

Week of March 26, 2023

Ezekiel 37:1-14 (NRSV)

^{NRS} **Ezekiel 37:1** The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones.

² He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry.

³ He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know."

⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.

⁶ I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

⁸ I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.

⁹ Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

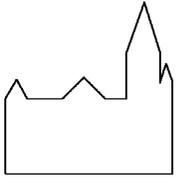
¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹ Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.'

¹² Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people.

¹⁴ I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."



Group Leader

Remember: you don't need to use all of the questions. Go with what works. Give people a chance to think before answering, but if a question falls flat, move on. Let the discussion go where it needs to go, as long as it remains centered around the lesson. Give the participants page 1. Use this page for yourself.

Gathering questions:

- A. Name something that you started doing later in life that you wish you had started earlier. How might your life be different?
- B. Discuss something that you used to do that you wish you hadn't stopped.

Bible Study Questions:

1. What do you think Ezekiel was thinking in verse 3 when he answered God, "O Lord GOD, you know"?
2. What do you think it means to be told to "prophesy" to the bones as opposed to, say, "speak" to them or "declare" to them?
3. At the end of verse 8, how do you think Ezekiel feels when the bones are covered in flesh, yet there is no breath as had been promised?
4. When something comes partially true for you, do you tend to be appreciative or upset? Do you tend to quit, be satisfied with what you got, or do you press on for the rest?
5. Why do you think God made Ezekiel prophesy to the bones? How would the story be different if God had simply shown Ezekiel the valley of dry bones and reanimated them before his eyes?
6. Why do you think Ezekiel never discusses his reactions to seeing the vision fulfilled? Do you think he was amazed? Was he dubious? Did he simply expect it?
7. What are the "dry bones" in your life right now, and what would it look like for them to be fully alive?

Closing prayer: particularly invite prayers about discovering and becoming who God knows you can be.