

Sermon: Helping without Hurting

Speaker: Dr. Brian Fikkert

Date: November 15, 2015

Poverty is a crisis that continues to afflict nations, households, and individuals year after year. Jesus addressed it in his time on Earth, but two thousand years later, billions of people around the world are still in poverty. Clearly society's method of solving impoverishment is not working; it's time we took a biblical approach to the situation.

Guest speaker Brian Fikkert, author of *When Helping Hurts*, challenged us in this week's sermon to change the way we think about poverty and therefore how we help people overcome it.

1. Share memories of times that you actively served another person(s) in need. What was the person's physical, material, or emotional need you were addressing with your aid? Did you openly share the gospel message during your interaction? What was the result?
2. How would you describe the "American Dream"? Does this goal address the reality that we are not just material beings but relational ones too? Is that truth apparent in our culture, or do concepts like the "American Dream" hinder our desire to meet the needs of others?
3. Dr. Fikkert taught that God created us to be image bearers. What does it mean to be an image bearer? Provide examples of yourself and/or people you know as:
 - a. image bearers.
 - b. broken image bearers.
 - c. restored image bearers.
4. If we are all made in God's image (Gen 1:27), why do we tend to elevate ourselves at the expense of others? How should being made in the image of God shape our actions and attitudes toward others?
5. Do you agree with Dr. Fikkert that the church's primary mission isn't merely preaching or giving to those in need, but rather to restore God's kingdom? What do you believe the church's primary mission is meant to be?
6. In this week's message, Dr. Fikkert said that "to help a beggar, we must be a beggar." What did he mean by this? How does this relate to what Jesus said in Matthew 9:9-13? How can we "become poor" to facilitate the spiritual restoration of ourselves and others?
7. How does a relational approach to ending poverty differ from a material one? How can you apply this difference as an individual the next time you serve someone in need?

The effects of poverty in our world can be seen around the globe and in our own neighborhoods. Satan tries to fool us into believing that we as individuals can't make a difference, but God empowers each of us to change our community beginning with simple steps.

Resolve with your group to find a way to serve those in need over the Christmas season and share the good news of God's plan for restoration.