



Can These Bones Live Again?: Ezekiel 37:1-14

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Group Leader Notes

Last week, Pastor Leah kicked off a three-week series called *The Me We Want To Be*. We're exploring the kind of people we want to become and how we are transformed – individually and communally. We're looking at one of the prophetic books. In the book of Ezekiel, he writes when Israel had little hope, they felt lost, they were exiled, the temple had been destroyed, and they longed for renewal and a new vision.

<u>Question:</u> What do we do when the world is broken? When we don't measure up. When we aren't the me we want to be?	<u>Bottom Line:</u> We learn to let God breathe in us. When we allow God to breathe into every aspect of our lives, we begin to see the world not according to our own vision, but with God's vision.
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Take Home Message:

Whether we're in exile or find ourselves stuck in the graveyard of dry bones, faith isn't about sitting around waiting for heaven to beam us up. It's about seeing what God is doing right here, in the middle of our valleys. It is about seeing how God can take even our worst moments, our exiles, our ruins, and use them as building blocks of resurrection.

Main Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

37 The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³ He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "Sovereign LORD, you alone know."

⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! ⁵ This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath^[a] enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶ I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

¹¹ Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’” ¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.’”

Other Scripture References

- Ezekiel 34:11-12, 16
- Matthew 9:35-37
- Genesis 2:7

Teaching Points:

- God does his best work in the graveyard. No matter the valley of dry bones you find yourself in, that’s when God does his best work.
- In our graveyards, God makes a promise. God doesn’t speak to what is; God speaks to what will be. And he’s not interested in resuscitating what once was – he’s interested in transformation, in making something new.
- God’s vision is to breathe new life into our souls. The promise isn’t that all our dreams will come true, it’s that God will breathe into us his life. God breathes in us and speaks to what will be.

Group Discussion

Begin in prayer before reading and discussing the text.

1. This sermon series focuses on the book of Ezekiel. Prophets were messengers from God. They were sent to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. Ask your group to name some other prophets from Scripture.
 - What were their messages?
 - Who did their messages afflict?
2. What Pastor Joshua discussed the Hebrew word *ruach*, which can refer to invisible energy, wind, breath, and also the Holy Spirit. Ask your group to read the following Bible verses.

Genesis 2:7

Ezekiel 37:9-10

John 20:21-22

Acts 2:1-4

- What does the Holy Spirit mean to you?
- How does the Holy Spirit impact your behavior, decisions, and/or actions?

3. In the short video, Pat and Bob explained how their project to provide winter coats for kids started with 25 donations and has now grown to over 3,000 new coats. Their advice was simple:
 - Try not to think about all of the problems in our lives and in the world. This is overwhelming and can lead to depression and paralysis. We can't do everything.
 - Start where you are.
 - Choose just one thing to focus on. See where it takes you.

What is just one thing you can focus on to take one step in the right direction?

4. God commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones. Speak life into what looks dead. Declare hope over what seems hopeless. Call for the breath of God into what feels empty because that's how transformation happens. Not by escaping the valley, but by learning to speak resurrection into it.
 - What's your graveyard? What looks dead in your life? What dreams, what relationships, what callings have dried up?
 - Take a few minutes and think about how you can prophesy to the bones. What might that look like for you?

Let's Pray