

DAY TEN:

DRY BONES CAN LIVE

INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges we have in praying and preparing for community revival is that most of us have not personally experienced it. We live in a secular and materialistic society (at least in the West) and we are surrounded and influenced by our culture. How can this ever change? How could our community come alive spiritually? Well the Jews that had been exiled wondered the same thing. They were defeated, downtrodden and banished. How on earth could God restore Israel? Both ancient Israel and modern Christians are faced with the same dilemma – spiritually dry bones everywhere. But Ezekiel the prophet told Israel what God would do. And his message is the same for us.

SCRIPTURE: EZEKIEL 37:1-14

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. He 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. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I 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.'"

So 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. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

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

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.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am



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going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 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.”

DEVOTION

Ezekiel saw a picture of devastation and desolation. Lots of dry, dead bones piled all over the floor of a valley. They may have been a powerful army at one stage, but those days were long gone. These people had been slaughtered and their bodies left to the animals and elements. In this valley, there was no strength. No life. No hope. Just misery and despair.

Ezekiel was speaking primarily about Israel in this prophecy, but what a poignant picture of our community. Dry bones. Spiritually barren. Devoid of life and hope. Morally corrupt. Trapped by the idols of pleasure and self-indulgence and selfishness. Dry bones everywhere. Maybe I am being alarmist. I know God is at work and many people in our community try hard. But as I look around, it just feels spiritually like a pile of dry bones. People don't care about God. They are apathetic and disinterested. Their hope is gone. I find myself confronted with the same question Ezekiel was asked, "Can these bones live?"

If this is your question about your community, keep reading the Scripture passage until God's answer sinks in. These dry bones can become a vast army of God. God does the work, but our role (with Ezekiel) is to believe, pray and prophesy new life into our community. God will breathe on these bones and restore spiritual life.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord my faith is small. It is so hard to see how things are going to change radically among the people I mix with. But faith is believing what I cannot yet see. So please help me to hold on to your promises and trust your power. Help me to believe that dry bones can become a vast army of people following you.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord you built Israel into a powerful nation again as Isaiah prophesied. You bring spiritual life to those who are dead. I am asking you to do the same for my community. Please work in your power. Do the impossible. Bring spiritual revival. May these dry bones live.

