



# SIX WORDS

Week 3

*The Very Good Gospel* by Lisa Sharon Harper  
Chapters 6 and 7

## SIX WORDS

October 16 -  
November 20

*Reading Scripture  
Through The  
Language Of Jesus*

Jesus was not a Christian. He was Jewish. In this series we're going to look at the meanings of six words in the language that Jesus spoke, giving us a fuller picture of his message and his hope for the world. Our prayer is that by unearthing the meaning of these words, our church community is called to the action of living a more abundant life.

## OPENING:



This is the Hebrew word *ruach* (sometimes spelled *ruwach*). It is a feminine noun. It means wind, breath (of God), or spirit.

According to Lisa Sharon Harper, this is the word used in Genesis 2 when God breathes life into humans ("Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and *breathed* into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." Genesis 2:7). Knowing the fuller definition of *ruach* as the word *breathed* in that context, what does it change about the passage for you?

After discussing take a few minutes sitting in silence to absorb what this means for you.

## DISCUSSION:

Have different members of your group read this excerpt from Lisa Sharon Harper's book *The Very Good Gospel* aloud.

*"Male dominance is nowhere to be found in the heart of God's intentions for humanity prior to the Fall. It makes sense that God is simply describing the natural outcome of humanity's having broken the way to peace. Humanity chose the way of dominance. Between men and women, it takes the form of patriarchy, which shows what it looks like to live in broken shalom.*

*One of the first acts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was to include women in a public demonstration of the presence of God."*

## RESOURCES

Soong-Chan Rah,  
*Prophetic Lament: A Call  
for Justice in Troubled  
Times*

Kate Wallace Nunneley,  
*No Words: A Lament for  
Women*

The Junia Project

## REFLECTION EXERCISE:

Lead your group through this reflection exercise from Lisa Sharon Harper. Encourage your group to think of times they have been hurt or conversely, have unduly benefitted from, this broken shalom in patriarchy. (Say aloud the parts in italics.)

1. *Close your eyes and ask God to show you the part of yourself that feels strong, the part of your voice that feels rich, full, and like it might have something stored up that is worthy of taking up space in the world.*
2. *Sit in that space. Take note of how it feels in this strong space. This full, weighty space.*
3. *Now, ask God to bring to light the part of you that feels shameful, hidden. Examine it. Is it actions you've taken? Injustices you've perpetrated or sat by and watched perpetrated? Ask God for forgiveness. Ask God to fill you with shalom.*
4. *"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." Spend a few minutes in silence meditating on what this means and how you can join the lament of the oppressed. "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."*

## CLOSING PRAYER:

Ask a few people from your group to read aloud this lament:

*How lonely sits the woman  
who was once so full of life.  
She that ruled over creation  
is now considered subject.*

*She weeps bitterly in the night  
with tears on her cheeks;  
among all her lovers  
she has no one to comfort her;  
all of them have dealt treacherously with her,  
they have become her enemies.*

*She is alone in this world of suffering and servitude;  
alive with no resting place;  
her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress.  
Her foes have become the masters, her enemies prosper.  
Is it the Lord that has made her suffer?*

*And she remembers all the precious things about her life long past  
before her sisters fell into the hand of the foe and there was no one to help her,  
the foe looked on mocking over their downfall.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

11/6 - FCQ 2016: Brian McLaren

Visit [forefrontnyc.com/calendar-mh](http://forefrontnyc.com/calendar-mh) for more events

*The woman cries out,  
"Gone is my glory, and all that I had hoped for from the Lord.  
My eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of my sisters.*

*My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite,  
until the Lord from Heaven looks down and sees.*

*My eyes cause me grief at the fate of all the women around me.*

*I called on your name, O Lord.  
From the depths of the pit  
you heard my plea.  
You came near when I called on you;  
you told me, "Do not fear!"*

*You have seen the wrong done to me, O Lord;  
judge my cause!  
You have seen all their malice,  
all their plots against me.*

*You have heard their cat calls,  
their taunts, their murmurs.  
Whether they sit or they rise,  
I am the object of their taunting songs.*

*Pay them back for their deeds, O Lord, according to the work of their hands!  
Let them feel my anguish  
as you judge them for the evil they have done.*

*You have taken up my cause, O Lord,  
You redeemed my life.  
Restore my sisters, O Lord, to what we were meant to be."*

Would it surprise you to know this is from Lamentations 3 in the Old Testament, and only a few words have been changed?