

SEVENTH LAY TALK

TALK #11

CHANGING OUR WORLD

Overview of All Talks

The Walk to Emmaus 72-hour experience delivers one message that is communicated through the music, meals, clergy meditations, attitudes and actions of the team members, and the talks. You will deliver one of the fifteen talks. In reality, you will deliver one-fifteenth of the Emmaus talk—one message with fifteen presenters.

Prepare your talk using the outlines provided. As a good general rule, two-thirds of the talk will come from the outline and one-third would be the speaker's original insights and illustrations.

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 twenty to twenty-five 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 begin to consider their return home, to think about family and job and community. They begin to ask questions like these: "How can I put my faith to work in the world?" "How will my faith affect my relationships?" "To what arenas of ministry am I 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 makes

a plan: self, others, 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 encourages pilgrims to be active and intentional about changing our world in their everyday life. Personal examples from your life can help pilgrims start conversations during their table discussion about their own situations and call to discipleship. Keep examples and illustrations as practical and personal as possible.

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 difficulties can become opportunities to witness, and inspire them to act on those opportunities—to be an effective Christian presence in the world.

Videos and recorded songs should not be part of the talk. Any projection during the talk should be kept simple.

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

EXPANDED OUTLINE

CHANGING OUR WORLD

Lead the Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Please turn to page 48 in your Worship Booklet, and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Introduction (1–2 minutes)

Choose a brief, personal story or experience that relates to the main point of this talk. If you cannot think of an appropriate introduction, consult the Lay Director or 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 view 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 you had to 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. A Christ-centered world

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?

- A. 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."¹ For the next few minutes, I want to talk with you not only about trying Christianity but also about making a plan to live it successfully and to help Christ make a difference in the world (G. K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, pt. I, ch. 5; originally printed in 1910).
- B. 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. This first field of ministry calls you to walk humbly with God. Changing the world requires you to have a plan for anchoring yourself spiritually. To bring change to the world, you 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 (Elie Wiesel, *Souls on Fire: Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters* [New York: Simon & Shuster Paperbacks, 1972], 134-135).

- B. When we attempt to change the world without firm grounding in a relationship with God and Christian community, we can fall into traps.
 - 1. *The legalist*. God's grace does not motivate the legalist; he or she is driven by rigid perfectionism and guided by legalism. This approach perverts the mission into attempts to force everyone into your own mold.
 - 2. *The do-gooder*—Do-gooders often find themselves motivated by a need to be needed or a desire to make a notable difference rather than by true compassion and commitment to meet human needs.
 - 3. *The "savior complex"*—Without a sense of God's providence, a caring person may believe he or she must save the world by themselves. This results in far-reaching plans or feverish activity 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, a person's fire for the mission burns out. You cannot change the world if you are running on empty.
- C. Our model is Jesus. Jesus drew his strength for ministry (as do we) 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 by 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 comes in our relationships with other persons: family members, colleagues, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. (See John 12:26.)
 1. Infuse your network of relationships with the grace of Christ; make mercy and outreaching love a part of your everyday life.
 2. Create an inventory of your relationships and the grace they call for from you.
 - a. Who 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. (See Matthew 7:12.)
 1. How do you make affirmation of people a daily exercise? When do you find yourself categorizing people with limiting labels? Your judgmental attitude can be the greatest obstacle to the spiritual growth of another.
 2. How do you view persons? In what ways 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 people and support them in their new life. Through prayer, God will 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 their receptivity. Be authentic in sharing your faith and the difference your

relationship with Christ makes. Sharing your faith has no right or wrong way, only authentic and inauthentic ways.

- E. When friends commit 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: the local community

- 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. (See Luke 4:18-19.)
 - 1. Identify situations of human need. Jesus identified such situations, and he makes clear the significance of our response.
 - 2. Work to correct the situation, which may mean taking an unpopular stand.
 - a. Influence with Christian values the groups, organizations, and businesses of which you are part. 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 hunger 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 an adhesive strip on a gaping wound.
 - c. 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 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 leads us into the world. Jesus sends us into the world. (See Luke 6:12-13; Matthew 28:19-20.) This field of ministry calls us to stretch our hearts, minds, and actions.
- B. Church or church mission board offers opportunities.
- C. You will need a strong and firm foundation: faith, study, and action.
- D. You may be called to participate in 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 step. What can you do now to make a difference?

The validity of our witness does not always manifest in immediate results. Some Christians will plant; some will water; and some will harvest. (See 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.) As disciples, God calls us to be faithful not successful. We do what we can with what we have where we are to advance Christ's reign "on earth as it is in heaven." But to do so, we need a plan for change in ourselves, in our relationships with others, and in our community and world.

De Colores!

ABBREVIATED OUTLINE

CHANGING OUR WORLD

Lead the Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Please turn to page 48 in your Worship Booklet, and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Introduction (1–2 minutes)

My name is _____, and the title of this talk is CHANGING OUR WORLD.

I. Christ-centered world

This talk is about making a plan to change our world: making the world a more Christ-centered and loving community. Changing our world involves four fields of ministry: self, others, local community, and 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 man who set out to change the world; see Expanded Outline.]

- B. When we try to change the world without being firmly grounded spiritually, we can fall into traps:
 - 1. the legalist
 - 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 comes 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 changes people 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 commitment to Christ, encourage their change by providing opportunities for spiritual support, growth, and service.

IV. Third field of ministry: the local community

- 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 leads us into the world.
- B. Church or church mission board offers ministry opportunities.
- C. Your involvement will require a strong and firm foundation of faith and commitment.
- D. You may be called to participate in 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 step. What can you do now to make a difference?

As disciples, God calls us to be faithful not successful. We do what we can with what we have where we are to advance Christ's reign "on earth as it is in heaven." To do so, we need a plan for change in ourselves, in our relationships with others, and in our community and world.

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