



Session 2: Shattered



Research reveals that the number one enemy of spiritual growth is exhaustion.

Many of us are living beyond our means not only financially but physically. God calls us to be good stewards of both our money and our bodies, and this means getting enough sleep.

Previous session review

- Recap on your experience of the previous challenge. How did it go? Was it helpful?
- If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question: Where and how did you experience God last week?

Read

Read the passage several times through, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. At the end of the text you will find helpful background information in our 'Setting the Scene' section.

As you read, look out for shockers and blockers.

Shockers – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

Blockers – something from the text that raises questions for you.

Mark 4.35-41

That evening, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the east side." So they left the crowd, and his disciples started across the lake with him in the boat. Some other boats followed along. Suddenly a windstorm struck the lake. Waves started splashing into the boat, and it was about to sink.

Jesus was in the back of the boat with his head on a pillow, and he was asleep. His disciples woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we're about to drown?"

Jesus got up and ordered the wind and the waves to be quiet. The wind stopped, and everything was calm. Jesus asked his disciples, "Why were you afraid? Don't you have any faith?" Now they were more afraid than ever and said to each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Setting the scene:

- In the Gospel of Mark we have already seen Jesus as one with authority to heal the sick, to cast out demons, to forgive sins. Here we see Jesus as the Lord of nature.
- Although this story is also recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, only Mark records 'other boats' – this is not simply an account of Jesus saving the disciples, but also calming the storm on behalf of others in the area.
- Crossing the lake was Jesus' suggestion – so it was all the harder to understand for the disciples. Why had Jesus allowed them to face such danger?
- Fear and faith are opposites. It was due to their lack of faith that they feared drowning. But notice that they were 'even more afraid' after they witnessed Jesus' power and authority to calm the storm!
- The two words for 'afraid' used here have different meanings. When Jesus asks them 'Why were you afraid?' it refers to them being timid. The second time ('Now they were more afraid than ever') refers to the disciples being in awe of Jesus.

Reflect

After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your shockers and blockers. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. How do you think Jesus was able to sleep through the storm?

Q2. When were you last afraid and unable to sleep well?

Respond

Shattered challenge: As a group, create a challenge this week that will help you combat tiredness and fatigue, or choose from the following:

Challenge ideas:

1. Rest Easy

Pick a day this week when you will be able to sleep as much as you want and need to. The point of the challenge is to stay in bed, asleep, until you finally feel rested and can sleep no more. If this requires the help of others to take care of children, or if it requires you to book into a hotel room for one night, then do it! Make sure you get an early night and avoid coffee, exercise, computers or the TV before you go to bed. Sleep is a declaration of surrender and trust in God. It's admitting that we are not in control of the world and that the world will continue whilst we rest! If this is not possible, then make a decision to go to bed earlier for a week.

2. Home Spa

It might not be possible to go to a spa for a day, but creating a spa experience at home should be more doable. Plan a day (on your own or with a friend) of exercise and fresh air, healthy foods, a hot bath, some good body treatments, lots of water (and maybe some wine!), a great film or a relaxing book. Plan to also include some time for quiet, solitude and meditation on verses from the Bible. Try to make the day free from interruptions and distractions. This is a day to restore your energies and enjoy.

3. Exercise

Sometimes we don't sleep well because we are not physically tired. If you have an office job or a relatively sedentary lifestyle, look to increase your physical activity this week. Cycle or walk to work, do some gardening, go for a run or a hike. Just make sure you get lots of fresh air and feel physically tired at the end of the day.

“As I started my retreat, Dallas Willard gave us the following guidelines for our time together. ‘Get 10 hours of sleep the next three nights.’ Sleep until you don’t want to sleep any more. Most of us are so weary that we have forgotten what it is like to be well rested.”

James Bryan Smith

Group Prayer

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group this week as you look to find the time and space to create more rest and sleep.