

Dry Bones, Living Hope

From Dead, to Alive, to United (Ezekiel 37)

1. Hope Looks Dead, But God Asks the Question (Ezekiel 37:1-10)

God leads us into the _____ places on purpose – not to hurt us.

When all seems lost, God's _____ brings life.

The same _____ who raised Jesus from the grave is living in you.

2. Hope Is Spoken Over a Cry of Despair (Ezekiel 37:11-14)

You can lose your _____ and God hasn't lost you.

God's purpose in the rescue is that you would _____ Him.

He doesn't only fix the situation – He reveals _____ He is.

God doesn't ignore our despair; He gives us _____ life by His Spirit.

3. Hope Reunites What Was Divided (Ezekiel 37:15-28)

We can't manufacture _____ by trying harder.

God's goal has always been to _____ with His people.

God doesn't just restore us; He _____ us together as one people.

Key Takeaways

Main points to remember and apply

1. When all seems lost, God's breath brings life.
2. God doesn't ignore our despair; He gives us new life by His Spirit.
3. God doesn't just restore us; He joins us together as one people.
4. The power was never in Ezekiel. It was in the word of God that he spoke.
5. You can look right and still be dead. We need God's Spirit, not just the right parts in place.
6. God hears our honest cries of despair without condemnation and still calls us 'My people.'
7. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in every believer.
8. Real unity comes when we are held in the same hand, not when we try harder or agree on everything.
9. The gospel moves from dead, to alive, to united, and its goal is God dwelling with His people.

Scripture References

Ezekiel 37:1

"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."

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:3

"He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I said, 'Sovereign LORD, you alone know.'"

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:4

"Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!''"

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:5

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life."

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:10

"So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army."

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:11

"Then 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.'"

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:12

"Therefore 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.'"

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:14

"I 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."

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:17

"Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand."

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:22

"I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms."

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:24

"My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd."

(NIV)

Ezekiel 37:26-27

"I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people."

(NIV)

Genesis 2:7

"Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

(NIV)

John 20:22

"And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

(NIV)

John 11:43

"When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'"

(NIV)

Romans 8:11

"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit, who lives in you."

(NIV)

John 10:16

"I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."

(NIV)

Ephesians 2:14

"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."

(NIV)

Discussion Questions

For personal reflection or group discussion

1. God led Ezekiel into the valley on purpose and let him walk back and forth among the bones. Where have you sensed God leading you through a hard place, and what might He have wanted you to see?
2. God asked, "Can these bones live?" What is the 'dry bones' situation in your life right now, such as a relationship, a dream, a habit, or a loss? How would you honestly answer God's question about it?
3. In verses 5 and 6, God says "I will" again and again, and never "you must." How does it change the way you face your own valley to know that God is the one who does the work?
4. The bones in verse 8 looked complete but had no breath. In what ways can a person look right on the outside (job, family, church attendance, right answers) and still feel spiritually lifeless? What does it look like to ask for God's breath in those places?
5. Israel spoke their despair out loud, and God didn't condemn them for it. What makes it hard to be honest with God about your despair, and what would it look like to bring Him your real words this week?
6. Romans 8:11 says the same Spirit who raised Jesus lives in believers. What difference could that truth make to something that feels dead in your life today?
7. The two sticks represent long-divided people who become one only in God's hand. Is there a 'stick' you have been holding tightly, such as a grudge, an old argument, or a broken relationship? What would it mean to let God hold both sticks?
8. The chapter moves from dead, to alive, to united. Why do you think God does not stop at 'alive'? How does being part of a church family fit into God's plan of restoration for you?
9. God's ultimate promise is, "My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people." How does knowing that God's goal is to live with His people shape the way you see this week's challenges?

Additional Notes

- The Hebrew word *ruach*, used throughout Ezekiel 37, can be translated as breath, wind, or Spirit. All three meanings are at work in the vision.
- Background: after the reign of Solomon, Israel divided into the northern kingdom (also called Israel, Ephraim, or Joseph) and the southern kingdom (Judah). The two sticks in verses 15-17 represent these divided nations.
- Ezekiel was a prophet and a priest living in exile in Babylon after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple.
- Numbers (1) through (12) in this handout match the fill-in-the-blank sheet used during the sermon. The answer key is included above.
- Related passages for further study: Psalm 13 ('How long, O LORD?'), John 11 (the raising of Lazarus), Genesis 2:7, John 20:22, Romans 8:11, John 10:16, and Ephesians 2:11-22.

Answer Key

1. **Hard**, breath, Spirit
2. **Hope**, know, who, new
3. **Unity**, live, joins