

D. N. March 7, 1952 P. m.

"THE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND"

Zechariah 8:5

"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

That sounds (shocking) to some people.

There are some people (surprised) to know that the Bible has anything to say about children playing.

This verse not only speaks of them playing, but declaring boys and girls are to (play together!)

It even (startles) us further by saying boys and girls are playing together in the (streets!)

(Unbelievable, playing in the streets.)

V. 6 - Well it certainly is marvelous, the prophet continued - ("Thus saith the Lord of hosts. If it be marvelous in the eyes of the remenant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in mine eyes? Saith the Lord of hosts.")

To put this in (simple) words -- the (thing) which surprises you, that you look upon as marvelous, that almost shocks you, is the (very) thing upon which the heart of God is set.

✓ God believes in children playing, he believes in them playing together and he believes in them playing in the streets.

✓ This is a picture of the coming age. Call it what you will -- golden age -- millennial age -- the good time is coming. A picture of ultimate victory toward which men perpetually looked in the midst of battle.

✓ Prophets saw glimpses of the coming glory -- coming harmonies. These men were not near-sighted. They saw far ahead of things not yet come to pass.

They saw a kingdom established over which a King should rule in righteousness.

They saw a Kingdom - not by the sight of his eyes or the hearing of his ears.

This coming King is the rule.

They saw nature at peace.

They saw in the midst a little child at play.

Picture of Zechariah of Jerusalem, zion the mountain of the Lord of hosts.

This is a picture of Heaven. It is a picture of earth.

A picture of conditions where today sinning, sighing, and sorrow abound.

A picture -- The Lord's Prayer, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done as in Heaven so in earth.

As I come to this Sunday service, I feel the value of being a part in turning this place we live into a playground for the children. The establishment of the Kingdom of God, the building of His city, the healing of all wounds, the realization of perfect conditions. In that day the horses shall have bells "Holy unto the Lord."

If I want to know about God's coming Kingdom, I must get among the children, where the noise is.

Zechariah was a stern prophet, a poet who saw coming glories.

You do not think of him as having time for a child, yet suddenly, he speaks of the streets being full of boys and girls.

Text reveals what God thought of children. Lets go and visit that city and see what the city is like.

#### I. IT IS IDEAL FOR A CHILD TO PLAY

Significant fact -- "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp . . .

the lion shall eat straw with the ox - the wolf and lamb shall lie down in perfect peace - this will be the child's playtime.

Have you ever taken a child to the zoo? The child has a deep anxiety to climb over the rails and get in the den with the polar bears - or get inside the cage with wild monkeys.

This is divine (instinct) - the child wants to be where God intended it should be -- at play with all the lower animals.

"A little child shall lead them."

If you do not believe me and you have a boy four years old, stay at home one day, and from morning til night do everything that boy does.

A man said his son requested they play horses. He agreed to be the driver of the horse and the son the horse. The horse went from one path to another, turned around and took another path. Until he had made six rounds in the same place. The man said I have to go into the house a few minutes. He stayed over an hour!

What is play? Play is work which is not a task set. Play is work, not for profit, but out of pure delight in the exercise of strength.

The child has no thought of profit in play.

✓ The characteristics of a little child at play are merriment, earnestness,  
defense of the weak.

A child plays itself into its work.

Every individual ought to be able to say this about his work.

To this end have I been born -- to this end am I come into the world.

Work will become a delight to him - for the sake of doing it.

Walk in a carpenter's shop and watch the man at the bench. Making a piece  
of furniture, touching it with love, enjoys.

✓ II. IDEAL IS PLAY TOGETHER

See in every land school for girls or boys.

Y. M. C. A. -- Y. W. C. A.

We do all we can to keep them apart.

Together perfectly, purely, naturally.

Perfect family brothers and sisters grow up, play together.

✓  
III. IDEAL PLACE PLAY IN STREETS

Public life in the coming Kingdom.

In God's city boys and girls are to play in the streets of the city.

✓ Simplest way of saying this, the streets will be (fit) for them to play in.

This says something about the character of the child and the public life in the city.

The child is the test of public life in the city.

Everything in the coming city will depend upon the little child. Everything will go forward in the interests of the little child.

Among all things they shall be safe and fit for children to play in.

Isaiah - "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

What a city that will be -- not hurt nor destroy. Nothing in the streets to harm little children, physically, mentally, or spiritually!

✓ V. 4 - When you have city streets fit for children, you have a city with streets

fit for adults. If a child is safe (everyone) is safe. As you walk the streets of the city of the King - find nothing that can harm the child physically. The city drainage will be perfect, traffic perfect for the sake of children.

This is Gospel!

These children whom God loves and speaks of in terms of playtime in the coming Kingdom are safe.

Use your imagination - take a walk through the streets of the city of the King, look into the shop windows, can you find any impure literature?

Take a look at the bill boards of amusement, are they suggestive of evil, calculated to influence the passion of a child or youth.

No, no, no, & unholy pictures can be found.

The love of the child will be greater than love of gain. That is the truth about the city of God.

As you walk through these streets of the city - we find no man ready to pollute young life. No man standing in the shadows of a building watching a chance to lead a boy into ways of betting and gambling.

The word of Jesus will be in operation - the man who is found causing a little child to offend will have a millstone hung about his neck and be drowned in the depth of the sea, while angels rejoice.

There will be nothing sickly in the city. The streets are fit for the children.

This gives light. There will be no dry dusty, filthy, half starved, diseased, children crowded in alleys, but bright sunny streets.

The child reflects the home from which he comes - the legend. "Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation." This will be a living reality in that Kingdom. In homes where these things are believed, as children from such homes go out into the streets they will not harm or pollute.

Tragic thing in this city of ours is the streets are not fit for playtime.

Dangerous to let children out into streets - beyond the crime - drugs - alcohol - half are unfit for cars, let alone as a playground. Holes, detour signs, one way signs, barricades. Begging are up - Felling are same common -!

You who listen to me now dare not turn your children into the streets to play, but there are children who have no other place to play and in their hearts there is a



capacity for good or evil.

I saw a policeman take a small boy by the hand - hold up the traffic - and lead him safely across the street.

I read about a public works man in London going through St. James Park. Two or three children were playing, one of them a girl, with dirty face and ruffled hair. The man looked down at this child and said, "Why do you stay here?" Why don't you go over there into the Green Park, where you can play on the grass?

The bright eyes looked up into his and she said, "There are no flowers there."

If we could, get the message - the thing that gladdens the children.

You and I have a responsibility about our streets for the sake of the children.

People push the big five in an election, but who cares for the children?

Right here under the shadow of our church houses, families are crowded together. These children come out into the streets and play and these streets are

not fit for them.

Many of the homes are not the right kind, that would make their home a blessing to the streets.

Are you saying, I don't have anything to do with this and content to do nothing.

I would like to lay this burden upon you.

Some will say there is nothing I can do, or very little.

You are not responsible for all that ~~can be done~~ or has to be done.

You are responsible for the thing next to you. Whatever you have of influence - whatever lies at your disposal.

Take hold of and use in the interest of the Kingdom of God.

We have orphan children.

We have public houses, drinking places, and every last one of them is a center

of death, an instrument for spoiling childhood.

Prophets saw this distant day and suffered -- died in faith having received the promise.

We are to work for this present hour, and all the future -- keep the little child in mind - make the streets fit for our children.

I remember tragic deaths on the streets of the city - robbing on every hand.

Every child in this city is near to the heart of God -- not his will that one should perish.

The Devil said to Jesus, "Let us alone." Christ's answer is our answer. We will not let you alone. It is our business. You can not go on luring children to destruction.

It is very little we can do -- but let us do something. Let us close in on the Devil and leave our mark upon him.

Our city is not ready for what Zechariah saw. Streets are not ready for the boys and girls to play in.

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Where shall we begin?

In your own home?

How can I do it?

Crown Christ there as Master and Lord. Make your home a church going home.

What we cannot do as individuals we can do together. Begin with the child in your home. Often you see freight cars marked perishable -- these cars contain fruits, vegetables, and other items that must reach the markets quickly. They must not be side-tracked nor handled carelessly.

We should mark every child perishable and see to it that nothing takes from our teaching them the Word of God and bringing them early to the Saviour.

*Had my father take me to ch - Twice Sunday  
to come to listen sermon - its - Most Thankful!*

Much of the Bible, though not nearly all, is a fore-telling of future events. Many of the events prophesied in the Bible have already taken place and the prophecies have been fulfilled. For instance, the prophet Amos fore-told the downfall of Israel before Assyria, and Jeremiah predicted the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. But there are even more striking examples.

In 740 B.C., eight hundred years before the birth of Jesus, a rural preacher named Micah rose to say, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." And eight centuries later, in the little village of Bethlehem, the Messiah, Jesus, was born in literal fulfillment of the prophecy.

In 520 B.C., five hundred years before Christ, the young prophet Zechariah said, "And I said unto them, if ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." And five centuries later, Judas Iscariot betrayed his master and took for his price thirty pieces of silver.

Again and again, Biblical prophecy has proved itself correct. There are at least 35 more Old Testament prophecies which absolutely are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and dozens of other which seem to be fulfilled in him. If these prophecies have come to pass, we have a right to believe that other Scriptural predictions will also be fulfilled. Once again, we are on safe ground when we say that the Bible is true.

The Bible claims to be the supreme revelation of the character of God through the medium of the personality of Jesus Christ. He said of himself "I am the truth." Was he right? Is the Bible true when it records that claim? Here is the place where no argument can convince. A man must make that discovery for himself. He must submit himself in faith to Jesus Christ as Lord and Master. And when he does, Jesus will validate himself in that man's experience and, in doing so, will prove also the truth of the Holy Bible.