

SERIES	COME ALIVE
BIBLE	EZEKIEL 37
TITLE/TOPIC	DRY BONES COMING ALIVE - THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE
OVERVIEW	<p>After Ezekiel's call and commission (ch. 1-3), the judgments against Judah (ch. 4-24), and the judgments against the gloating nations (ch. 25-32), there is an important turning point for the entire book. This pivot turns from coming judgment to coming restoration. Common to even the sharpest and bleakest prophetic writings, one finds hope and promise: God's plan will not be undone by sin and brokenness <i>in</i> his people nor <i>around</i> his people. His story will not be derailed and his glory will not be robbed. His promise will prevail. Our passage comes in the middle of this section but since we're skipping 36 chapters, <i>it's critical to highlight God's imagery of heartbreak and hurt before getting to the hope (see below).</i></p>
SCRIPTURE BREAKDOWN (PART ONE)	<p>To set the hope in context, I would highlight three things: 1. God's Pain, 2. God's Promise, 3. God's Picture... (and then end with GOSPEL, baby!)</p> <p>GOD'S PAIN AT HIS PEOPLE'S REBELLION - EZEKIEL Chs. 3-32</p> <p>God underscores the image of family in his relationship with his people (family of love!). When they are unfaithful and idolatrous, he is like a husband whose wife has cheated or a parent whose lost her children. Broken families hurt.</p> <p>The deepest betrayal is infidelity in marriage, when "till death do us part" dies. Ezekiel 16:17 You also took your beautiful jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and with them played the whore.</p> <p>Another deep hurt is when children go wayward - and hurt themselves drastically. Ezekiel 23:2-5, 11 2 "Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother. 3 They played the whore in Egypt; they played the whore in their youth; there their breasts were pressed and their virgin bosoms handled. 4 Oholah was the name of the elder and Oholibah the name of her sister. They became mine, and they bore sons and daughters. As for their names, Oholah is Samaria, and Oholibah is Jerusalem. 5 "Oholah played the whore while she was mine, and she lusted after her lovers the Assyrians ... 11 "Her sister Oholibah saw this, and she became more corrupt than her sister in her lust and in her whoring, which was worse than that of her sister.</p> <p>These are themes that God, through Ezekiel, plays on in more ways than one. The picture is that idolatry - worshiping anything other than God - breaks God's heart and breaks us as well. It always leads to death in our spirit and in our relationships. We become useless (Ez. 15) outside of God's plan.</p>

<p>SCRIPTURE BREAKDOWN (PART TWO)</p>	<p>GOD'S PROMISE IN SPITE OF REBELLION - Ezekiel 36:25-27</p> <p>Even despite his people's rebellion, God's grace is greater. He makes a promise. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.</p> <p>GOD'S PICTURE OF VICTORY OVER REBEL HEARTS - Ezekiel 37:1-14</p> <p>God gives a riveting picture to "flesh out" (lol...) the image of his promise. The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. 2 And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. 3 And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, you know." 4 Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. 6 And I will lay sinews upon 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."</p> <p>7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 And I looked, and behold, 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, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.</p> <p>11 Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' 12 Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. 14 And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord."</p> <p>If rebellion leads us to death in all areas of life, then the Word of God awakens us to life and the Holy Spirit fill us with life. We enjoy relationship with God in life.</p>
<p>GOSPEL</p>	<p>How does this sermon bring people to the Gospel?</p> <p>Jesus promised the Holy Spirit. (John 17) Jesus gave his Holy Spirit. (Acts 2) The Holy Spirit empowered a new people for a new mission (Acts 3-28).</p>

NEXTSTEPS

Begin | Connect | Engage | Grow | Disciple

Not-yet believers, Begin by believing in Jesus.

Already believers, Grow by being filled with the HS daily (Eph. 4:30, 5:18, 1 Thes. 5:19)

See Steve Smith's *Spirit Walk*, where he encourages believers everyday to engage in...**SWAP**

Surrender to His will and Word

Wait on God in prayer

Avoid sin and let God

Pursue the promptings

This would be a great moment to help walk people through the pastor's morning routine so they could see a real-life example of the Way of Jesus.