

LET THE SISTERHOOD ARISE!

Ezekiel 37:1-10 (LB)

The power of the Lord was upon me
and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord
to a valley full of old, dry bones
that were scattered everywhere across the ground.
He led me around among them, and then he said to me:

“Son of man, can these bones become people again?”

I replied, “Lord, you alone know the answer to that.”

Then he told me to speak to the bones and say,
“O dry bones, listen to the words of God, for the Lord God says,
See! I am going to make you live and breathe again!
I will replace the flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin.
I will put breath into you, and you shall live and know I am the Lord.”

So I spoke these words from God, just as he told me to;
and suddenly there was a rattling noise from all across the valley,
and the bones of each body came together and attached to each other
as they used to be.

Then as I watched, the muscles and flesh formed over the bones,
and skin covered them, but the bodies had no breath.
Then he told me to call to the wind and say: “The Lord God says:
Come from the four winds, O Spirit,
and breathe upon these slain bodies, that they may live again.”
So I spoke to the winds as he commanded me
and the bodies began breathing;
they lived, and stood up –
a very great army.

– PRAY –

Undoubtedly, the restoration of Israel
is the immediate thought in the mind of Ezekiel.
He sees his people stricken to death.
The nation is virtually dead.

The exiled citizens of Jerusalem have lost all spirit and energy;
but with the restoration,
the nation will once more rise up as from the dead.

As you know, there are three layers of Scripture.

1. 1st layer is the actual reading and the obvious person/people to whom it was written.
2. 2nd layer is the personal layer. You are the recipient.
3. 3rd layer is prophetic, needing the discerning eye of the Holy Spirit to convey its meaning.

The primary reason for this prophecy is the House of Israel.

But, God is not just giving us a history lesson
through this great prophet,
He has something to say to us –
a personal word – for you and me.

While I too, understand
the prophetic implications of this Scripture,
the Holy Spirit brought it to my mind months ago
when Sena asked me to speak on this Friday night.

I tried other avenues of study,
but could not get away from Ezekiel 37.

WHY DO I THINK THIS MESSAGE IS IMPORTANT?

Because we are living in the perilous times of II Timothy 3;
and I see women of God
falling around me on every side.

They are caught up in the very things
Paul warns us about in this end time.

Women of God, who once walked in truth and light,
Women of God, who once felt the quickening power of the Spirit,

Women of God, who knew God, loved God, and served God,
Women of God, who prayed for you and prayed for me
until victory came back into our lives!

Women of God, who came to Heart of Florida year after year
and laid on this very floor,
out under the anointing of the Holy Spirit –

Somewhere they lost their first love!
Somewhere they took a wrong turn!

Somewhere they chose a detour to “go find themselves.”
Somewhere they decided they DESERVED
more than life was shelling out.

They have walked away from home,
family, children, some even
grand-children – everything! – EVEN GOD!

And Paul said, they are self-absorbed,
money-hungry,
self-promoting,
stuck-up,
unbending,
impulsively wild,
cynical,
addicted to lust,
and allergic to God.

They kept on “talking the talk” –
making a show of religion –

but behind the scenes
it was a different story;
and long ago they stopped “walking the walk!”

1. Paul says these are women
who are depressed by their sinfulness.
2. They take up with every new religious fad
that calls itself “truth.”
3. They are continually exploited
and never really learn.
4. They are in a valley of dead, dry bones!

And I am convinced,
that some of you have been
(1) playing this dangerous game of flirting with the enemy,
(2) living on the brink of catastrophe,
(3) standing on the very precipice of spiritual death.

Isaiah 42:22

“This is a people robbed and plundered;
all of them are snared in holes,
and they are hidden in prison houses,
they are for prey and no one delivers,
for plunder and no one says RESTORE!”

I have come tonight wearing the mantle of the prophet!
I have come saying, “O GOD, RESTORE!”

My first goal is
restoration to the
weary,
worn, and
desperate;

a warning from the heart of God is the second;

and a birthing of revival fire
that will burn in your hearts until Jesus comes again
is my third and final goal.

LET'S LOOK AT EZEKIEL 37!

Ezekiel beholds the dismal sight of a valley of dry bones.
It is a scene of silent desolation.
The human remains are not even covered with flesh.
He sees bones, not corpses.

The bones are many!

They are not underground, in graves,
where they cannot be seen;
they are not heaped up in piles;
but they are scattered all over the face of the valley –
no bone is connected to its brother-bone.

The unclean scavengers
that have been at work among them
have ruthlessly torn them joint from joint,
and mixed them up in apparently hopeless confusion.

And THEY ARE VERY DRY!
BLEACHED!
WITHERED!

The vultures have picked them clean;
and they have been left to bleach in the sun.

There is no possibility, not even a thought,
that these bones can be
re-sus-ci-ta-ted to life again.

BUT GOD!

GOD WALKS ON THE SCENE WITH A PROPHET BY THE
HAND AND SAYS,

“Son of man, can these bones live?”

Ezekiel says, “Lord you alone know the answer to that.”

And God says, “Prophecy the Word over them!”

The significance of the command
lies in the fact that it taught the prophet
that he was himself to be instrumental
in the great work of re-sus-ci-ta-tion.

He who had been so often troubled
with the sense of impotence and failure,
who had heard the people laughing behind his back,
and calling him names,
saying of him, “Does he not speak parables/riddles?”

He was at last to learn that the “word of the Lord,”
spoken by his lips,
was mighty,
and would not return to him void!

Vs. 5

God says, “I will cause breath to enter into you.”

Are you getting the picture?
Jehovah God will be the real agent
in the resuscitation of the bones;
and the Wind of the Spirit
will be the breath that gives them life again.

Vs. 6

It all takes place in two stages –

A preliminary stage
which would effect the reconstruction
of the external skeleton,
by bringing together its different parts
and clothing them with **sinews, flesh, and skin;**

and the finishing stage
would consist in animating, or “putting breath in,”
the re-con-struct-ed skeleton.

The result would be
that the resurrected and reanimated bones
would stand up as an exceeding great army
to take their part in the spiritual wars of Jehovah God!

Ezekiel speaks the WORD
and the bones fitted themselves together
and were clothed with flesh.

Still they were not alive.
Life can only come from God’s Spirit!
The most stirring preaching will not create it!
The Spirit of God comes and produces Divine life!

He did as God had commanded and
he prophesies to the WIND –
the Holy Spirit of God,
the power of life –
to breathe on the slain
and make them live.

When he did this, the WIND came,
and there stood up “an exceeding great army” of living men.

I GOD KNEW WHERE THE DRY BONES LAY; AND HE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE

1. You came to this retreat as a last ditch effort to find God.
2. You came battle weary and scarred.
3. Your husband – mid-life crisis – don’t recognize him
as the man you married.
4. The children you birthed are acting like strangers,
5. The doctor announced that you have an incurable disease,
6. You have been hurt – church member,
a pastor, a pastor’s wife,
7. You got up this morning feeling worthless, useless,
8. You are suffering depression, loneliness, disillusionment,
9. You have suffered at the hands of your friends, family,
peers, and the powers-that-be,
10. You have been pushed and shoved
until it’s all you can do to
remain standing –
but the fact that you’re here tells me that
you ARE still STANDING!!
11. Perhaps you thought God had forgotten all about you.
12. Perhaps you thought He had erased your name from the
palm of His hand.

TAKE HEART!

GOD STILL KNOWS YOU and
HE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE!

According to

Isaiah 37:28

**He knows your dwelling place.
He knows when you go out and when you come in.**

Psalms 139

**He knows everything about you!
He knows when you sit or stand.**

**He knows your every thought.
He charts the path ahead of you.**

**Every moment, He knows where you are.
He knows what you are going to say,
even before you say it.**

**He both precedes and follows you and
places His hand of blessing on your head!**

**If you go up to Heaven, He is there.
If you go to the grave, He is there.**

**If you ride the morning winds to the farthest oceans,
even there you will find Him!**

**And if you try to hide in the darkness,
HE WILL STILL FIND YOU!
HE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE!**

**Here in the middle of 500 women, surrounded by
the sisterhood,
HE WILL FIND YOU!**

**Even in a valley, filled with dry, dead bones –
HE WILL FIND YOU!**

~ AND ~

II GOD WILL MEET YOU THERE

At your lowest point of need,
At the most desperate moment of your life,
In the dark night of your soul,
Just when you think all hope is lost –
GOD WILL MEET YOU THERE!

Jesus said:

“I will **NEVER** leave you nor forsake you!”
(Hebrews 13:5)

The wise man Solomon said,

“There is a Friend who sticks closer than a brother!”

Paul said,

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!
He changes not!”

Paul – I Corinthians 10:12

“No test or temptation that comes your way
is beyond the
course of what others have had to face.

All you need to remember

is that God will never let you down;

He’ll never let you be pushed past your limit;

He’ll always be there to help you come through it.”

God – Isaiah 43:2

“Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are mine.

When you go through deep waters and great trouble,
I will be with you;

when you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown!
(I will be with you!)

When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not
be burned up – the flames will not consume you.

For I am the Lord your God, your Savior,
the Holy One of Israel ***(and I will be with you!)***

He was with Daniel in the lion’s den!
He was with the 3 Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace!
He was with Paul in the Mamertine Prison at Rome!
He was with John the Beloved on the Isle of Patmos!
He was with Joseph in Pontifer’s prison house!
He was with Elijah when he was running from Jezebel!
He was with David when he hid in a cave, hiding from Saul.

& on a personal note:

He was with Randy and me during the last five years
when we had to walk out our faith!

October of ’05 – Randy’s burnout – break down,
For 5 months he was unable to fill his pulpit,

’06 – Annette – Massive heart attack,

December of '07 – Randy – diagnosed w/Prostate cancer,
followed by 1 ½ years of radiation and shots that almost left him lifeless;
but during that time,
HE PREACHED EVERY WEEK-END!!

'08 – Church Split,
'09 – Retirement

THROUGH IT ALL – GOD WAS WITH US!
AND I CAN TELL YOU THIS FACT IN 2010 –

III GOD WILL BRING YOU OUT!

Jeremiah 29:11-14a

“I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

You will call upon Me and go and pray unto Me, and I will listen to you.

You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

I will be found by you, says the Lord, *and I will bring you back”*

KNOW the Lord as “MY GOD!”

KNOW HIM as the REDEEMING SAVIOR

who has sought you out,
to rescue you from the pit,
to save your soul,
and to set your feet on a high place!

KNOW HIM as the GREAT PHYSICIAN!

KNOW HIM as the FRIEND OF THE AGES!

In a world filled with question marks,
God will give your life an exclamation point!

If you want the blessings that have been promised you –
GOD WILL BRING YOU OUT!

If you want to take back all that the enemy has stolen –
GOD WILL!

If you want the anointing flowing fresh in your life again –
GOD WILL !

If you want the power of God accelerated in your ministry –
GOD WILL!

You say: I JUST DON'T FEEL IT!

HEY!

Can't walk by feeling!

Can't sing by feeling!

Can't minister by feeling!

IT'S A FAITH WALK!

& IN THE DARK TIMES

YOU remember the WORD!

It's the Word that gives life to dry bones!

It's the Word that makes a day worth living!

It's the Word that restores HOPE!

It's the Word that defeats your enemies!

It's the Word that point you back to God!

It's the Word that reveals His person, His plan, His power!

It's the Word!

Remember what God has brought you through in the past!

Remember - kept,
sustained,
saved,
protected &
sheltered you!

REMEMBER the times
when He supplied your needs!

When your soul is confronted w/questions too difficult to answer,
when you want to throw everything to the wind,
run away from home,
and forget everyone and everything you ever knew.

WAIT! DON'T RUN!

REMEMBER GOD!
REMEMBER HE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE!

TURN AROUND IN A CIRCLE – HE'S WITH YOU!

THE SAME ONE WHO SPOKE LIFE
IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH
WILL ONCE AGAIN
BRING YOU OUT!

Why throw away the answer to 99 questions
because you cannot satisfactorily solve one?

Why throw away
countless,
victorious,
happy yesterdays
because for a moment you cannot understand
what's happening right here and right now!

GOD SAYS:

Isaiah 41:10

“Fear thou not, for I am with thee;
be not dismayed, for I am thy God;
I will strengthen thee;
yea, I will help thee;
yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my
righteousness.”

Take all the riches and wealth,
glory and majesty of heaven –
it is available to meet your needs!

There is no limit – not even a fraction –
to the great resources at God’s disposal;
and our resources are
the PROVIDENCE of God,
the POWER of God,
and the PROMISES of God!

Be assured that no matter what your need is,
the need is not greater than the God
who is more than enough!

SING: “Through many dangers, toils and snares I have
already come; ‘Twas grace that brought me safe
thus far; and grace will lead me on.”

REMEMBER GOD!
REMEMBER THAT HE WILL BRING YOU OUT!
REMEMBER TO PRAY! PRAISE! WORSHIP!

We can pray and worship
until the upper atmosphere shifts to one
that is conducive
to a supernatural move of God.

And when we WORSHIP
it will build up our spirit-man;
it will take us into the Presence of the King;
it will change the atmosphere around us,
and defeat the enemy of our soul!

CLEAN HANDS
AND A PURE HEART!