

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 107.1-9, 33-37 [Worship]

1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those he redeemed from trouble 3 and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. 4 Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to an inhabited town; 5 hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. 6 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress; 7 he led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town. 8 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind. 9 For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.

33 He turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground, 34 a fruitful land into a salty waste, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants. 35 He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water. 36 And there he lets the hungry live, and they establish a town to live in; 37 they sow fields, and plant vineyards, and get a fruitful yield.

Consider:

[Think & Pray...]

Abuse of power is one of the greatest temptations for Christian leaders. It is at the heart of more scandals in the church than anything else.



Matthew's churches faced this problem. There were leaders, teachers, and pastors who set themselves above others. Jesus reveals the pernicious misuse of power in his ongoing conflict with the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:1-7). Recounting this conflict,

Matthew exposed the abuse in the churches he knew (23:8-11). Then he reminded people that in the household of God authority means "you have only one Master, and you are all brothers [and sisters!]" (23:8).

Matthew's gospel begins by revealing Jesus as "God with us" (1:23-24), and ends with Jesus asserting, "I am with you always; yes, to the end of time" (28:20). This is the "Master" whose authority is present in each and in all equally, by the Spirit. When some put themselves above the rest in a community of believers, not just misuse of power results, but the loss of a unique corporate authority, achieved by mutual self-giving.

The principle is, "Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave" (20:26-27). It's the very opposite of our conventional understanding! — Peter Price

Reflection and Action

How will you as a group function in the coming weeks? What models of leadership will you adopt?

[Scripture] 1 Thessalonians 2.9-13

9 You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. 11 As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, 12 urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. 13 We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers.