

PLAY WELL Sept 27/15

INTRODUCTION

When I say the word 'play' what comes to mind?

It's easy to picture children at a playground.

The definition for play is 'activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose. So its an enjoyable refreshing activity.

There is one part of the definition I disagree with: it assumes that play is not serious or practical. Ever spent time with someone who doesn't play well with others? It can affect their relationships and work for the rest of their life. I'd say that's practical.

Children playing is a sign of God's blessing.

Zechariah 8:5

This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with cane in hand because of their age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there."

Through Zechariah, God promised that Jerusalem will see her children play again, and Zion will hear the laughter of her children once more.

For adults, 'play' is not so simple. And certainly God has a warning.

Read 1 John 2:15-17

There is no time or pursuit that does not matter to God. You can only serve one master.

Like the previous 2 sermons on redeeming the time, it's all about: Who's the boss?

Why did God give us a mind with imagination? A mind that can paint, make up stories and songs, invent and play instruments, play games, laugh and THROW A FOOTBALL.

The word 'play' shows up in the Bible 35 times...mostly to do with playing an instrument but also of children, animals and acting. I believe God gave us imagination to play as part of being in His image. God's sense of play shows up in Creation: a dog wagging it's tail; a cat playing with a sock; the flight of a butterfly, the otter.

If we're thinking about redeeming time for eternity; Does play time even count?

There was a man who had it all...

Read 1 Kings 10:14, 23

50,000lbs of Gold coming in.

Move over Donald Trump! King Solomon had it all. Wise, popular and rich.

Solomon was also an author. "On the side" he composed 3000 Proverbs and 1005 Songs.

Then he pursued play...

Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

So what went wrong?

Read 1 Kings 11:1-4

Solomon's heart became divided. He had a high regard for God but he wanted more power and beauty. Solomon's greatest weakness: exotic women.

Bonus: Solomon is an example of what happens when you become unequally yoked. How they're doing with Jesus is what really counts in the long run.

What can divide our heart has a lot to do with how we spend our 'play time' or we'll also call it our 'free time'.

After Work with Christ

We examined a day in the life of Jesus at the beginning of this series (Mk 1:21-39). We found Jesus' source for redeeming time was our Father in heaven. So we know to stay tight with the Father.

How did Jesus spent His time 'free time' after work?

You may recall that after Jesus finished teaching in the synagogue, He went to Simon & Andrew's home for the rest of the day.

Is that work? Well, He did heal their mother-in-law. But then she waited on them while they ate together.

Another example.

Read Luke 19:1-10

And so fulfills Jesus' earlier prediction that people would reject him for eating and drinking as a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Lk 7:34-35).

Jesus didn't call Zac at his workplace and He didn't call Zac to follow Him.

"I'm coming over to your place today."

If there was a space in Jesus' ministry we could call 'after work' 'it was probably hanging out with people...in their homes, on the beach, in the country.

Its not just go go go. It's go & stay. Jesus spent time in the homes of friend and foe, rich and poor; sinner and faithful. His family thought He was crazy to love people that much.

Making Friends & Mentoring

Many of us are **working** full time...some with flexible hours, some not. The challenge today is to make friendship building and mentoring a regular part of our free time.

For parents, their children are the first order responsibility...so there is less free time in a sense. And yet you have a wonderful opportunity to shape play with the taste of heaven.

Parents, grandparents and the extended spiritual family (that's us, the church) can model and teach **playing well**:

- With Others: do to others as you would have them do to you (Lk 6:31).
- By yourself: do it for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31).

With kids, there are so many opportunities to teach godly attitudes and to deal with our sin nature...like teaching repentance and forgiveness.

There is also a great reward in finding other families who share your values. You've struck gold when you find spiritual grandparents to share the load of passing on the faith. You also have amazing opportunities to be salt and light with your children's friends and their families.

Children & Activity

Special concern about redeeming play time with children. The most comprehensive annual assessment of children and youth physical activity in Canada 2015 says: The biggest risk is keeping kids indoors. Only 9% of 5-17 yr olds meet the daily recommendation: 1 hr of MVPA – moderate to vigorous physical activity. Kids need both the activity and the social interaction.

Many here, are **retired** from the regular work life and have more choices with time.

Be mindful of the important influence you have. You are in your prime for being salt and light...for passing on your faith to the next generations.

Find the cracks of time in their week. It will be time well spent preparing for eternity.

Read Matthew 28:16-20

How do we make disciples if our spare time is...without people? Before you came in today, I placed some disciple seeds under your cushions. I know...I didn't get your permission first. If you sit on them 48 times in a year, you will sprout a new disciple. Actually, there is a tiny truth in that. Helping others begins with growing ourselves. But you know what I'm getting at. People are more important to Jesus than stuff or temporary tranquility. The Bible supports rest...even naps, the Sabbath concept, a hope of Rest with God forever and peace for our soul through Christ. But the attitude: 'I deserve this or that' has to die. We have been bought at great price. Hell is what we deserved before Christ came knocking at the door of our heart. God knows what we need: the

balance between alone time and people time. Listen to His Spirit in you.

Jesus' Great Commission is for us all. And it comes with a promise: 'I will be with you'.

1 John 4:4b

the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

So why isn't every one of us helping someone grow to obey Jesus...discipling one person?

We live in a work of distractions. And some of us have acquired a healthy appetite for being entertained.

Counterfeit Play

Satan is a counterfeit expert. He knows God built us for community; that our basic need is to be loved and love others. So he tricks us with a counterfeit. Water that makes us thirsty again...like extra salt in the popcorn so that we buy the popcorn too. Visual media is powerful...for good and bad. When it is taking the place of loving God, the church and your neighbor...the enemy is winning.

The other day in Lillooet I heard someone say. 'I've got time to

kill.' Here's another one... "I'm bored".

When we feel that way and choose to 'veg' in front of the screen, the entertainment short circuits the thinking process and takes over as the stimulus for thinking. We end up developing a dependence on a counterfeit for what we really need.

When I was younger, I struggled with dependence on entertainment. My dad did too. I looked forward to weekend sports and evening movies. It didn't happen all at once, but I began making better choices for my free time...and a better choice for my finances when I cut cable. Our house here in Lillooet, I cut it off and stuck it back into the wall. The choice to limit that kind of free time has enriched my marriage, parenting and my whole life. My diet changed and I sought more activity in my life. I also got more sleep. My dad has also lost a large amount of weight and has become an avid reader of books for feeding the Christian soul.

Jesus said I came that you might have life...to the full. So here's an idea. When you're feeling useless, unmotivated and just well...blaa,

do a gut check. Is this a physical thing (have I eaten enough, need a nap). Is this an emotional thing (hurt, holding a grudge, worried), is this a social thing (need to talk to a friend) is it a spiritual thing (avoiding a soul condition). When we use the mind God gave us, we can work past the feelings that drive us down and make better choices with our free time:

Exercise, call a friend, eat a snack, take a nap, Sing, Pray, read God's word.

1 Cor 6:19-20

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Entertainment might not be the issue for you. But whatever you need to turn over to Him, do it. God is the judge. God is most pleased with our "free time" when we choose to follow our heart for Him:

Enjoy God's creation on a walk, read a novel with the scent of heaven, arrange a fun activity to be salt and light, enjoy the arts and thank God. Our 'free time' can carry Jesus' passion for

sinners...those dying spiritually, in need of the Great Physician. When we turn our agenda over to God and He has time to refine us like a potter with clay; our desires begin to line up more with what pleases God too.

Time and Play at LGC

In the arena of 'play', we will battle with pride and selfishness. But it sure helps when we're in an environment where love and acceptance is the rule.

Play date: next Sunday afternoon (4th) at our house, 3-6pm. Anyone - stay longer & order in pizza

I hope God uses this week to refresh our thinking about our 'play' time.

I'd like to get to know you better; how God is moving your heart. So here's something to do at home and then get back to me.

Take Home

1. Pray earnestly about surrendering all your time to God
2. Dream with God. What has He given you a desire and ability for...that builds up Christ's church or bears witness to His Gospel
3. Write it down to share with me. Service, offering, office, home, email.

One of my mandates as an undershepherd of Christ is to encourage you to do the work God is calling you to. (Eph 4:11-13)
This communication will get the ball rolling but it will take time, please be patient.

Next Sunday we share Communion: a time to reflect on the love of God and our hope because of Jesus. Parents with younger children, we'll make sure there's crackers and grapes at the back as an alternative.

Instead of me preaching, we'll share a 'sermon'. It's called 'Boast in the Lord (1 Cor 1:31). You can share what God has been doing in your life lately, A verse that has impacted you, Or a response to the Redeeming Time Series.

Closing

Let us return to the man who had everything and tried everything.

Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Let's make our time count for eternity. AMEN?

Benediction: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all (Rom 16:24)