years later there was so much noise around Jesus that shouts about him, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” were heard from end to end of the city of Jerusalem. His opponents begged him to stop the noise. What really got on their nerves was the kids. The children were Jesus' praise choir.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday near the end of his life, all the city went out to meet him. And they did what *adults* do: they showed up for the parade, and then they got on with life. But Matthew 21 tells us that the children did what *kids* do: they kept following Jesus. And the song they heard in the morning, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” got stuck in their heads so the kids did what kids do and kept on singing it wherever they followed Jesus. And the morning song was on their lips even as the afternoon sun dipped low in the sky. And Jesus opponents couldn't stand it. They looked at the children and they said, “Hmmpff!” And they told Jesus, “Do you hear what these children are saying?”

And Jesus' answer was this little passage from the Old Testament, “Have you never read, ‘From the lips of children and infants [the LORD] has ordained praise’? (Matthew 21:16). Let them sing!