



## **SEVENTH LAY TALK**

# **TALK #11 CHANGING OUR WORLD**

### **Overview of All Talks**

One message is delivered during The Walk to Emmaus 72-hour experience; it is communicated throughout the music, meals, clergy meditations, attitudes and actions of the team members, and the talks. You have been selected to deliver one of the 15 talks. In reality, you will deliver 1/15 of the Emmaus talk—one message, fifteen presenters.

Prepare your talk using the outlines provided. In general, 2/3 of your presentation will come from the outlines; the remaining 1/3 will come from your original insights and personal experience.

The talks are sequenced in a defined order; each builds on the next to provide pilgrims with the complete message of Emmaus. Do not try to cover more than your assigned topic. The expanded outline intends to provide a solid understanding of the material from which your talk will be developed. The abbreviated outline helps you see the progression of the main points. *Neither outline is a script*; you will need to add personal examples to give life to the content and make it real to the hearers. Use visual aids to help convey the main points.

The Holy Spirit, as well as feedback from the team after your talk preview, will provide additional guidance for your unique presentation of this talk. Once you incorporate the suggestions offered after your preview, your presentation no longer belongs just to you but to the team God is forming to deliver the Emmaus message.

*This presentation is allotted a maximum of 20 to 25 minutes.* Please honor the time limit out of a spirit of cooperation, charity, good stewardship of time, and consideration for the hearers.

### **Overview for Speaker**

This is the first talk on Sunday morning, the third day of The Walk to Emmaus. The theme of this day is the Christian community in action. Up to now, pilgrims have heard about God's grace; Jesus Christ as the model of a life in grace through piety, study, and action; and the call to discipleship. Now pilgrims are beginning to consider their return home, to think about family and job and community. They are beginning to ask questions like: "How can I put my faith to work in the world?" "How will my faith affect my relationships?" "To what arenas of ministry I am called?"

CHANGING OUR WORLD expands on the theme of Christian action and continues the theme of discipleship. This talk addresses four arenas of ministry for which a serious disciple must make a plan: self, others, his or her local community, and the world. CHANGING OUR WORLD focuses on making an effective plan for living out our discipleship in these everyday arenas of our lives.

This talk is not a license for you to “soapbox” on general issues (especially divisive ones) that pilgrims cannot examine thoroughly in this setting. This will only disrupt the Walk. Nor should you use this talk to persuade or teach about your favorite concern. This talk is concerned only with convincing pilgrims of their call to be active and intentional about changing our world in these arenas of everyday life. Personal examples are helpful if the talk causes table discussion on the pilgrims’ situations and call to discipleship, not on your personal views on issues.

Keep examples and illustrations as practical and personal as possible. They should be illustrations that all pilgrims can relate to.

Your goal as speaker is to encourage pilgrims to continue thinking practically about what it means to be active disciples in their everyday life: to be “in the world but not of the world.” Help them see that problems can become opportunities to witness, and inspire them to act on those opportunities—to be an effective Christian presence in the world.

**This talk is scheduled for Sunday at 8:50 a.m.**

# Expanded Outline: CHANGING OUR WORLD

**Begin by leading the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:**

*Please turn to page 48 in your Worshipbook and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.*

## **Opening Story (1–2 minutes)**

Choose a story or experience from your own life that is brief, personal, and directly related to the main point of this talk. If you cannot think of an appropriate introduction, consult with the Lay Director or a Spiritual Director for assistance. A good introduction will engage the hearts, minds, and attention of pilgrims and move them into the theme of this talk. For example, you might do the following:

Option 1: Share a specific way you have come to see the world differently and formulated your own plan to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. Feel free to name the fears or obstacles that had to be overcome.

Option 2: Share the life story of someone else that illustrates the main theme of the talk.

**My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the title of this talk is CHANGING OUR WORLD.**

## **I. Introduction**

This talk concerns a plan for changing our world: making the world a more Christ-centered, just, and loving community. You have heard about piety, study, and action and about the world's desperate need for Christ and Christian leadership. But how can you respond to the challenge?

In *What's Wrong with the World*, G. K. Chesterton wrote, "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried."<sup>1</sup> For the next few minutes, I want to talk with you not only about trying Christianity but also about making a plan to successfully live it and help Christ make a difference in the world.

Changing our world involves four fields of ministry: yourself, others, your community, and the world.

Micah 6:8 provides a helpful framework for understanding what God requires of us and how we will bring about change in these fields of ministry: "What does the LORD require of you but to do justice [community and world], and to love kindness [others], and to walk humbly with your God [self]?"

## II. First Field of Ministry: Yourself

- A. In this first field of ministry, you are called to walk humbly with God. Before you can change the world, you must have a plan for anchoring yourself spiritually. If you are going to bring change to the world, you must start with yourself.

Elie Wiesel tells the story of a Jewish man who set out to change the world. In making his plan, the man said to himself:

Basing myself on the Talmudic saying that if all . . . repented, the Messiah would come, I decided to do something about it. I was convinced I would be successful. But where was I to start? The world is so vast. I shall start with the country I know best, my own. But my country is so very large. I had better start with my town. But my town, too, is large. I had best start with my street. No: my home. No: my family. Never mind, I shall start with myself.<sup>2</sup>

- B. When we try to change the world without firm roots in a relationship with God and Christian community, we can fall into traps.
1. *The "Pharisee"*—Because the Pharisee is not motivated by God's grace, he or she is driven by rigid perfectionism and guided by legalism. The mission is perverted into attempts to force everyone into one's own mold.
  2. *The do-gooder*—Do-gooders are often motivated by their own need to be needed or to make a notable difference instead of by true compassion and commitment to meet human needs.
  3. *The "savior complex"*—Without a sense of God's providence, caring people may feel they must save the world by themselves. Far-reaching plans or feverish activity may be based more on anxiety for the future than attention to God and discernment of God's will for the present.
  4. *The burned-out*—Without a vital relationship with God and other Christians, one's fire for the mission burns out. You cannot change the world if you are running on empty.
- C. Our model is Jesus. The strength of Jesus' ministry (and ours) came from his relationship with God and close friends (his disciples). Between times of intense ministry, Jesus withdrew with his disciples to a lonely place to pray and share his concerns (see Luke 22:39-41).
- D. Changing our world begins with changing ourselves and sustaining that change in our heart (piety), mind (study), and will (action).

## III. Second Field of Ministry: Others

- A. In this second field of ministry, we are called to love mercy. Our most immediate opportunity for changing our world through sharing God's love in our relationships

with other persons: family members, colleagues, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances (John 12:26).

1. Your mission is to infuse your network of relationships with the grace of Christ, to make mercy and outreaching love a part of your everyday life.
  2. Make an inventory of your relationships and the grace they call for from you.
    - a) Who do you know that needs your encouragement?
    - b) Who needs what only you can do or give?
    - c) Who needs to hear about Christ from you?
- B. Your attitudes toward others will either open or close relationships as channels of grace (Matt. 7:12).
1. Do you affirm people? Or do you categorize people with limiting labels? A judgmental attitude can be the greatest obstacle to the spiritual growth of another.
  2. Do you see persons for what they have been and condemn them to that, or do you see them for who they can become and encourage them to rise to their potential? A new attitude can be an offering of love to another.
- C. Your prayers for others are acts of love. Through prayer, God can transform your relationships. Through prayer, you help others become changed persons and support them in their new life. Through prayer, God can open opportunities to reach out and witness. Make sure your **ministry to others** flows from your **prayers for others**.
- D. Your friendship with others is the means by which you can share your life and offer Christ.
1. Remember the motto from the CHRISTIAN ACTION talk: Make a friend; be a friend; introduce your friend to Christ.
  2. Seek opportunities to share your relationship with Christ with friends. Expect them to be receptive. Be authentic in sharing your faith and the difference your relationship with Christ makes. There is no right or wrong way to share your faith, only authentic and inauthentic ways.
- E. When friends make a commitment to Christ, encourage their new way of thinking and living through spiritual support, study of scripture, and involvement in church and meaningful ministries.

#### **IV. Third Field of Ministry: Society**

- A. In this third field of ministry, we are called to work for justice.

- B. Your world does not consist of one-on-one relationships alone. You are an integral part of society and culture, groups, families, organizations, institutions, workplaces, and governments.
- C. You influence your society by how you do or do not participate as a Christian. You are called to help Christ transform your part of the world into a more Christ-centered, loving, and just society. *[If possible, share a personal story of how you participated as a Christian in your society.]*
- D. Your mission is to help Christ change your community by acting as an effective Christian influence in it. God calls you “to do justice, to love kindness [mercy], and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). This theme is evident in Jesus’ plan for ministry (Luke 4:18-19).
  - 1. Identify situations of human need. Jesus identified such situations to which we are called to respond. *[Read Matthew 25:31-40.]* He makes clear the significance of our response.
  - 2. Work to correct the situation. Sometimes this means taking an unpopular stand.
    - a) Influence groups, organizations, and businesses of which you are part with Christian values. Call them to be partners in the road to a better world, not obstacles along the way.
    - b) Both works of mercy and justice are necessary. An example of mercy is providing food baskets to needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Justice, in contrast, aims to determine why these people are hungry and addresses the factors causing the need. To love mercy (give food to the hungry) without acting justly (addressing the cause of hunger) is to fall short of changing our world—like putting a Band-Aid on a gaping wound.
  - 3. Joyfully witness for Christ in everything you do. Let people know by your actions, attitudes, and words that Christ is the source and strength of your zeal for a more Christlike, loving, and just world—that Christ is the Way.
- E. How are you called to be Christ in your society? Persons of goodwill may differ in their approaches to changing our world. As Christian witnesses, we should seek tolerance and mutual understanding. But in every case, Christ’s spirit should be evident in what we do and how we do it.

## V. Fourth Field of Ministry: The World

- A. Apostolic action—Jesus sends us into the world (Luke 6:12-13; Matt. 28:19-20). This field of ministry calls us to stretch our hearts, minds, and actions.
- B. Your church or church mission board will offer opportunities.

C. You will need a strong and firm foundation: faith, study, and action.

D. You may be called to go on a short-term mission trip.

*[Describe your plan of action for each of the four fields of ministry.]*

## VI. Conclusion

What is your plan? Changing your world begins with one small step. What can you do now to make a difference?

**The validity of our witness is not proven in immediate results.** Some Christians will plant, some will water, and some will harvest (1 Cor. 3:5-9). **As disciples, we are not called to be successful but to be faithful**—doing what we can, with what we have, where we are, to advance Christ's kingdom "on earth as it is in heaven." But in order to do so, we need a plan for change in ourselves, in our relationships with others, and in our community and world.

**De Colores!**

1. G. K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, pt. I, ch. 5; originally printed in 1910.
2. Elie Wiesel, *Souls on Fire: Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 134–35.

# Abbreviated Outline: CHANGING OUR WORLD

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**My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the title of this talk is CHANGING OUR WORLD.**

## **I. Introduction**

This talk is about making a plan for changing our world: making the world a more Christ-centered, and loving community. Changing our world involves four fields of ministry:

1. self
2. others
3. local community
4. world

Micah 6:8 provides a helpful framework for what the Lord requires of us.

## **II. First Field of Ministry: Yourself**

- A. Before we set out to change the world, we must make a plan for anchoring ourselves spiritually, for "walking humbly" with our God. *[Tell Elie Wiesel's story about the Jewish man who set out to change the world; see Expanded Outline.]*



- B. When we try to change the world without being firmly rooted spiritually, we can fall into traps:
  - 1. the Pharisee
  - 2. the do-gooder
  - 3. the savior complex
  - 4. the burned-out
- C. In contrast, the strength of Jesus' ministry (and ours) came from his relationship with God and close friends.
- D. Changing our world involves sustaining the change in your heart (piety), mind (study), and will (action). A changed world begins with a changed self.

### **III. Second Field of Ministry: Others**

- A. Your most immediate opportunity for changing the world is in your relationships with other persons; Christians are called to love mercy.
- B. Your attitudes toward others will either open or close relationships as channels of grace.
- C. Your prayers for others are acts of love for them. Prayer helps others become changed persons and supports them in their new lives.
- D. Your friendship with others is a means of sharing yourself and your relationship with Christ. Make a friend; be a friend; introduce your friend to Christ. Be authentic in sharing your faith.
- E. When friends make a commitment to Christ, encourage their change by providing opportunities for spiritual support, growth, and service.

### **IV. Third Field of Ministry: Society**

- A. This field of ministry calls us to work for justice.
- B. Your roles in society, groups, organizations, and your workplace provide an opportunity for being a Christian influence.
- C. You influence others by how you participate as a Christian.
- D. Your mission is "to do justice, to love kindness [mercy], and to walk humbly with your God" (Mic. 6:8).
  - 1. Identify situations of need [*read Matthew 25:31-40*]; then pray for God's guidance.

2. Work to correct the situation. Both mercy (meeting need) and justice (addressing the cause of the need) are necessary for real change.
  3. Joyfully witness for Christ in all you do.
- E. How are you called to act in Christ's name in your community?

## **V. Fourth Field of Ministry: The World**

- A. Apostolic action—Jesus sends us into the world. This field of ministry calls us to stretch our hearts, minds, and actions.
- B. Your church or church mission board will offer ministry opportunities.
- C. Your involvement will require a strong and firm foundation of faith and commitment.
- D. You may be called to go on a short-term mission trip.

*[Describe your plan of action for each of the four fields of ministry.]*

## **VI. Conclusion**

What is your plan? Changing the world begins with one small step. What can you do now to make a difference?

As disciples, we are not called to be successful but to be faithful—doing what we can, with what we have, where we are, to advance Christ's kingdom "on earth as it is in heaven." In order to do so, we need a plan for change in ourselves, in our relationships with others, in our community, and in our world.

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