

# Can Dry Bones Live Again?

Tim Dubberly, January 9, 2005

Text: Ezekiel 37:1-14

## Introduction:

Have you ever felt like you were drying up? Many Christians have felt this way and tried to blame their condition upon someone else. Some would change churches, change jobs, change friends, and some would even change spouses. However, I want to assure you that none of these things are responsible for your dryness.

Ezekiel's gospel reveals his vision, in which he was carried by God and set down in a valley that was full of dry bones. He made Ezekiel walk around and look at all the bones. Ezekiel makes the statement, in verse two, "There were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry." At this point God directed a question at him that shook him to his heart. God asked him, verse three, Son of man, can these bones live." He responded with an emphatic, "O Lord God, You know."

The valley of dry bones contextually is speaking to a despondent and hopeless people. Jerusalem was such a ravaged and exiled people. They had once seen the glory of God and what God could do, but now they were a defeated and destroyed people, dead to the spirit of God.

■ Psychologist William Marston asked three thousand people, "What have you to live for?" He was shocked to discover that 94 percent were simply enduring the present while they waited for the future--waited for something to happen--waited for "next year" --waited for a "better time" --waited for "someone to die" --waited "for tomorrow," unable to see that all anyone ever has is today, because yesterday is gone and tomorrow exists only in hope.

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) pp. 291-292.

I. This happens when we stop listening to God's word (4-8).

A. God wants you to be alive in Him.

- God wanted someone to preach and prophecy to them to restore their hope.
- Her bones were dry and she was spiritually dead, she was going into exile in Babylon for 70 years.
- God wanted her to live again that He might make her whole, for he said, "*Surely, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.*"

B. This drought will come when we stop hearing the word of God.

- God was using Ezekiel to raise up His people again.
- He declared, "*O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!*"
- The gospel is the power of God unto life!

■ Life is a grindstone. Whether it grinds you down or polishes you up depends upon what you are made of.

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 60.

C. The word can bring you to a restored condition.

- He prophesied and the bones began to rattle.
- Sinews and the flesh came together and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

II. Dryness is evidence of a broken relationship with God (9-11).

A. These bones were whole but they were not alive.

- Without the breath of God you can only go walk by the word.
- He prophesied, “Come from the four winds, *O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.*”
- You need more than a function of the word; you need a restoration that can only come from a relationship.

B. A fresh relationship with Christ will make a person alive in Him.

- They could only stand after the breath of God came upon them.
- He prophesied as he was commanded and “*breath came into them, and they lived.*”
- They could only become a great army, able to fight, after the breath came upon them.

C. God wants that relationship to be restored.

- He wants you to trust, love, and need Him, because He wants to bless you.
- God told him these bones represented Israel, and their testimony was, “*Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!*”
- Jesus wants to change your testimony to that which says, “I am more than an overcome through Christ Jesus who strengthens me!”

III. Dryness also represents a lack of desire for the work of God (12-14).

A. We are dead to the work of God in our heart.

- He prophesied, “I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves.”
- When His spirit and word are alive in us, so will the desire for the work of God be restored.

B. We will then recognize that spiritual death has been resurrected.

- We will feel the freshness of His spirit making everything new again.
- He prophesied, “Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves.”

C. The joy of salvation will be restored to us.

- His spirit will explode in us bringing such a desire to work for Him.
- He prophesied, “I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live.”

Conclusion:

The dry bones did live again because they heard the word of God, and believed it. They lived because they rededicated themselves to God and the breath of His spirit re-entered their lives. And they became powerful again, like a mighty army, because they fell in love with God and His work.

This is a beautiful picture of our life and need for God. Many are dry because their joy, peace, hope, desire, and excitement, has dried up. They have begun to live by their will and not God's, and they no longer have a 'want to' when it comes to the work of God.

Tonight God wants you just the way you are!

■ London Businessman Lindsay Clegg told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors smashed the windows, and strewn trash all over the place. As he showed a prospective buyer the property, he took pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, and bring in a crew to correct any structural damage. The buyer said “Forget about the repairs. When I buy this place, I’m going to build something completely different. I do not want the building; I want the site.”

That’s God’s message to us! Compared with the renovation God has in mind, our efforts to improve our own lives are as trivial as sweeping a warehouse slated for the wrecking ball. When we become God’s property, the old life is over. He makes all things new. All he wants is the site and the permission to build. There are still some trying to “reformen,” but God offers “redemption.” All we have to do is give Him the property: and He will do the rest.

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My Challenge:

- Ask God to help you to be made whole through your faith in His word.
- Ask Him to breath upon you and help you as you make the effort to repair that broken relationship.
- Ask Him to restore your love for prayer, preaching, and all the work of the kingdom of God.