

# THE HOLE IN OUR GOSPEL

SIX-WEEK QUEST

SERMON OUTLINE 6

## REPAIRING THE HOLE IN THE WORLD

LUKE 10:17-23

### INTRODUCE THE TOPIC

After the attacks on September 11, 2001, Don Henley and Glenn Frey, of the Eagles, wrote a song titled Hole in the World. The lyrics to the chorus are:

*There's a hole in the world tonight.  
There's a Cloud of fear and sorrow.  
There's a hole in the world tonight.  
Don't let there be a hole in the world  
tomorrow.*

There is a hole in the world. In fact there are many holes. Holes of fear and sorrow. Holes of unforgiveness. Holes of hatred. Holes of hunger. Holes of poverty. Holes of disease. Holes of war. Holes of spiritual darkness.

But these are holes that can be filled. Holes that can be repaired. The whole gospel W-H-O-L-E can repair the hole H-O-L-E in the world.

### INTENSIFY THE ISSUE

Still, have you ever thought that in some places and in some things the hole in the world is just too big and too deep to repair? Have you ever known a place so dark that you thought the light of the world would just be swallowed up?

In the book, *The Hole in Our Gospel*, Richard Stearns tells about the darkest place on the planet he has known in Northern Uganda.

One day, Margaret, six months pregnant, was gardening with her friends. A group of boy soldiers – led by an adult commander – attacked Margaret's friends and hacked them to death with machetes. The commander noticed Margaret was pregnant, so he chose not to kill her because he thought it would bring bad luck. Instead he told the boy soldiers to cut off her nose, ears, and lips, which they did.

Remarkable, she survived, and three months later gave birth to her son James. Margaret and James were brought to World Vision's Child of War Center, where she received counseling and support to deal with her trauma and disfigurement.

Months after her son's birth, Margaret saw the commander who ordered her mutilation come to the same rehabilitation center. Margaret was afraid for her life and also wanted to kill him. World Vision staff worked with this man to get him to confess to what he did. They also worked with Margaret to help her anxiety and explore the possibility of forgiveness. Weeks later the man asked Margaret to forgive him, and Margaret reached deeply to the source of all forgiveness – Jesus – and forgave.

*Pastor: To read the full story about Margaret, see pages 158 -160 in *The Hole in Our Gospel*.*

If a hole like this can be filled by the love of Christ and this kind of darkness can be

dispelled by the light of Jesus, then no hole is too deep and no darkness is too great.

Today we will take a look at a passage that shows followers of Jesus repairing holes in the world and shining light in dark places.

## INSTRUCT WITH THE BIBLE

Open your Bibles to Luke 10.

CONTEXT: Virtually everyone knows that Jesus had twelve disciples. But many people aren't aware that Jesus also had a wider circle of people who formed a community of faithful disciples. In today's passage, Jesus sent seventy-two of that wider circle on a short-term journey to be His ambassadors in the dark places around them. He sent them out to repair the holes in the world. We pick up the scene when they return to Jesus to report to Him what happened.

### 1. YOU CAN DEFEAT EVIL BY REPAIRING THE HOLES

*17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."*

*18 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."*

*19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.*

*20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

Prior to this time, the disciples had been largely a diverse gathering of spectators. Jesus was the expert who performed miracles while they looked on. He was the worker, and they were the watchers. But this assignment was different.

Jesus sent them out by twos and to God's work. Look at verses 1-3. 1After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. 3Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

Notice that Jesus told them to pray first for God to send out workers into His harvest field. Then notice that Jesus chose to use them to be the answer to their own prayers. Let me ask you a question. When you pray to God, asking Him to bring light to dark areas or to repair the holes in the world, are you willing to have God use you to be the answer to your own prayers?

The disciples let God use them to be the answer to their prayers for workers. I'm sure they were nervous though. Jesus told them that He was sending them out like lambs among wolves. It is perfectly normal to be nervous about God using you. But don't let that stop you. Real faith moves you outside your comfort zone.

Ok, back to our text. The disciples have been gone for at least a few days, and now they return to Jesus pumped up! They tell Jesus that even the demons submitted to them when they evoked Jesus' name and authority.

Jesus didn't drench their enthusiasm, in fact, he shared that He saw something as well. He told them there was more going on than what they saw and realized. Jesus was like a field-General perched at a vantage point that allowed Him to see the totality and full impact of a raging battle.

The disciples saw a direct correlation between what they said and did and the spiritual transformation that resulted. Jesus upped the importance of their service by highlighting a reality that was out of their ability to comprehend.

Jesus said that the disciple's actions dealt Satan a terrible blow. The 72 acted in obedience, and Satan was dethroned and quickly. Jesus uses an intriguing phrase to describe what He saw. "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightening." What was Jesus saying?

Many believe that what Jesus meant by this phrase is that as a result of the disciples' actions, Satan lost his grip in the variety of encounters the disciples participated in. Wherever the disciples were working, a spiritual transformation took place. Everywhere the disciples preached, Jesus saw Satan falling. Everywhere they healed, Jesus saw Satan falling. Everywhere they served, Jesus saw Satan falling. Everywhere they cast out demons, Jesus saw Satan falling.

The same can happen through us today. Even though we can't see it, Satan falls like lightening from heaven whenever we serve another with a heart of love. Satan falls like lightening from heaven whenever we forgive someone that has wronged us. Satan falls like lightening from heaven whenever we put another's needs in front of our own. Satan falls like lightening from heaven whenever we break systems of injustice.

Our obedience to Jesus combined with God's power knocks Satan down.

Jesus didn't stop there; He mentioned peculiar powers. 19I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

The disciples weren't going into the woods or the deserts where snakes and scorpions were the problem. The context of this passage is about power over spiritual forces, not natural forces. They were going to the towns and urban centers that were under the grip of Satan, and needed the work and grace of God. The disciples had the power to transform the spiritual dimension of the world in which they lived under the power and authority Jesus.

Jesus went on to point out an even greater reason to celebrate. Jesus said, "Don't rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Jesus said the real reason to celebrate is that we're on God's team.

It's easy to get caught up in the size of our impact or discouraged because of the seeming lack of our service results. But Jesus was clear that this was to put the emphasis on the wrong thing. Location or size of service has little to do with how God measures our service. Obedient service is always in response to what Christ has already done for us. Our small acts of compassion are in reaction to Christ's redemptive actions at the cross. We need to rejoice that we are on His team.

Now let's look at the second half of this passage:

## **2. YOU CAN BRING JESUS JOY BY REPAIRING THE HOLES**

*21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.*

*22 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who*

*the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."*

*23 Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see."*

Throughout the Gospels, the writers are good to record the variety of emotions displayed by Jesus. Jesus experienced and displayed genuine emotions: anger, compassion, disappointment, frustration, grief, laughter. Here we find Jesus overwhelmed with deep feelings of joy. There are some contemporary drawings and paintings of Jesus laughing. If you had to find a place in scripture to place those pictures, you would put them here.

Jesus' joy makes Him break into a prayer of praise. He praises God because "...you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children." Jesus isn't saying that He is glad that smart people can't see God's truth. He is saying that you don't have a spiritual advantage for being an intellectual, philosopher, or somebody with status in life.

A life of faith doesn't come from natural abilities or education. Instead, even a little child can know God's love and experience the joy of imitating what they see Christ do. Jesus praised God for revealing Himself to little children.

Jesus also praises God for being the source and vessel of that revelation. "...No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

This is one of the highest moments for Jesus. If He were to recollect on His time here on

Earth, this would have been one of His favorite memories. He has seen His followers carry on His ministry – they did what Jesus did – and He has seen that common, everyday people are coming to know God through Him.

Jesus connects the dots between His followers doing God's work – shining light in dark places and repairing holes in the world – and people coming to know God through Jesus. Maybe it's because when people see us working for Jesus in the name of Jesus, they really do see Jesus.

## IMAGINE THE RESULT

*"In 1948, Bob Pierce was finishing up a long tour in Asia, where he had been preaching at large evangelistic meetings representing Youth for Christ. Just a couple of days before he was scheduled to return to the States, he preached a message to some children at a missionary school in China, on Amoy Island, just off the coast. As was his practice, he exhorted them to give their lives to Christ. One little girl, named White Jade, went home that night and told her parents that she had become a Christian, not understanding that her parent's reaction would be severe. They were angry, and she was beaten by her father, disowned, and cast out of her home.*

*The next morning Tena Hoelkeboer, the missionary director of the school, found White Jade crying and huddled at the front gate. She took her in, comforted her, and listened to her story. When Bob arrived at the school that day, he saw Tena approaching him with a bloodied and crying little girl in her arms. He asked what happened. "This little girl did what you told her to do, and now she has lost everything!" Tena declared angrily, thrusting the child into his arms.*

*Shocked and dismayed, Bob stammered, "How will she live? Will you take her in and feed her and care for her?"*

*The feisty school director answered, "I am already sharing my rice bowl with six other children who have no homes, and I cannot take in even one more. The question isn't what I am going to do. The question is, what are you going to do?" (The Hole in Our Gospel, 24-48).*

That question haunted Bob Pierce. Though he did not have much materially, he did end up helping that little girl. He also started a ministry called World Vision, which has brought the whole love of Christ to millions in the world.

How could such a simple man be used so greatly by God. Part of the reason was because throughout Bob's life he kept praying a prayer to keep his heart soft. His prayer was, "Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God."

## **ILLUSTRATE THE APPLICATION**

It's your turn now. What does God expect of you? Are you willing to give Him what you have? Are you ready to be a light in a dark place? Are you willing to repair holes in the world? What are you going to do?

Start by making this a regular prayer: "Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God." Pray also for God to send workers out into this world, and then be willing to be the answer to your prayers.

