

## Into Dark Places : Lesson 7 Homework

### Day 1 : Scripture Study

Tahom is the 15<sup>th</sup> word of the Hebrew Bible. It was there “in the beginning.” It is connected to the tenth word in the Bible, tohu, which means formless, confusion, chaos or emptiness. Genesis tells us that from what was once tohu, God created the tahom: the deep, the abyss, the watery dark recesses of the earth. In the ancient mindset, these deep recesses are still associated with chaos and confusion. They are deep, dark, unseeable caverns filled with water. At the bottom of the tahom are unknown places that house the dark, foreign creatures of the underworld that stand in opposition to the shalom of God.

Read the following passages from the Old Testament. Make note of what they say about the deep:

OT Passage	What does it say about the deep and/or who is there?
Exodus 15:1-5, 8-10	
Psalms 77:16	
Ezekiel 26:19-21	
Revelation 20:1-3	
Isaiah 51:10	

Read the following New Testament passages and note what Jesus’ position and interaction is with the deep:

NT Passage	What is Jesus’ position/interaction with the deep
Matthew 14:22-33	
Mark 4:35-41	

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For sure the tahom was a scary place of judgement and darkness in the world of the Old Testament. But even as we move into the New Testament, the time of the disciples, this idea was prevalent. Consider the elements of the stories you read; violent storms arise, waves overtake them, they think they see a ghost, they are afraid and they think they are going to die. Yet, in both stories, Jesus is showing mastery over the swirling chaos of the waters, the tahom, the deep. In one, He defies the properties of water, walking on it and placing the tahom and all of its darkness in its proper place, under His feet. In the other, He simply speaks with authority over the tahom and the waves have to obey, and the sea must settle as He effortlessly defeats its power.

Jesus gave the disciples an object lesson teaching them His proper place over the dark, chaotic forces and places of our world. Jesus has not changed. Our Bible states that He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He still has mastery over the dark, unknown, chaotic places not just out there in the world, but also in our own personal lives. We cannot live in this world and not feel the effects of chaos and yet Jesus promises peace.

“These things I have spoken to you so that  
in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble,  
but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33

Close today by taking a moment to meditate on John 16:33, the very words of Jesus:

- Expose to Him the scary parts of your life, heart, friends and family that feel like they are in chaos.
- Acknowledge Jesus’ rightful authority over chaos. Invite Him to walk on your chaos, put it under His feet and speak His shalom over it.
- Ask the Holy spirit to give you peace and confidence in God’s power and presence in the darkness and over the darkness.

## **Day 2 : Scripture Study**

The disciples were all from that northern end of the Sea of Galilee. The northern shore was a bastion of religious fervor for the text. When we talk about the Scriptures for the people in the New Testament, we have to remember that their Bible was the Old Testament only! They did not have the advantage of the complete Scripture. These people loved God’s word, hid it in their hearts and strove to walk it out with all that they had. The disciples were a part of that rich, religious history and culture that loved the Old Testament. They did not always get it right but that was not for lack of diligence, love or passion for the text.

Let's practice exercising that same passion and fervor for God's word. Using our color coding system, read through Psalm 107.

**Blue:** What is God like? How does He work? What is His character?

**Green:** What does God promise?

**Orange:** What does God ask of us? What is our response to Him?

**Pink:** What is worthy of prayer and pursuit in your own life?

Using some of your personal history and potentially the chaos you referred to in yesterday's prayer apply this Psalm to your life. God is the great deliverer. He has not changed since this Psalm was written. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. There will come a time when you can write a Psalm like this over all of the various scenarios that you are encountering in your life. He is the redeemer.

### **Day 3 : Scripture Study + Application**

There is no doubt that the disciples were familiar with Psalm 107. In fact, there is evidence that many had memorized the entire book of Psalms in the time of the New Testament. Being confident that the disciples knew their text thoroughly, re-read Psalm 107:23-30. *Immediately* after, read Mark 4:35-41.

If we put ourselves in the disciples' context of intimately knowing the Psalms, what they experienced with Jesus, in the storm of Mark 5, would have been shocking. Psalm 107 says that the LORD (Yahweh, the personal name of God in Hebrew) can cause the storms to be still. It says that He can hush the storms. The disciples just saw this played out; that is what Jesus just did! He stilled and hushed the storm.

What is the disciples' response in vs. 41? \_\_\_\_\_

The disciples were originally afraid of the storm. You would think that once the storm was stilled, they would now be relieved, at peace grateful. But their response is peculiar. It says that they are now *very* afraid. Imagine being in that boat as reality begins to sink in. As they begin to recognize who Jesus is, their fear of the deep fades and their fear of Jesus increases. They begin to see that the one who walks on the deep and controls the abyss with His words is far worthier of fear than the darkness He encounters. This is the God of the universe in the boat with them. He is doing what He has done from the beginning. Bringing shalom out of chaos with nothing but the power of His spoken word.

End today by continuing the story. Read the very next thing that happened to the disciples in Mark 5:1-20. Note the response that evil has to Jesus. Note where the evil spirits end up in the story. Note the effortlessness of Jesus in redeeming, restoring and rescuing the one who the whole town had given up on.

## **Day 4 : Lamentation**

Like the townspeople of the demoniac, is there someone or a situation in your life that you have given up on? You have tried everything. You are defeated and discouraged. Maybe you have literally tapped out because you cannot endure the disappointment any more. Maybe you do not believe God wants to rescue. Maybe you do not even believe that He can.

God sees. Bring it all to Him. He can handle it.

Read Psalm 34. Along with David, commit to what it says in vs. 1 and proclaim the rest of the Psalm over your soul.

Read Psalm 91 changing the pronouns to first person. He is still this same God!

## **Day 5 : Prayer**

Prayer is the weapon of warriors in the face of darkness. As the week comes to an end, take the opportunity to live into the spiritual discipline of prayer. Create space to ponder who He is and what His kingdom can bring about. Pray into the three Psalms we read this week: Psalm 107, Psalm 34 and Psalm 91. Here are some prompts that may help:

- Thank God for sending Jesus to reveal Himself to us and to show us how to walk (maybe the things you underlined in blue).
- What did you underline in orange? Is there anything you saw that He is asking of you? How are you doing with those things?
- Recall His promises and all that He is in all three Psalms pray His character back to Him! (Did you underline anything in green?). Ask Him to help you to have a proper perspective of who He is and His power over darkness. bring His kingdom for you and your community in keeping with all He has promised.
- Pray over the situations He has revealed to you and the ones mentioned in your small group. Do not be afraid to continue to ask His kingdom to have victory in your life, in the lives of those that you love and in your community.

Conclude by asking Him for an extra measure of the Holy Spirit so that you can stand against the darkness and be empowered to live according to His Kingdom.

## Psalm 107

<sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.

<sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story—  
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,

<sup>3</sup> those he gathered from the lands,  
from east and west, from north and south.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Some wandered in desert wastelands,  
finding no way to a city where they could settle.

<sup>5</sup> They were hungry and thirsty,  
and their lives ebbed away.

<sup>6</sup> Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress.

<sup>7</sup> He led them by a straight way  
to a city where they could settle.

<sup>8</sup> Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,

<sup>9</sup> for he satisfies the thirsty  
and fills the hungry with good things.

<sup>10</sup> Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness,  
prisoners suffering in iron chains,

<sup>11</sup> because they rebelled against God's commands  
and despised the plans of the Most High.

<sup>12</sup> So he subjected them to bitter labor;  
they stumbled, and there was no one to help.

<sup>13</sup> Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he saved them from their distress.

<sup>14</sup> He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness,  
and broke away their chains.

<sup>15</sup> Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,

<sup>16</sup> for he breaks down gates of bronze  
and cuts through bars of iron.

<sup>17</sup> Some became fools through their rebellious ways  
and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.

<sup>18</sup> They loathed all food  
and drew near the gates of death.

<sup>19</sup> Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he saved them from their distress.

<sup>20</sup> He sent out his word and healed them;  
he rescued them from the grave.

<sup>21</sup> Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

<sup>22</sup> Let them sacrifice thank offerings  
and tell of his works with songs of joy.

<sup>23</sup> Some went out on the sea in ships;  
they were merchants on the mighty waters.

<sup>24</sup> They saw the works of the Lord,  
his wonderful deeds in the deep.

<sup>25</sup> For he spoke and stirred up a tempest  
that lifted high the waves.

<sup>26</sup> They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths;  
in their peril their courage melted away.

<sup>27</sup> They reeled and staggered like drunkards;  
they were at their wits' end.

<sup>28</sup> Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he brought them out of their distress.

<sup>29</sup> He stilled the storm to a whisper;  
the waves of the sea<sup>29</sup> were hushed.

<sup>30</sup> They were glad when it grew calm,  
and he guided them to their desired haven.

<sup>31</sup> Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

<sup>32</sup> Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people  
and praise him in the council of the elders.

<sup>33</sup> He turned rivers into a desert,  
flowing springs into thirsty ground,  
<sup>34</sup> and fruitful land into a salt waste,  
because of the wickedness of those who lived there.

<sup>35</sup> He turned the desert into pools of water  
and the parched ground into flowing springs;

<sup>36</sup> there he brought the hungry to live,  
and they founded a city where they could settle.

<sup>37</sup> They sowed fields and planted vineyards  
that yielded a fruitful harvest;

<sup>38</sup> he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased,  
and he did not let their herds diminish.

<sup>39</sup> Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled  
by oppression, calamity and sorrow;

<sup>40</sup> he who pours contempt on nobles  
made them wander in a trackless waste.

<sup>41</sup> But he lifted the needy out of their affliction  
and increased their families like flocks.

<sup>42</sup> The upright see and rejoice,  
but all the wicked shut their mouths.

<sup>43</sup> Let the one who is wise heed these things  
and ponder the loving deeds of the Lord.