

3.29 Message Text: Old Testament Lesson for Today

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The Valley of Dry Bones

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. 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, “Prophesy 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^[a] 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, “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.’” ¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

¹¹Then 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.’ ¹²Therefore 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. ¹³Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴I 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.”

Hear Your Health Report!

1, You were dead and hopeless.

2. You are alive through the Spirit.

Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Friends of Jesus,

Will someone please tell me something positive? I need that and I need it now. Words like quarantine. Virus. Shut-down. Mask, hoarding. Government officials fighting amongst each other. Name calling.

Stop it. I need to hear something good. Please for once. Good, I am glad you are listening. To God. To His Word. This section from the Old Testament needs some explanation. God’s people the Israelites were carried off into captivity. 586 BC The Babylonians were their rulers.

God uses Ezekiel to see a vision of dry, dead bones. He leads him thru this valley. Normally in a valley you would see wheat or some other life giving crop. Not here. Death Valley. It was filled with dead man’s bones.

God promised his people in exile they would come home to Jerusalem but they had lost hope in his promises. (Reminder

here-trust that when God makes a promise to you it is as good as done. It also means he is not only with us but for us.) Oh yes Israelites and Americans remember these sure promises of God made to us. They are good as done.

God's question to Ezekiel was, SON OF MAN, CAN THESE BONES LIVE? His answer was, Only the person who made these bones can give them life. We can see here from Ezekiel's response that God thru his power and grace could give life to these dead dry, bones.

A miracle happened. Ezekiel prophesied to these dead, dry bones. These was a rattling noise. The bones came together. Disconnected bones became skeletons. Tendons and flesh appeared on the bones. These bones heeded God's Word from the prophet. Power in this reassembling. God's power.

The dead lifeless corpses came to life. But one element was still missing. Breathe. Life. There was no breath in them yet. But the breath, the Spirit of the living God, was about to give them life. Again, understand that Ezekiel was just a man incapable of doing this on his own. He could not change the lifeless situation of these bones. Showing they were truly alive they stood up. Through this vison God uses Ezekiel so the people could see how God would re-create his people now apparently lost formerly in Babylon as prisoners. A kept promise. I need to hear that good news. Don't we all?

Ezekiel carried out his orders and the Lord, as usual, kept his powerful and gracious promises. (Reminder: When God makes

a promise we can take it as though it were done). This is the good news I need to hear. Finally, I have some for you and me. A description of our lives right now: Knowledge knowing we are doing the Lord's will is what takes away this boredom of being caged up in isolation and quarantined. We are Not just here for a paycheck. I can spend with my kids and grandkids knowing we are shaping their souls for an eternity with Jesus in heaven. More time to teach Sunday School lessons and Bible stories at home the way God meant it to be. Catechism lessons and memory work to be done in the homes. Lessons learned here. My prayer life can exist as God is clearing my schedule of my business. AND the Lord keeps his promises. A new health report. A description of my life right now. Isolation with the Lord. Good. Heart to heart talks. Letting his sweet word continue to touch my heart.

As a nation Israel had given up hope. 'AS A PEOPLE AND A NATION WE ARE JUST AS GOOD AS DEAD, the Israelites said. With all the chaos, waiting at fast food places, masks, no food on the shelves we are as good as dead. Our country is a goner if this gets worse. We are giving up hope. Do we sound familiar to the Israelites? Very much so. There is breath. There is life in this rubble of our world. Only in God do we still trust. Remember his promises.

To which the Lord said, I CAN CHANGE THAT! AND I WILL. I CAN RAISE YOU FROM THE DEAD. I CAN RETURN YOU TO YOUR HOME LAND. Nothing, nothing is impossible for me.

Sound familiar to you. God did raise our dead, lifeless, spiritual lives from being dead and dry bones. I can fast forward you to the Biblical description of what we were like spiritually. Paul clearly describes us this way in Ephesians 2: YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS. By nature everyone is spiritually dead. Blind we were by nature. God was foolishness to us. We could not do a thing to please the Lord. There was not a drop of spiritual life in us. We were only a sack of dead, dry bones until the Holy Spirit breathes the breath of life into us and makes us alive, breathing,

Here is what I need to hear again from the next verses in Ephesians 2: BUT IN HIS MIGHT AND MERCY THE LORD HAS MADE US ALIVE IN CHRIST. The health report has changed. Once dead, blind, and foolish. We once dead are alive, once blind we see, and we believe the cross as the power of God. How did this happen?

The same way these bones came to life. Thru the Spirit breathing into them and giving them the breath of life. When the “gospel wind” blows it gives life by the power of the Holy Spirit in His Word and Sacrament-Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Once dead we are now ready like an army to serve their supreme commander. We live with preparedness. We believe his promises to be with us and for us. We Live ever aware of God’s presence. We know this rubble heap here does not compare with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Courage in Christ defines faith. This dead bone story is all about the Holy Spirit giving breath and life. There is good news! Here you have it! Amen

Other readings for this Sunday:

Old Testament: Ezekiel 37:1-14 Printed here.

New Testament Lesson: Romans 8:11-19

Gospel: John 11:17-27; 38-45