

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE

Dry Bones, Hear the Word of the Lord

SERIES**DATE**

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KEY SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 37:1-10

SYNOPSIS

God is breathing new life into what seems like hopeless situations.

HIGHLIGHTS

Video embedded; audio embedded near the end



☞ **Dry Bones, Hear the Word of the Lord**

Ezekiel 37:1-10

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. ²He 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. ³He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!’” ⁵This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶I 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.” ⁷So 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. ⁸I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, 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.’” ¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

Perhaps you feel like you are in the Valley of Dry bones. There doesn't seem to be any hope. You're not even sure how you got there.

☞ **Disobedience will leave your life dry.**

Psalm 51:8 says, “Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.” This is a verse from the psalm David wrote describing his condition and praying for God's forgiveness after he sinned with Bathsheba and had her husband killed. The joy is gone. The energy is gone. He was just hanging on. “God, my sin has done this.” Unconfessed sin will sap the joy from your life. It will rob you of your energy. It will leave you dry.

☞ **Discouragement will leave you dry.**

Proverbs 17:22 says, “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” This is literally loss of confidence or enthusiasm, and it is one of the Devil's primary weapons against you. He uses it so often because most don't realize he is behind it. We think it is just circumstances and bad luck, but the enemy wants you down and discouraged. But God says...

Isaiah 41:10

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

☞ **Division will leave you dry.** The bones were disjointed and dry (v.7)

We need each other. We are not meant to be alone. This was God's first negative observation about his creation. In Genesis 2:18, he said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” Yet, this is where a lot of people have been these past few years... alone; divided from the body of Christ.



Some have allowed politics and even more local circumstances to draw lines of division. This shouldn't be so in the body of Christ. A body with dislocated joints does not function well; it's painful. A severed hand or foot is even worse. We are the body of Christ and we are to remain united. We are to work hard to keep the unity.

Ephesians 4:1-3

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

And this dryness-from-division goes right along with the last point about discouragement. According to Hebrews 10:25 one of the reasons we need to keep on getting together is to encourage each other. Think about all the "one anothers" in the Bible. Encourage one another; love one another; forgive one another; accept one another; bear with one another; serve one another; be devoted to one another; honor one another; comfort one another; pray for one another...

When we are divided, discouraged and disobedient we will be dry spiritually, which can ultimately lead to death. This is what we see in this valley with Ezekiel. This is the true Death Valley. These bones had been alive at one time, but had now been dead for quite a while. They were very dry; they were disjointed; they were dead. When Ezekiel saw this, he must have thought this was a horrific vision. Israel had been scattered and essentially died as a nation. It seemed hopeless.

There are situations which appear to be totally and absolutely hopeless for people today. Just a quick glance and you can't see any hope at all. On a broader scale, we can look at the church and think it's dying or it's dead. It for sure ain't what it used to be. When we see and feel the dryness and division, we can become cynical and lose hope.

-Fred Smith... Cynicism is cancer of the spirit. The bad cells of hopelessness attack the good cells of the spirit and, if undiagnosed, will eventually destroy the soul

Cynicism is something we have to be careful to avoid, because that will lead to unbelief which is what gets us into real trouble. God will help us through doubts and discouragement, but he rebukes unbelief.

v. 3 He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

Perhaps God is asking some of you this same question today. You look at your situation and see dry, dry bones, but God is asking you if they can live. How are you going to respond? "Not a chance? It's too late? Ain't no coming back from this? No way in the world?" Now, that last one may be true, but Ezekiel answered most wisely...

"O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." In other words, the prophet has to shift his attention from the problem in the valley to the power of his God. Ezekiel looks over the battle field. He



feels the hopelessness of a battle that has been lost, and a war that has failed. But God is with him. A hopeless situation does not mean that God has left you. Just because things don't work out exactly how you planned does not mean God is not at work in your life.

☞ **There are no hopeless situations. There are only people who have grown hopeless about them.**

-Charles L. Allen - When you say a situation or a person is hopeless, you are slamming the door in the face of God.

Let me just stop here to tell somebody: if you need a miracle, if you need a deliverance, if you need a healing or a breakthrough in your life, you have to **shift your attention from the problem to the power of God.**

And, we need to know that God doesn't show us these kinds of hopeless conditions and circumstances to overwhelm and frustrate and depress us. If God shows you these kinds of things it is because God has chosen you to help change the situation. It was already in the mind of God to make Ezekiel an agent of change.

God asked Ezekiel to prophesy to dead, dry bones. Can you imagine Ezekiel's natural reaction? "Lord, they don't even have ears! They're dead! They're not listening! They couldn't care less what I have to say." How often have you felt that way about a loved one you've been praying for? Yet the command was clear. The dead bones would live. But they needed to "hear the word of the Lord." **When God's Word goes forth, things begin to happen.**

v. 4 "Hear the word of the Lord" – listen to what God is saying. He is bringing renewal to those who will listen. In the OT it was "Hear, oh Israel." In the NT it was "He who has ears, let him hear..." **Replace the enemy's lies with the truth of God's Word.** What is God saying? What has he already said in the Bible? Listen and obey!

Ezekiel looks out at the hopeless valley of dry bones. Can they live again? Of course not. But God commands Ezekiel to preach to the dead. In the New Testament, Lazarus remains dead until the Word of God is spoken through the Son of God, when he addresses the grave and says, "Lazarus, come forth." Then, there was life! Church, we need to hear the Word of the Lord; we need to believe the Word of the Lord; we need to obey the Word of the Lord. There is life in the Word of the Lord.

As we hear and heed the Word of the Lord, God breathes out his Holy Spirit and brings life back into dry, dead bones. **Nothing can stop the Word of God and the Spirit of God** – not even death. Could death and the grave hold Jesus? Could death, division and dryness prevent these bones from living again?

God's vision for us is the same as this valley of dry bones. He wants to raise us up and rebuild us. He doesn't want us to stay in the valley. He wants renewal for us even more than we want it for ourselves. Hear the word of the Lord! Who or what are you listening to? Are you listening to



pop culture? Are you listening to all the “doom and gloomers?” Are you listening to gossip? Are you listening to the nay-sayers? It’s time to stop listening to other sources and time to hear the Word of the Lord! God has given a lot of promises in his written word; and God has spoken his personal promises to OBC as well...

More than once we’ve received prophetic words about continued growth; revival and greater things yet to come. So, hear the word of the Lord! We will grow. We will experience revival. We will see and do greater things!

v. 7 there was a rattling sound as the bones came together.

v. 8 tendons, flesh and skin covered the bones.

Charles Spurgeon... Notice how the prophet draws attention to the fact of the shaking and the noises, and the coming of the sinews and the flesh, even before there was any sign of life. I think that, if we want the Spirit of God to bless us, we must be on the watch to notice everything he does.”

☞ **Hope Scott testimony**

v. 10 breath entered them; they came to life; they stood up on their feet – a vast army.

So, these bones were revived and brought back to life. But, the bones were not revived to become a group of spectators or to live for their own comfort. They became an army, and an exceedingly great one. They lived to act under the orders of the one who gave them life. The Lord is calling to us as well. It’s time to wake up; it’s time to come back to life; it’s time to **☞reunite**; time to **refresh**; time to **revive**! **Don’t be mistaken, God is doing a shakin’; it’s time to be awakin’ and get to undertakin’ God’s will.**

Church, I want to hear a rattling sound; I want to hear a wind beginning to blow. I want God to bring renewal; to bring new life. He can make us into a powerful army for his kingdom. Hear the Word of the Lord. Be revived by the power of the Holy Spirit!

☞ **Audio on slide** Have you been in the Valley of Dry Bones? Does something in your life seem hopeless? Do you need a personal revival? God wants to speak to you today. He wants to breathe life into your dry situation. He wants to create an army of righteousness out of your bones of despair.

I feel God is asking me to pray for you today. If you need a sliver of hope; if you need a personal revival; if you need new life, come to the altar. We’re not going to talk about your situation; I’m just going to pray for you and God is going breathe new life into your situation today. So, come on down. Today is the day of new life. Hear the Word of the Lord.