

## ☞ **GOD IS NOT DONE WITH US YET**

### **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

This was a very bleak time in Israel's history. Many of Ezekiel's hearers were convinced God had abandoned them. They were defeated and alone. The people were hopeless and helpless. This valley of bones was a pretty relevant image to Ezekiel. Not one of the bones was in its correct position to make a skeleton, let alone any sinew or flesh and blood. Just dry bones; lifeless, parched, bleached bones. At a first glance the damage seemed irreversible. There was no way humanly possible that they would ever arise from this defeat. It would be impossible!

There is a valley of dry bones in the life of many Christians. This valley has no joy and no fruit. It's an awful place and no believer should ever stay long in this valley. Several things can lead to this valley of dry bones.

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

"Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice." This is a verse from Psalm 51, 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. Unconfessed sin will sap the joy from your life. It will rob you of your energy. Disobedience will leave you dry.

### ☞ **Discouragement will leave you dry.**

*The Devil was having a yard sale, and all of his tools were marked with different prices. There was hatred, jealousy, deceit, lying, and pride--all at expensive prices. But over to the side of the yard on display was a tool more obviously worn than any of the other tools. It was also the most costly. The tool was labeled DISCOURAGEMENT. When questioned, the Devil said, "It's more useful to me than any other tool. When I can't bring down my victims with any of the rest of these tools, I use discouragement, because so few people realize that it belongs to me."*

Because of this weapon of discouragement, statistics tell us that every month in America 200 pastors quit the ministry and every year more than 4,000 churches close down and nearly 3 million churchgoers fall into inactivity. Because of this weapon called discouragement many of the people of God become downhearted, hopeless, burned out and weary. Discouragement will leave you dry.

☞ **Division will leave you dry.** The bones were disjointed – v. 7. We need each other. That was also God's first negative observation about his creation. In Genesis 2:18, he said, "It is not good for the man to be alone."

Hebrews 10:25

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.

I know we are living in unusual times and some are staying home out of legitimate concerns for health and safety. But if you stay home from gathering together simply because it is convenient, then you are missing out. There is something special and needed about gathering together to worship and encourage each other. Think about all the “one anothers” in the Bible; there’s a ton of them. Division will leave you dry.

Dryness comes from Disobedience, Discouragement and Division. **The enemy also uses ☞ Deception, Distraction and Doubt.** These all lead to the valley of dry bones, where everything seems lost and hopeless.

Perhaps some feel that way about your current circumstance. Others may feel that way about our nation. Things seem lost and hopeless. Now, we should never simply pretend that we have no problems; that’s denial. But we must be careful to not become hopelessly lost in despair; that’s a death sentence.

*-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.*

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

v. 3 He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." This is obviously setting the stage for something miraculous. Ezekiel had a least a measure of faith. He didn't say, "No way, God. It's impossible!"

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

**☞ God delights in doing the impossible!**

*I heard about an interesting scientific experiment that was done a while back at Duke University. A group of behavioral scientists put some rats in a tank of water, and observed them to see how long they would survive before drowning. The average time was 17 minutes. Then, they repeated the experiment but this time they “rescued” the rats just before the point of drowning. They dried them off, put them back in their cages, fed them and let them play for a few days before repeating the drowning experiment again. This time, the average survival time increased from 17 minutes... to 36 hours! The conclusion of the experiment was just the opposite of our common conclusion. We usually say, "As long as there is life, there is hope." The Duke experiment proved, "As long as there is hope, there is life."*

*A man approached a little league baseball game one afternoon. He asked a boy in the dugout what the score was. The boy responded, "Eighteen to nothing--we're behind."*

*"Boy," said the spectator, "I'll bet you're discouraged." "Why should I be discouraged?" replied the little boy. "We haven't even gotten up to bat yet!"*

☞ **Quit looking at your circumstances and look at God.** God alone holds the answer to hopeless situations.

**How do we resurrect hopes when things seem so utterly hopeless?**

☞ **At the outset we need to know that God is present in our lives.**

I can imagine the hopelessness Ezekiel must have felt looking over this valley. Here is clear evidence of a battle that had been lost; a total defeat. But God was 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. So, how can you partner with God when everything looks hopeless?

**Three things to do when you feel like you are in the "Valley of Dry Bones."**

☞ **Admit the problem**

You can't fix a problem until you face it. There was no denying the situation that Ezekiel found himself in. God wanted him to know just how dead these bones were. This situation was beyond Ezekiel's ability to fix.

The problem most Christians face is that even though they may find themselves in a valley of dry bones spiritually, their pride keeps them from admitting it. Perhaps there is a feeling of shame and worry over what others may think. Or perhaps there is just a sense of denial. But Ezekiel described it as he saw it. This was a valley full of dry bones. Admit the problem.

☞ **Read the Word**

If you are struggling; if your Christian life seems dry; if you are spiritually thirsty; then dive into the Water of God's Word. That's where you'll find spiritual refreshment. We need the Word of God spoken in our lives.

v. 4 Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!'

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. Yet the command was clear. The dead bones would live. But they needed to "hear the word of the Lord."

Ezekiel looks out at the hopeless valley of dry bones. In the natural, can they live again? Of course not. But God commands Ezekiel to preach to the dead. In the New Testament, Lazarus was dead until the Word of God was spoken through the Son of God, when he

addressed the grave and said, "Lazarus, come forth."

### ☞ **God's Word makes things happen.**

Hebrews 4:12

**the word of God is living and active...**

Without the Word of God, we have only the words of humanity on which to lean for our understanding and hope, and that will always be insufficient. Read the word and preach to your own dried up self.

### ☞ **Trust God** **Proverbs 3:5-6**

**"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path."**

Ezekiel is asked by God, "Son of man, can these bones live?" The natural response would simply be, "no." But instead, Ezekiel defers to God. "Lord, you know."

Zechariah 4:6

...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD.

### ☞ **God's Spirit gives new life.**

v. 9 "Prophesy to the breath... Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.' "

Adam was made from the dust of the earth, but he didn't become a living being until God breathed the breath of life into him. (Genesis 2:7) The breath of God is the spirit.

John 6:63

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.

You may feel as though things in your life are dead and nothing but dry bones. Perhaps a loved one seems like a lost cause. Perhaps a dream or promise from God seems to have died. In some cases that may simply be your misconception and things haven't really died. But for others, the situation is very bleak. In the natural, there is no hope. But God is not limited to the natural. God is supernatural and he can make dead bones come alive.

### ☞ **God is not done with us yet.**

*The school system in a large city had a program to help children keep up with their school work during stays in the city's hospitals. One day a teacher who was assigned to the program received a routine call asking her to visit a particular child. She took the child's*

*name and room number and talked briefly with the child's regular class teacher. "We're studying nouns and adverbs in his class now," the regular teacher said, "and I'd be grateful if you could help him understand them so he doesn't fall too far behind." The hospital program teacher went to see the boy that afternoon. No one had mentioned to her that the boy had been badly burned and was in great pain. Upset at the sight of the boy, she stammered as she told him, "I've been sent by your school to help you with nouns and adverbs." When she left she felt she hadn't accomplished much. But the next day, a nurse asked her, "What did you do to that boy?" The teacher felt she must have done something wrong and began to apologize. "No, no," said the nurse. "You don't know what I mean. We've been worried about that little boy, but ever since yesterday, his whole attitude has changed. He's fighting back, responding to treatment. It's as though he's decided to live." Two weeks later the boy explained that he had completely given up hope until the teacher arrived. Everything changed when he came to a simple realization. He expressed it this way: "They wouldn't send a teacher to work on nouns and adverbs with a dying boy, would they?"*

What word is the Lord speaking to you today? What "grave" is the Lord going to bring you up out of through that word? Is there a loved one that seems like a lost cause? Is there a dream that has died in your life? Have you given up on something you knew was God's plan? God wants to speak to you today. He wants to revive that plan for your life. He wants to create an army of righteousness out of your bones of despair. God is not done with you yet.

**📺 Video – Come Alive, Lauren Daigle**