



4: Repairing the Hole | Pastor Joe Wittwer | November 8, 2009

A. Fellowship Time (10-15 minutes)

1. Chitchat. Perhaps offer coffee, tea, or a cold drink with some snacks.
2. Pray (or invite someone to pray) to open the discussion.

B. Review Time (Read the summary below to the group: 5-10 minutes)

In the last 3 weeks we've talked about the hole in our gospel, and we have laid out a biblical framework for seeing the good news of Jesus as something bigger than just getting us to heaven. Jesus came to bring the Kingdom of God to earth. We're part of something much bigger than our own personal story; we're part of God's plan to redeem the world! We've talked about the hole in our world: the desperate need of over half our world and the plight of the poorest of the poor. Today these people are our neighbors, and we can't just walk by on the other side of the road. We've talked about the hole in our church: the cultural blindness that has made us slow to come to the aid of those suffering from injustice. And we've talked about the awesome potential of the church to change the world if we get it right and live out the gospel. Today, we're talking about the final section of the book, "Repairing the Hole." What are we going to do about it? What are we going to do with all we've learned? If we don't do something, we've wasted a lot of time because this book is a call to action. The first thing that paralyzes many of us is that we feel overwhelmed. The need is so large; I am so small. So let's start here:

1. The power of one.

Everything starts with one: one step, one decision, one action, one person. You can be the one God uses, who goes radioactive and decides to do something and ends up changing the world. When God rescued the Israelites from Egypt, he started with one man: Moses. When God rescued the Israelites from the Canaanites, he started with one woman: Deborah. When God rescued the world from the sin, he started with one person: Jesus. So if God is going to rescue the poor, the sick, the suffering, the lost, he starts with one person. Change has to start somewhere, and it usually starts with one and spreads. God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things! You can make a difference. Together, we can make a huge difference! But it all starts with one: one person, one church. Remember Bob Pierce's challenge: "Don't fail to do something just because you can't do everything." Don't get paralyzed and do nothing—do something! As we continue, we're going to talk about things you can do and things we can do. They may seem small, but that is how the world is changed: one person at a time. Stearns addressed this truth when he said, "In the end God works in our world one person at a time. The hungry are fed, the thirsty are refreshed, the naked are clothed, the sick are treated, the illiterate are educated, and the grieving are comforted, just one person at a time" (p.257). One person loving another person is how the world is changed; it's the power of one:

2. What do you have?

If the world is going to be changed, it will happen through ordinary people like you and me who offer ourselves and what we have to God. You might be thinking, "What do I have that God could possibly use?" That's exactly what Jesus' disciples were wondering one day. [Read **Mark 6:30-44** together now] By late afternoon, the disciples (who give us the idea they weren't feeling compassion) told Jesus that *he needed to do something*. It was late, people were getting hungry, He should send them home to get dinner. But Jesus turned the tables on them, and told them that *they needed to do something*. "You feed them," He said. They replied, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" Then Jesus asked: "What do you have?" They did a quick reconnaissance, and came back with a little boy's sack lunch, consisting of five little buns and two sardines. Andrew asked the obvious, "How far will they go among so many?" Their

resources weren't going to do much. And when we look at the enormity of the world's need—1.2 billion people without clean water; almost 1 billion people without food to sustain them; 15 million AIDS orphans; and on and on—it leaves us feeling overwhelmed. What do you have? Bring it to Jesus...and watch what He can do with it. Stearns suggests we all have three things God can use: time, talent and treasure.

Time. We all have different amounts of money and talent, but we all have 24 hours a day. What are you doing with your minutes? We say, "Time is money." Time has value. Many of us are paid "by the hour." All of us, when we spend our money, are spending time—the time it took us to make that money. If you have time, you can give it to God and use it to serve others.

Talent. Usually when we think of talent, we think of abilities such as musical talent, athletic ability or artistic talent. Certainly, whatever abilities you have should be available to God and can be used by Him. But think beyond your abilities to other things you have as well. Your unique personality, your passions and interests, your life experiences, your job skills, your relational networks—all of these are part of who you are and what God can use.

Treasure. We talked last week about how rich we are, and how the American church could change the world if everyone tithed. We're not talking about everyone giving up all they own—just doing the biblical minimum of giving God the first 10%. If we just did that, we'd change the world! Occasionally, people will say, "Well, I give my time and talent to serve others, so I don't really need to give my money." Following Jesus means that all we have is His: our time, talent and treasure. We can't give him 2 out of 3 and be wholehearted followers of Christ.

3. What will you do?

Discuss this in your group and look on our website (www.lifecenter.net) for some ideas, and let the time, talents and treasure that God has given you translate into serving others who need it. God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. What will you do? Pray about it!

C. Life Group Questions (select, revise, and add as desired: 20-40 minutes)

1. Reflect back on "The Hole in Our Gospel" series. As you've read the book, listened to sermons, prayed, and discussed this with others, what "a-ha" moments have you had? How has God changed your perspective of the world and your responsibilities within it?
2. In what ways are you feeling overwhelmed by the scope of the world's problems and your seemingly small contributions? Nevertheless, how has Jesus historically and today directed His church to change the world?
3. What has God given you in terms of time, talents and treasure at this time? Even if we don't feel like we have much, what does Jesus tell us to do with it as we saw with the feeding of the 5,000, and what is the outcome when we do so? When have you seen God multiply the resources and talents that His people brought to Him for service?
4. Stearns reminds us that "we are God's plan A, and he doesn't have a plan B." What does this insight tell us about God and about God's people, the church? Brainstorm things you or your group can do to be change agents by fully living out the gospel. [Leaders, check out the attachment and make copies of the website pages recommended below as useful.]

D. Personal Application (1-3 Minutes)

- If you haven't already done so, pledge your minutes individually or as a Life Group, and follow through by serving somewhere.
- Make a plan of action—one that you can share with others—and act on it! Ideas are available from the list developed Sunday (attached), Life Center's website at www.lifecenter.net, or the World Vision website at www.theholeinourgospel.com.

E. Prayer Time (As a whole group or subgroups of 3-4: 10-15 Minutes)

- Ask the Lord to always give us eyes that see, hearts that break over the needs of others, and the drive to take action where it is needed.
- Ask God to help you use your time, talents and treasure to bless others who need them.
- Pray that God will direct us as a church to love and serve people effectively so that we are a vital part of "repairing the hole."



Ideas of things that we can do individually and together:

The following ideas were shared during the service this week. Don't feel constrained by these—use them, add to them or use your creativity and come up with your own ideas. Be sure to look at the included websites for more ways to serve your community and world.

- Start praying. Pray for the poor. Ask God, What do you expect of me?
- Volunteer your time.
 - Union Gospel Mission
 - House of Charity
 - Our House
- Short term missions trip.
- Adopt a child. China, Nicaragua, Ethiopia.
- Mentor a child
- Make a microloan. www.kiva.org
- Give a chicken, a goat, etc. <http://donate.worldvision.org>
- Tithe.
- Fast for a day; give the money to the hungry.
- Have a dinner for the poor (Luke 14:12-14).
- Give to the poor for Christmas!
- Donate some good clothes/things you don't use.
- Sell something on eBay or craigslist and donate the money.
- Create a video that challenges people to do something and post it on u tube.
- LG: sponsor and befriend a refugee.
- LG: serve together.
- LG: brainstorm and create a fun idea!
- LG: Join the Black Students Union at Whitworth in a school supply drive to aid a poor school in Louisiana. Please drop small school supplies (pencils, pens, rulers, etc. no paper or notebooks, please) or store gift cards (Target, Wal-Mart, etc.) at the Info Center on Sunday, November 15
- Use your gifts/passions to do something new: e.g.: Hoops for Hope.

Don't forget to Check out www.lifecenter.net & www.theholeinourgospel.com for additional ideas.

What will you do? God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

What will you do? Pray and talk about that in your Life Groups this week.