

## Children Playing on the Streets of the City of God

Children can be a joy to watch. Their energy and imagination are unlimited. Once in a while their play is interrupted by a skinned knee or bruised ego, but all in all play is more important. Have you ever tried to stop children from playing? It is not an easy task. They are involved completely in their activity. Their minds take them everywhere from playing house to a jungle safari. They are lost to all around them.

Zechariah 8: 4 “This is what the Lord Almighty says: *‘Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.’* *‘It will seem marvelous to the remnant of this people at that time, but will it seem marvelous to me?’ declares the Lord.*” (NIV)

The essence of the prophets told of the coming of the Lord and the setting up of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The nature of the King would be reflected by the spiritual nature of the kingdom. The king would reign in righteousness and truth. This day has come! Jesus is king! His kingdom is here! We, who have ‘put on Christ’ are citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven. This Kingdom is the City of God. Too often our earthly eyes see the physical world and thus we are tempted to focus upon it. We ought to focus our spiritual eyes each morning in realization that we are but passing through and our citizenship lies elsewhere.

Consider *“The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.”* How often have we heard in lesson after lesson or sermon after sermon of our duty and/or obligation toward God. We have often been taught that we have Christian duties to fulfill. This idea of duty or obligation seems to carry with it a negative connotation. In other words, “I am only doing it because I have to.” “If I had my choice, I would do something else.” It is almost like when we were told that we had to do our homework before we could go out and play. Somewhere along the line, what was best for us became a negative duty or obligation. That duty/obligation seemed always to get in the way of our enjoyment of life.

Consider why it is that our activity in the kingdom is so negative. In marriage, do we consider doing for our spouse a duty or an activity of love. What is it that makes you happy? One fellow said, “I only get her flowers to shut her up!” I wonder if that is the reason why some meet on Sunday. “I am just going to church to shut God up!” “I am doing my duty.” Does God need our worship? Does God need our praise? Is there any amount of duty that we can fulfill that will earn us points with God?

God does know our heart, does he not? Why could we not substitute the word ‘work’ with the word ‘play’? Some might say, ‘We have to use the word, ‘work’ because it is in the Bible. So, stop playing games.....’ My compassion is extended toward the hardened heart that looks at the Christian life as a burden or weight to be carried around through a life in this world. May it never be this way! Jesus said that His burden was light and yoke was easy. This does not mean that we take the things of God lightly or indifferently, but with joy and zeal, lets get busy playing.

The prophets see boys and girls playing together. Together they are playing. Working together are both males and females on the streets of the city of God. When kids are lost in their play, they work together toward the purpose of their play. There is no competition or animosity unless one child becomes selfish over an aspect of play. This soon permeates to most all the children. Does this sound familiar? In God's city, He has provided that we (work) play together in harmony and to the other's benefit. Why should not the strength of the man be used to strengthen the woman? Why should not the blessings of the woman refine the man? There is just so much to do together!

God knew what He was doing when He designed His city. The streets are fit for the children to play upon. God's city, the kingdom of Heaven, is just the place for His children. God has provided streets lined with opportunity. Buildings of influence and billboards for direction are what line the streets of the City of God.

Not only has God made the streets fit for the children to play upon, but He has made the children fit for the streets. The children are not to pollute the streets, but rather to light the streets for all to see. Jesus said that we are the light of the world and a city that cannot be hid, for it is built upon a hill. We play in the City of God in a manner in which we shine as lights in the city of men.

Won't you come out and play with us?