



## Sermon, Sunday October 23, 2022

### “You Will Come to Life”

**SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 37:1-14** <sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> 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.” <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, 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.” <sup>10</sup> I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. <sup>11</sup> 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.’ <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophesy 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. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> 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.”

#### **Introduction: The Prophet Ezekiel's Despair and God's Grace**

I would like to share with you a fable about 'desperation'. One day the devil opened a night market and sold tools such as lust, deceit, pride, envy, despair, etc. with price tags. However, it is said that the most expensive thing in the market was 'Despair'. Despair is a human emotion that arises when our goals and desires are not fulfilled or when we are forced to do something we do not want to do. But a more fundamental reason for despair is that we have abandoned our faith which allows the devil to attack us with fear, unbelief, and self-pity. It is said that the devil uses the last tool of frustration when people do not listen to him despite all means.

Today's text is the book of Ezekiel which tells the story of Ezekiel who overcame despair and found hope in the Lord, and it is a message of hope to those in despair.

Ezekiel was the son of a priest who lived in the southern kingdom of Judah. In 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, invaded southern Judah, and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple burned down, and the people died or were taken into captivity.

At this time, Ezekiel was also taken captive to Babylon. Ezekiel was about 25 years old when he was taken into captivity. He was in deep despair. He believed that God lived, but he doubted whether God loved Israel. Ezekiel had a vision at the age of 30 when he had been in captivity for about five years. The Lord came to Ezekiel in despair. This is the grace of the Lord.



The book of Ezekiel is divided into three main parts. Ezekiel 1-24 is a warning against Jerusalem in Judah, chapters 25-32 are judgments on Judah's neighboring nations, and chapters 33-48 are the promise of Israel's restoration. Through today's text, I hope you enjoy the grace of the Lord who gives you hope during despair.

## **Body: A Valley of Dry Bones**

**Ezekiel 37:1-2 says: "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. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry."**

The Lord took Ezekiel into a valley full of dry bones. What do you mean dry bones?

Dry bones are bones that have been long dead with no hope of reviving them. The Lord showed Ezekiel dry bones and asked: **"He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." (Ezekiel 37:3)**

In this verse, the Lord asked Ezekiel, **"Can these bones live?"** Ezekiel answered, **"O Lord God, you know."** Why did the Lord ask this question? The Lord is telling Ezekiel, who is in despair, to have hope.

Brothers and sisters in Christ! Who is our Lord?

He is the One who gives hope to those in despair. Even if we give up on life because of despair, the Lord does not give up on us. We must not forget that it is the Lord, not the circumstances, that determines our lives. Therefore, we should not look for hope by looking at circumstances but hope through the Lord. How, then, can we have hope during despair?

**First, we must listen to the word of the Lord, have confidence in the word, and obey the word.**

Today's text, verse 37:4, says: **"Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." Then amazing things happen. Ezekiel 37:7-8 says: "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. 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."**

As the above verse describes, Ezekiel listened to the Lord's word and obeyed it. Then the old, dead, dry bones began to come to life. But do you know what kind of situation Ezekiel was in at that time, who obeyed the Lord's word? He was a person of the fallen southern Judah, living in captivity in Babylon. He also lost his beloved wife while in captivity. Ezekiel was in despair like dry bones. Nevertheless, he obeys the word of the Lord.

I ask you, are you in despair like the dry bones in today's text? However, even when our circumstances are difficult, if we believe and trust the word of the Lord, we can overcome despair. That's why **Romans 4:17 says: "He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were."**

**Also, Jesus says in Matthew 4:4: "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Furthermore, please remember how Job, the righteous man in the Old Testament, overcame tribulation and temptation. Job 23:12 says: "I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread."**

Please don't forget. Even during tribulation, if the word of the Lord fills our hearts, we can overcome despair. So, we must be able to obey the Lord's word rather than our own opinions and experiences.

How can we have hope during despair?



## **Second, for dry bones to come to life, the Holy Spirit must come upon them.**

When the word of the Lord was prophesied to the dry bones, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone, tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them. But there was no breath in them. The Lord commands Ezekiel to prophesy, **“Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.”** As Ezekiel prophesied according to the Lord's command, breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet--a vast army.

In this verse, ‘breath’ is **‘Ruach’** in Hebrew. Ruach is the **'Spirit'**.

If the Holy Spirit does not come and work, even if we hear, read, and know the word of the Lord, nothing surprising will happen. When the Holy Spirit within us works, the word of the Lord can do wonderful things. **So, Romans 8:9 says: “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”**

So, do we have the Holy Spirit in us? The Bible says that the Holy Spirit is with everyone who says that Jesus is Lord. (1 Corinthians 12:3) So it is more important for us we are filled with the Holy Spirit than whether we have the Holy Spirit in us or not. So, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, all despair disappears, and hope abounds. After the dry bones are raised, the Lord commands Ezekiel. **“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.' Therefore prophesy, 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.”** (Ezekiel 37:11-12)

The Lord says that the dry bones in the valley that Ezekiel saw in a vision were the Israelites. This verse says that the Israelites are now living in captivity, but the Lord promises that they will return to the land of Israel.

It is through the grace of the Lord that the Holy Spirit comes to us in full. It does not come by our will and effort, but by the grace of the Lord. Our love for the Lord, our holiness, and our innocence allow His grace to come into our lives more abundantly through the Holy Spirit. I hope you enjoy such a blessing.

## **Conclusion: By the grace of the Lord, come out of the grave of despair.**

Now let's summarize today's sermon. The Lord commands Ezekiel to prophesy as follows, **“The Lord will open your graves and bring you up from them.”**

The Lord does not want us to live in despair without hope. The Lord wants us to live in rest, in joy and thanksgiving. However, there are many times when we stay in our own graves. Also, instead of obeying the word of the Lord, we are obsessed with our own thoughts and live against the Lord's word. However, please remember: We cannot come out of the grave on our own. Only through the grace of the Lord can we come out of despair and live a life of hope.

The grace and love of the Lord are more precious than anything in the world. May the blessings of living and enjoying the grace that the Lord has granted for us take expression in our daily lives.

