

Raising the Dead

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon calls for a radical return to faith and holiness, urging believers to turn away from sin and heed God's warnings in a corrupt world.

Duration: 1:02:22

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:4-10, John 16:24, Romans 8:26, Ephesians 5:14, James 5:16

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of believers being commanded by God to speak His words into the lives of others, to intercede in prayer, and to believe for the miraculous transformation of those who are spiritually dead. It calls for a deep desire to make a difference in this generation by being vessels through which the Holy Spirit can breathe life and raise up an army for God's glory.

Transcript

It has been a marvelous day here in this house, all day today, and I thank God for it. The Word is penetrating, convicting, encouraging, but deepening, challenging. And I feel personally that my heart has been more challenged to believe God for the impossible than ever before.

The Holy Spirit has been speaking this to me for some time now. He's been drawing my heart to some of the truths that I'm going to be sharing with you tonight. And I pray that somehow, I shared with Pastor Dave earlier tonight, I feel like David when Jonathan said to him, the arrow is beyond you.

I feel like the depth of what I'm about to speak is yet still beyond me. But I have set my heart to it. I want it with all my heart.

My wife and I had a very, very good and long talk this week together, and we want to live for Christ all the days of our lives, no matter what that means. There's an old song, it goes, whether pleasure or in pain or my life, I give you rain. Father, glorify yourself in me.

I believe in my heart that should the Lord tarry and should I live, there is a day coming when the gospel is going to be extremely unpopular to preach, could even be illegal in some parts of the world as we know it. And the Lord is speaking and calling now many to, you've got to get out of sin. If you're living in sin, you've got to get out or you're not going to make it.

You've got to turn off the entertainment, the media. You have to turn it off. You have no choice now if you want to make it.

There's such an uncleanness. It is a sewer. It's a sewer.

I was up on my rooftop praying last night and looking at all the high rises all through Manhattan that I could see from that vantage point, and you see this eerie blue light in almost every window, every second window, and you realize that the sewer, the sewage of hell is being pumped into the homes in America. And I was praying, I said, God, how long, how long before this nation becomes so incredibly wicked, the incredible filth that is now being pumped into people's homes? Homes are porno centers, just like God gave to Pastor Dave to prophesy many years ago. Homes are porno centers now.

It's not optional to turn away from it now, or if you don't, you'll be swept away with the flood of deception that is coming. The unrighteous are going to be deceived in the house of God. The unrighteous in the house of God will be deceived.

They will be swept away by another Christ, another gospel, for your soul's sake. That's not what my message is about tonight, but for your soul's sake, you have to turn it off now. You've got to get away from it.

Most of the gospel that is now on the airways, not all of it, not all of it, but much of it is absolute trash. It is a disgrace to Jesus Christ. Greedy, absolutely unregenerate men standing, saying, as Jesus said, they're standing and saying, I am Christ.

They're saying, if you look at me, you look at Christ. This is the way of God, and it's such a disgrace. Whenever you hear something, I want you to picture the Savior.

Picture him on a cross. Picture him on Calvary. Picture yourself standing at the foot and looking at the foot of this cross and looking at this Savior that came from heaven and became a man, and then put this gospel you're hearing or this preacher beside him.

Do it and see if the two match. See if the Christ on Calvary is the Christ that this person is telling you is alive and sits at the right hand of Almighty God. You don't even have to be discerning to see it now.

Beloved, I beg you in Christ's name to get away from ungodly media now. Get in your Bible. Get in your prayer closet.

It's the only protection you have for the coming days. Father, I stand before you. I am completely dependent on you.

If you don't animate me, I can't even begin. I can't scratch the surface of this that you've given me to speak. Lord, I never want to stand and just speak empty words.

There's no point to it. There's no purpose to it. I'm asking that you would anoint these words, that you would anoint my mind and heart, that you would anoint the hearers in the house tonight, and that your kingdom would come.

That's all I ask. Your kingdom come, that your truth be understood, embraced, and loved, and that your heart become the heart of your people. Lord, we want to put aside those things that are not like you, and we want to embrace you and become your beloved bride on this side of eternity.

Let that be our portion, O God. Father, I thank you for this from the very depths of my heart. In Jesus' name.

You don't have to open your Bibles yet. We'll get there momentarily. Now, beloved, it's hard to believe that a land can become so evil, and the ways of God's people so intertwined with it, that the voice of God is in danger of no longer being heard in the nation.

Now, this is exactly what happened to Israel, and the Bible says that the things that happened to them are written as types, or shadows, or lessons, rather, admonitions for those of us upon whom the ends of the earth have come. Now, Amos, the prophet, prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel in the mid-eighth century before Christ, and it was at a time of a parallel territorial expansion and national prosperity. The nation was prospering.

They were conquering. And in the midst of all the prosperity and the conquering, this God-raised-up, now Amos was not the only voice, but he was one of some, or a few, that God raised up to begin to warn that the nation was heading in a direction that was going to bring it into destruction and captivity. Not a very popular message in a time of prosperity, in a time when a nation thought that it could not be conquered, Israel in its own sight, perhaps many thought they were the most powerful people on the face of the earth at that time, or at least in that known geographical, of course they didn't have a reference, a global reference like we do today.

Basically their concept of the world was things they had heard, places they had traveled, known geographical locations, most in the at least reasonable proximity to where they were living. But God raised up a man, and you find this all throughout Israel's history, that began to warn that the good times are over. Something is coming your way, and you've got to be prepared for it.

Chapter 3, verse 7, Amos said it this way, surely the Lord God will do nothing but he reveals his secret unto his servants, the prophets. And now in verse 8 he says something very telling, he says, the lion has roared, and who will not fear? In other words, if we were walking down Manhattan tonight, and you turn a corner and you heard a very definitive roar of a very real lion, there would be a fear struck in your heart. There's no doubt in my mind about it, there would be a fear in mine for sure, I'm not going to stand here and say that I'd be full of bravado in the face of an escaped lion.

And Amos says, the lion has roared, who will not fear? Then he says, the Lord God has spoken, but who can prophesy? You see now this was a rhetorical question. He says, God, the lion has roared, and who will not be afraid to hear that voice? But God has spoken, but who can prophesy? The word prophesy in the Hebrew is *nabat*, it means to speak the message of God to God's people under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And so Amos is saying God has spoken, and it's a very definitive voice, and it's warning of something, but who's left around to speak for God? Amazing.

Who can speak under the influence of his spirit? Oh yes, there were people standing and speaking, and they were speaking even in the name of God, and there always will be a rise of the false right before judgment. But Amos says, who is actually speaking for God? Who is actually under the influence of the Holy Ghost? Who is speaking what is in God's heart? Who's warning the people of the coming days? Who's preparing them for the calamity that's at the doorstep? Or who's warning them or trying to tell them that it can be averted if there were a genuine, heartfelt, national turning back to God again? Now in Amos chapter 2, I'm just going to read this to you for time's sake, if you don't mind. Amos chapter 2, verses 10 to 16, here's what the Lord says, I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and I led you 40 years through the

wilderness to possess the land of the Amorite.

And I raised up your sons for prophets, and your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O you children of Israel, says the Lord. Now God says, now Israel, let's look at our history.

I brought you out of captivity. I put my spirit, just as I said I would, upon your sons. I gave them the power to speak for me to you.

And I set apart young people among you with a Nazarite vow. Now of course, the Nazarite vow is a vow of separation to God. I think the two are synonymous.

I set apart young men who were in your midst, or young people who were in your midst, who separated themselves from the evil ways of the land, and I gave them my spirit to speak to you. In other words, God's saying there was no reason why you could not hear my voice. He says, but you gave the Nazarites wine to drink.

In other words, you turned to those that were separated to me. Now he's talking to the people. And I'm speaking a history lesson.

I'm not reproofing anybody in this house, so please don't misunderstand me. At least I'm not doing it intentionally. He said, I gave you separated vessels, but you came to them, and you said, no, make us happy.

Talk about good times. We don't want anything that does not minister, make us feel good. And he said, you gave your Nazarites wine to drink.

You made them foolish. And you commanded the prophets, saying, prophesy not. And the Lord says an amazing thing.

He says, behold, I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves. Now God's saying it this way, my voice is under the weight of your pursuits. My voice is still there.

But you piled on to the top of my voice all of these pursuits and all of these ungodly things. The sheaves are supposed to be a harvest. We sing the song, Bringing in the Sheaves.

We talk about the psalm that says, the one that goes out weeping will come doubtless again, bringing his sheaves with him. We quite often use it in the context of bringing in a harvest of lost souls into the kingdom of God. But he says, now you've headed out, and you are pursuing things that have oppressed my voice underneath them.

I can't speak to you because your pursuits and mine are no longer the same. We're on a different path, a different wavelength. And I'm there, but my voice is muffled under all these pursuits and all these ambitions that are going on.

Then he goes on to say it this way. He says, therefore, the flight will perish from the swift, and the strong will not strengthen his force, and neither shall the mighty deliver himself. Neither shall he stand that handles the bow, and he that is swift to foot shall not deliver himself.

Neither shall he that rides the horse deliver himself. And he that is courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, says the Lord. And God says to Israel, he said, you pushed my voice away from

you.

And because you pushed my voice away, when your calamity comes, there'll be none with strength. There'll be so few left that have any strength to stand, because you're not aware of the degree of the adversity that is going to come your way. Now go with me to the book of Ezekiel, please.

Chapter 22. Ezekiel, now we're going to be, I'm speaking tonight about raising the dead. Ezekiel chapter 22.

In chapter 22, verse 26. Ezekiel now is speaking about the spiritual condition that brought about the destruction of God's people. In verse 26, he said, her priests have violated my law, and they have profaned my holy things.

And they put no difference between the holy and the profane. And neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbath, and I am profaned among them. So here are the conditions that led to the downfall of the nation.

He said the priests, those that are supposed to be speaking for me, are full of mixture. And they put no difference between the holy and the unholy. I think of today in America and Canada and other parts of the western world, where people come to the house of God, and all they hear is a good time gospel.

And all they hear is about how much they're loved and how much, and then it's true, they are loved. People are loved by God, but God is a holy God, God is a just God. Sin will not dwell in his presence.

You remember the apostle Paul said, don't be deceived. No idolaters, no fornicators, no effeminate, no abusers of themselves with mankind, none of these things, none of these people will inherit the kingdom of God. Paul says, don't be deceived.

You cannot live in sin and go into the kingdom of heaven. It is an impossibility. It just is not going to happen.

And sadly to say, there are many people who even sit and listen to gospels across the nation who are not going to understand their condition until they one day stand before the throne of God. How tragic it is. If I were not preaching the gospel, I would travel the length and breadth of the nation to find a house where the pastor or pastors who stand in that pulpit bring me a word of God that divides my heart.

That divides from soul, which is flesh and that which is spirit. That shows me the condition of my heart. Yes, brings me into grace, but I cannot even appreciate grace until I've seen the condition of my heart.

I have to see it. To be able to run to grace. I would do anything to get in a house where the word of God is opened and rightly divided and the full counsel of God is preached to my heart.

He said, her princes, verse 27, in the midst are like wolves ravaging to prey to shed blood and to destroy souls to get dishonest gain. Here are the leaders are full of greed, seeking dishonest gain. He says, her prophets, verse 28, have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity.

Now, the word vanity in the Hebrew means empty, foolish things, which disappoint the hope that is set on them. So your prophets have become foolish, and they're divining lies and saying to them, thus saith the Lord of God, when the Lord has not spoken. We are living in a time of false prophetic.

It's tragic. All of the gibberish and foolishness that goes on in the name of the Lord. I think the prophet Jeremiah said it the best.

He said, if that man or woman had stood in my presence, they would have shown my people their sins and turned them from their iniquity. That's the mark of a man or woman of God. I don't want you to go to hell.

I want you to be in heaven with me. None of the pastors here want you to lose your soul. We love you enough to speak the truth of God to you.

God, help us if we ever stood in this pulpit to entertain you or stood in this pulpit to make you feel good in your sin or comfortable in some kind of a spiritual illusion that you're going to heaven. God, help us. We'd have to stand before the Lord and give an account.

And because of it all, it says in verse 29, the people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery and have vexed the poor and needy. They have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. In other words, because of this mixture, because of the greed, because of the empty, foolish speaking of those that are supposed to be turning the people to God, the people now are living for themselves.

They view humanity as an opportunity for gain. That's exactly what's happening today. It's what the whole of society is like.

And tragically, I would assume tonight, I wish to God I was wrong. But I would assume tonight that there are many who profess Christ who are no different than those in the world. They view humanity as an opportunity for gain.

Looking at a person, not as an eternal soul, but what can I get from this person? How can they build my self-image? How can they further my objectives? How can I achieve my destiny through them? And it's tragic. It's absolutely tragic because these are not the eyes of Christ. This is in the heart of Christ.

Jesus looks at every soul in this world as a man or woman created in the image of God for fellowship with God, created for eternal purposes to rule and reign with Christ for all of eternity. And when Christ came to this world to die on the cross, he didn't come to get gain from you or I. Thanks be to God, he came to give his life as a ransom for my sin and for yours. And then he goes on and says something very incredible in verse 30.

He says, and I sought for a man. The word man means a soldier in the Hebrew. I sought for somebody who was willing to fight for the good of the larger group and perhaps does not for himself.

I sought for somebody who, actually the word means manliness. It doesn't exclude women, obviously. And please, when I say man, you understand that we always make that definition here.

But I sought for somebody who was manly. God says, I sought for somebody among them, this crowd who would stand up and just move away from the crowd and say, listen, enough mixture. I'm gonna walk it with God now.

I'm gonna do this right. As we heard this afternoon, who saw the hardness of sin, who saw and understood the ravages of sin, who understands why Christ came and went to a cross on Calvary 2,000 years ago. Somehow, by God's grace, opts into the heart of God.

Steps out of the crowd, not for the sake of fame or being different, but steps out because that man or woman has now the compassion of God burning in their hearts. They say, God, forgive me for the mixture. God, forgive me for these things that I've allowed into my life that have taken away your voice.

God, forgive me for taking your voice away from the people. Would be to God there'd be a cry among the ministry in our generation. There'd be a cry, God, forgive me for every time I've stood before your people and not spoken for you, not come with a word from the throne of heaven.

He said, I sought for somebody who was not full of greed, but looking to the people for what they can get from them, whether it be finances or personal recognition. I sought for somebody who was beyond that. I sought for somebody who would have weight in what they have to say because they've been with me.

I sought for somebody who'd not use the people for their own gain. I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land that I should not destroy it, but I found none. That's an amazing thing.

I sought for a man. I sought for somebody. God, the word of God says his eyes are always looking to and fro through the earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are towards him.

I sought for a man. I sought for a man. I believe that's the word of God tonight for you, in your neighborhood, in your workplace, in your home.

I sought for somebody that could stand in the gap and make up the hedge and stop the gap, really refers to a place in the wall that has been breached. I looked for somebody who had courage. I looked for somebody who was at least determined to do something, to stand in that place and to take the sword of God and stop the influx or inflating of the enemy in among the people of God.

I sought for somebody in this entire crowd. God says to Ezekiel, I couldn't find one. I couldn't find one.

God says I didn't want to destroy the land. If you read that, really, as it's written, he said I sought for a man to stand in the gap that I should not destroy the land, but I found none. Amazing.

You realize that your life can stop destruction. It can stop destruction in your marriage. Your marriage might be being trampled over by the devil as I speak.

But God says I'm looking and seeking for somebody that will stand up, give of themselves to hear my word and then act upon it. I sought for a man, perhaps looking in our homes, at our own children, our great-grandchildren, should the Lord tarry. I sought for somebody who could stop the flood of destruction, somebody who would just stand up and make the break.

There are families here today that there's a legacy of destruction, a legacy of broken marriages and broken homes and broken children, broken lives. And God knows and sees where your legacy started. He sees how far back iniquity got a hold, could be 1,000 years ago, iniquity got a hold of somebody and there's been this legacy of iniquity.

And addiction and selfishness. And the Lord looks at it and says, I sought for a man to stand up and stop the whole procedure of evil. I sought for somebody to stand up.

And that's you, sir, that's you, madam. God says, I'm looking at you, and if you will just stand up. If you will just even form the intent to make a difference in your home, in your community, I'm looking for somebody

who will just stand up.

You see, he couldn't find anybody, and then finally, the nation goes into captivity. And in captivity, God has a man called Ezekiel. There were others, obviously.

But I'm talking about this man Ezekiel tonight. He is living in Babylon. He's been taken away.

He's about, I think, 30 years old at this time. He hasn't been spared. The nation backslid, and he's been swept along with all of the captives.

I believe it's the second captivity, the second that there were three attacks against the southern kingdom. He gets taken out with a bunch of exiles in the second one. He ends up in Babylon.

God's still looking for a man. Even if it's too late for the nation, it's never too late for individual souls. Never.

It's sometimes too late to go back and do something about the past. It's over. Babylon has come.

The second captivity is gone. There's a third one coming. Jerusalem's about to be sacked, and the temple's going to be destroyed.

Ezekiel, God speaks it to Ezekiel. He knows it's coming. He begins to tell the people to settle down in the place they are, and understand why they've gone into captivity, and where is God going to take it from here? Sometimes it's too late to go back, and we don't have to go back.

We cannot recapture some of the things that have been lost, and that's obvious. But the Lord says it's never too late for the future and for today. Even if you are suffering because of a situation, perhaps it's not even your fault, perhaps Ezekiel was living righteously.

I'm assuming he was, but still is swept away. There are people here today that you can say, well, pastor, it's not my fault. I was born into a wicked home.

I've tried to do right, but I was swept away by the flood of evil. There are people here who can say, it's not my fault. I was loyal to my marriage vows.

I wanted it to work, and I've been swept away by a situation that was so far beyond my control, but God says even in the midst of that, you can still rise up now and make a difference. Ezekiel was a suffering man. Nobody can tell me it wasn't a suffering time.

Those forced exodus marches into Babylon were often cruel. People died of thirst and starvation along the way. The wounded were left on the side of the road.

There were often people taken, and in order to keep everybody in line, there'd be horrible examples made of them. I'm talking about killing and maiming and such like. Don't think for a moment that these invading armies were kind and gentle with the people, they weren't.

And I'm sure there was suffering, and Ezekiel is in the midst of suffering. And he finds himself in this place of captivity, and now God begins to speak to him. And even in captivity, he starts bringing a man into his innermost thoughts about the future.

God said it this way to Jeremiah, he said, I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil to bring you into an expected end. Now go to Ezekiel chapter 37. Now

firstly, the Lord brings Ezekiel into an impossible place.

Impossible. We heard it this morning. Oh, beloved, I'm hearing what the Holy Spirit is speaking.

There is an incredible call being given to this church. To my heart, to yours, individually and corporately as a body, the Holy Spirit is calling to us for our generation. And he says, the hand of the Lord in chapter 37 was upon me and he carried me out in the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones.

And he caused me to pass by them round about and behold, there were very many in the open valley and lo, they were very, very dry. He brings him into this place of impossibility. Now this is a spiritual transaction that's going on between God Almighty and Ezekiel.

And he's showing him the things that he's about to do. Because Ezekiel's name, I believe, means God gives strength or God strengthens. And he brings him into this place and Ezekiel himself in chapter 6 and verse 5 tells us that all these people had died before their idols and their bones were scattered around their altars.

They had formed a false pursuit. And the false pursuit had led them to a false god, irrespective of whether or not his name was Jehovah or not, it was still a false god to them, as their form of worship. And all of their bones, because of this falseness of worship, was scattered all around their altars.

And in this place of impossibility, he looks and he agrees with God, there are very many and they're very dry. It's like you and I going out Friday at 2.30 and going on 50th and watch all the kids come from high school and watch them walk down the street and listen to the cursing, the profanity, the vulgarity, literally curl your hair. The girls, the things that they're speaking, unbelievable.

Unbelievable, and it's just like God took Ezekiel there and you look and yeah, I agree God, there are very many and they are very dry. In other words, there is no moisture of God in them at all. There's no living water.

There's nothing of the life of God in them. They have altars, they're living at these altars. It could be altars of violent rap music, altars of rebellion, altars of hopelessness, altars of false theology, whatever it is that they've embraced or been taught.

And here they are around these altars and there are very many and they're very dry and it looks like an impossibility when you look at it. And he brings him into this place and he says, do you agree with me? He just shows it to him and Ezekiel has no problem. Yes, I see it.

There are very many of them and they're very dry all around. And then he asks him an incredible question. And it's a question which seems to the natural mind to be an impossibility.

He said to me, son of man, can these bones live? Can they live? In other words, can they, actually, I believe the word live means, can they be caused, can they be quickened, can they come alive? Can they live? And Ezekiel answers just the way you and I do in our generation. And I answered, Lord God, thou knowest. Now, it really seems to be, you can even try to get something spiritual out of the answer, but I don't believe there's anything spiritual in it.

He basically says, I don't know. I really don't know. Isn't it incredible? We are often like this.

We can correctly assess the causes of spiritual death. We have no trouble believing that judgment will come to the careless and hypocritical. No problem at all.

I'm telling you, I can open this Bible and I can believe it before it even happens. I can look in the word of God and say, if you do this, this will happen. If you do this, this will happen.

I have no problem. Ezekiel was among those that perhaps in his youth was warning the people, this is what's coming, this is where we're going. No problem believing it at all.

If you don't give this up, you're going to die around your altars. God says he's going to scatter your bones and believes it. Absolutely believes everything that the Holy Spirit is speaking to him.

No trouble believing the judgment will come to the careless and hypocritical. But yet we are so slow, so often to believe and agree with God about restoration, especially those that are closest to us. Think, now listen to me.

We have no problem believing sometimes for Jamaica. We're going to go to Trenchtown. There's 100,000 people living there, 70% of the crime, godlessness abounds, and we're going to see a mighty revival.

And we can pray and we have no problem believing until we go home and walk in our apartment. And there's our son or our daughter or our husband or our wife or our cousin or aunt or whatever it is, and we walk in and we're just so familiar with the dead bones. And God says, can these bones live? I don't know.

I don't know. God, I don't know. You see, much of our religion is like this.

We're Mary and Martha, quoting scripture with hearts full of unbelief, concerning a dead brother that's in our midst. We know how it could have been avoided. Yes, we're experts.

If you had been here, it wouldn't have happened, Lord. We know exactly how he died. We can document it.

I remember it was Tuesday, 6 o'clock, he began to cough. 7, he started to turn a little pale. We document the death.

We know exactly how it happened. We can give it detail for detail. And then Jesus comes and says, yes, I agree, he's dead.

But do you believe he can be changed? But all of a sudden, there's this incredible silence. Well, on the last day, in the resurrection. But Jesus says, do you believe it can be changed now? You see, I want you to notice how tenderly God deals with what I believe I can argue is momentary unbelief in Ezekiel.

And again, he says to me in verse 4, prophesy to these bones and say to them, oh, you dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Now he says, Ezekiel, I invite you to speak what I'm thinking about these people. I invite you, I'm going to say that again.

I invite you to speak what I am thinking about these people. Ezekiel, I don't want you looking at the bones anymore. Look away from the bones, now look to me.

I'm thinking some thoughts about these people, and I invite you now to become one in heart with me. And I'm inviting you to be my voice. I mean, God could send an angel.

He doesn't need Ezekiel. He doesn't need me. He doesn't need you.

He could send a chorus of angels. He could send 100,000 angels to New York City and preach the gospel. But in his mercy, he has chosen to use us.

And in all of our frailty, in all of our spiritual bravado, that's quite often laced with a heart that's full of unbelief. God says, I invite you in, even in your frailty, and I want you to speak now to these bones what I'm thinking about. I'm thinking something, and I'm inviting you in to speak it.

Amazing when you think of it. He says, remember, Ezekiel, that I've been tender with your failure. And I believe that's, if I had three points to this message, that would be point number one.

Remember that God is tender with your failure and mine. He's tender. We need to minister in the measure that God has ministered to us.

So many people come to the house of God and appropriate such tenderness. Come to the altar and weep hot tears and go home. And there's Junior sitting with his headphones and his rap music on.

And have just been recipients of such incredible tenderness in our spiritual ignorance and walk into somebody else who's dying around their altar. And all of a sudden, the tenderness is gone. Out comes the pointing finger and the lashing tongue.

With all of the pregame analysis as it is. That's what's gonna happen to you. You're gonna die.

You're gonna go to hell if you keep listening to that kind of stuff. All the tenderness of God is gone. He says, Ezekiel, I'm inviting you to speak something into their lives.

Then he goes on in verse five and six. He says, now here's the word I want you to tell them. Now, we often stop in verse four.

Dry bones, hear the word. And then take it off with whatever we feel the word should be. But if you want to read it in context, here is the word.

This is what I'm thinking, God says. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones. Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live.

Now the word breath is ruach. You've heard it before in Hebrew. It means air put into motion by divine breath.

I will cause, in other words, God says I will speak into you. I will do what I did to Adam. I will breathe on you and you'll become alive spiritually again.

And I'll lay sinews upon you and bring up flesh 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. He said, here's the word I want you to speak. I will put breath on you.

I will breathe on you. You will live. I will strengthen you.

I will restore you. I will cover you. You will live and you will know that the Lord is God.

Incredibly, he said, this is what I want you to speak, Ezekiel to the bones. Amazing. Amazing.

I'm trying to think if we could really get a hold of this and believe it. And we walk into that co-worker in the workplace that is just so obnoxious. But obnoxious because they've died around an altar, some false altar of their own making, and they've died.

And there's nothing of life. Imagine, in sincerity and with gentleness. It's so important to be gentle that you or I could walk up to them in that workplace and say, listen, I got something to say to you.

God said he's going to breathe on you. He's going to give you life. He's going to give you strength.

He's going to restore you, cover you. And you will live and you will know it's God. It couldn't have come from anywhere else but God.

Now, there are obviously various different ways we can say this. But here are the ingredients of what God says I want you to say. I'm going to do the miraculous in you.

I'm going to change you. I'm going to give you a new life. I'm going to give you a new mind, a new heart.

I'm going to absolutely transform you and change you. And people around you will know. You will know that this could only come from the hand of God.

Amazing. Mothers and fathers, I believe it's time to speak and be the voice of God to your children. Instead of walking in the house and constantly casting them down, constantly focusing on the negatives, it's time to come in.

So many kids turn away from God because they see God as just this negative, vindictive, angry God that sits on a throne and it picks you apart day in and day out. And they're so tired of it, they don't want any part of it. Because religion does that, that's what the law will do.

But the spirit of God is life in Jesus Christ and Christ. Imagine coming into your children and yes, they might be in rebellion. And yes, they might have the world all over them.

And yes, their attitudes might not be right. But imagine speaking to them as the voice of God. What drew you to Christ? Was it condemnation or the promise of new life? What was it that drew you? Was it the angry older brother or the thought of the father standing at the door waiting for you to come even in your ignorance so far away? What was it that drew you? I remember before I came to Christ, the thought that so provoked my heart was not even so much about Calvary, as wonderful as Calvary is.

But the thought that gripped me was that I could have a new life. Amazing, I remember this man that shared with me, he says, if any man is in Christ, he becomes a new creation. God promises you not just eternity, but that you will be another man on this side of eternity.

And I remember how that, I couldn't shake it. I couldn't, it wouldn't go away. It stuck with me day in and day out.

I'd wake up thinking about it. I could be another man. I could be a new man.

It sounded so impossible. I had died around my own altars, and my bones were very many and very dry. But somebody came and spoke to me on God's behalf.

Somebody who wasn't looking to gain something from me. Somebody who was not looking for me to open my wallet and give to them. Somebody who was honest came into my house with no objective but to gain my soul for the kingdom of God.

And thank God he did. Imagine coming to your sons and your daughters and say, here's what God's gonna do, God's gonna breathe on you. He's gonna restore you, he's gonna strengthen you, he's gonna lift you, he's gonna change you.

And you're gonna know that it's God, hallelujah. You're gonna know it. That sticks in you, it sticks in you, it sticks in you, it turns.

And as he spoke, he said, so I prophesied, verse 7, as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise. And behold, a shaking, and bones came together, bone to his bone.

And I beheld, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them. And the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them. He said, as I spoke, you see, he's talking about creating a desire.

That's how I will interpret that for the sake of what I'm speaking tonight. He's talking about creating a desire. You don't necessarily see instantaneous results when you speak for God.

But a desire is created, a noise, a shaking, a coming together. You can tell sometimes a person about Jesus Christ and you can see they're soaking it in. These are the dry bones now, soaking in this word of God that can raise them up out of the grave.

I spoke, in other words, and the desire was created, but there was no breath in them. Now here's, I wanna make it personal. We can speak to our children and create a desire, but still there's no breath.

It means there's no power to live. It can even be an attempt to look like what God thinks they should be, or they think they should be in God, but there's no power in it. They get up and they try and they fall down, but there's a noise at least.

There's a trying. I'm telling you, the moment you see that, the moment you even perceive that, there's something that God says you have to do next. And even if you don't, if you're speaking from God into the lives of your children, there's an element that has to be in this, or it may not be effective as it should.

Now Ezekiel saw the stirring, but there was no breath. Verse 9, he says, then he said to me, prophesy to the wind. Of course, the word wind, again, is ruach, it's the breath of God.

In the context of what we know as the Christian church today, that would be the Holy Spirit of God. Prophesy or speak under the anointing to God Almighty. It speaks about intercessory prayer.

It speaks about going into the closet and speaking to the Holy Spirit. It speaks about something that our generation doesn't know very much about. We hear about it, preached about, we hear it written about in days gone by, but our generation of instant everything wants instant salvation.

But it speaks about going into the secret closet and speaking to the Holy Spirit, speaking to the Spirit of Christ. And he said, prophesy to the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind. Now this wind is the breath of God.

Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain. The word slain means slaughtered. It has an inference of being slaughtered by sin.

Come, Holy Spirit, and breathe on these slaughtered by sin that they may live. I had written down here in my notes, and Pastor Dave preached on it this morning. And so I know that God is tying all our messages together today.

You now know God's heart for them, he says. Up to this point, you have asked for nothing, but now ask that your joy might be full. Once you know the heart of God for your children, your sons, your daughters, your husbands, your wives, your co-workers, your neighbors, your community.

Start speaking into their lives what God has given you to speak for them. Start telling them what God can do. Then go into the secret closet of prayer and say, Holy Spirit, I've done my part.

I've obeyed you, I've heard your voice, and I've spoken it to this generation. I've spoken it to my children. I've spoken it to my neighbors.

And yes, there's a stirring, there's a hunger, but it's worthless if you don't come. Holy Spirit, come and breathe on them. Breathe on them, Holy Spirit.

He said, I want you to prophesy to the Holy Spirit. I want you to call to the Holy Spirit. Call him to come, and he says, come from the four winds.

Hit him from every side, in other words. Don't leave any part untouched. Hit his mind, hit his heart.

Hit his body, hit his motives, hit his soul, his spirit. Breathe upon them, breathe upon them. Yes, we can go to Jamaica, and yes, we can preach the gospel, but it's in vain if all they do is agree with a theory about God.

It's in vain if we don't pray. There has to be a heavenly transaction. There has to be a supernatural transaction between God and fallen man.

That's where the light comes from. I can speak, but the Holy Spirit has to do the work. Prophecy.

He said, so I prophesied as he commanded me. It's interesting that Ezekiel doesn't see this as a suggestion. He views it as a command.

I prophesied as he commanded me. And breath came into them, and they lived. And they stood up on their feet, an exceeding great army.

They stood up, an army. Remember he said, I sought for a soldier and couldn't find one. But Ezekiel says, I did what God said.

And then I cried out to the Holy Ghost, and I watched them stand up. And they were an army, an exceeding great army, for the glory of God, hallelujah. My cry this week, and I'm only preaching just out of my own personal time with God.

I wasn't even sure how this was going to come out this evening. But my time this week with God, and my prayer has been, God, command me. God, command me, command me.

Command me to go into the prayer closet. Command me, God, to speak your word. Command me.

Put it in my heart beyond just something that I know I should do. But, oh, God, let it be like a fire in my bones. Command me to do it, oh, God.

Give me a heart. Give me a heart that burns with passion and compassion for lost humanity around me, beginning in my own house. Give me a heart, oh, God.

Give me the tenderness to speak to others the way you speak to me. The wooing that I always know, that tender hand, that tender voice of God that always draws me to life and never to death. Give me, God, that same heart.

And command me to come into your throne room. Command me, God, to call on you. Open to my mind these truths that you're speaking to me, God, for I feel the arrow is beyond me.

Help me, God, to understand this. I want to make a difference in my generation. I'm tired of seeing these kids go to hell.

I'm tired of watching a passionless church deceived by false prophets and voices that present before them things that will never profit. Tired of watching this generation swallowed up by filth and pornography. I'm tired.

God, command me. Command me there's no reason to live if you don't. Deliver me from this self-consuming focus that takes away your voice.

It's in all of us. Devotion should not be part of my day. It should be my life.

Please. My prayers have been give me words from my generation, cause me to speak and draw me into believing prayer. Believing prayer, not just words that fill a room for an hour.

I want believing prayer. Believing prayer is what God, the Holy Spirit, has been calling us into this. Believing prayer.

You can't work it out. The Holy Ghost does this. It's something that God does in your heart.

I remember reading about a revival years ago. And they said the earmark of the revival is the old saints of God began to pray. And this one young man that wrote about it said they began to pray in a way I've never heard before.

They began to pray as if they could not be denied by God. They could not and would not be denied. They began to pray for loved ones.

They began to pray for the most wicked sinners in town. And the Holy Ghost came and began to do the work of God. Draw me, give me words, cause me to speak that together, that's God in me, God in you, we in God, may see the dead brought to life.

And my prayer was, last night, oh God, do this for me now. Not tomorrow, I don't want it tomorrow, I want it now. This is my inheritance, I claim it.

If it sends me to prison, I'd rather go there than live a selfish life, trying to think of what God is speaking and watching people unchallenged, unchanged. Do it now, command me, command me, command me, separate me. I don't know what's in my heart, God does.

But whatever is on Christ like, separate me from it. Separate me God, we heard it this afternoon so clearly. Make me hate what you hate.

Don't let me make peace with what robs your people. I don't even know how to bring this to an altar call, because I've just poured my heart out on paper last night. Yesterday afternoon, yesterday morning, I was working, I just poured my heart out on what God is speaking to me, and I'm not really able to put it fully into words yet.

But as much as I'm able, and God has given me the ability, I've delivered it to you. And I guess my altar call is simple, for those that are living in sin, get out. For those that are living in compromise, you'll never hear the voice of God, don't even pretend you do, you won't.

You won't go into the prayer closet because you'll never know the burden of Christ. You might make it to heaven, but you'll have almost an empty basket. And you'll have that memory, at least for a moment anyway, of all those that you had contact with that could have been one, had you been a voice for God.

All the things that people pursue in this life will mean nothing. The houses, the cars, the jobs, the clothes, the relationships, it'll be all worth nothing then. Nothing, nothing of it goes.

The only thing you can take is a soul into eternity, everything else stays, beginning in your own home. Oh God, command me, command me to speak, command me to pray. That's the cry of my heart.

And if it's the cry of your heart that you want God to use your life to make a difference, now I'm believing, I'm believing tonight, that if you will step out and make this commitment, that the Holy Spirit is the one. I'm going to pray for you, I'm not going to have you pray a prayer, I'm going to pray for you and believe, because the word that Ezekiel brought to the bones was just, you will live and you will know. And that's going to be my prayer for you tonight, that you will be quickened by the Spirit of God, you will have a burden put in your heart for people that you don't even care about, faith will come in for impossible situations, you will live and you will know.

And many will begin to go in the prayer closet, it's not going to be this dull, boring time of repetition every day. There is going to be a genuine heart of intercession that God will give you. God will give it to you.

You can't work it up, it has to come from the Holy Spirit. But God will give it to you. And you will make a difference.

And it will start in your home. I believe that you can prove God on this one. You'll see your sons and daughters, even if they don't live in your house, you watch God begin to touch them.

They might live in California, you live in the Bronx, but you watch God begin to touch them as you begin to prophesy. You write them a letter and say, this is what the Lord spoke to me Sunday, this is what He's going to do in your life. He's going to breathe on you and you're going to live.

He's going to raise you up, He's going to restore you, He's going to use you for His glory. God told me this. And send it in the mail and start to pray.

And watch how faithful God is. Neighborhoods, all these kids hanging around the corners with so little hope. Psalm, God's just going to give you a word.

I think you already know what to say. It's here. Just study this verse of Scripture over and over from verse 5 to 7, Ezekiel 37.

And just speak those words. Let me tell you what God's going to do for you. And then pray.

If you would like the Lord, Jesus Christ, to use your life tonight to make a difference in this generation, I'm going to ask you to get out of your seat tonight and come and join me at this altar. Balcony, let's all stand. You can go to either exit, main sanctuary, you can slip out of where you are.

And I'd like to pray for you tonight. Hallelujah. Jesus.

Oh, Jesus, Jesus. Oh, Jesus. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

We've been quiet too long, Lord. Forgive us, God. Just move in, please, closely.

For those who can't make it down here, you can go into the rotunda. You can see the screen. We've been quiet too long.

Folks, we've been quiet for too long. We've been quiet in our own homes. We walked around the altars and just looked at the bones and said, Oh, I don't know.

I don't know. And we've not spoken for God. We're great at analyzing why the bones are there, but we have so little faith.

And the Holy Spirit is calling us to believing prayer. He said, Ask me now. Ask me and I'll do it for you that your joy might be full.

Just ask me. I can't even put the words in your mouth, because if I do it tonight, it's not going to be right. It's got to come from you tonight.

It has to be you asking God. It's got to come from your gut. It's got to come from your heart.

I looked for a man. I looked for somebody, God says, to stand in the gap. I looked in your marriage for somebody.

I looked in your home for somebody. I looked in your apartment building for somebody who could stop the flood of evil. I looked for a soldier.

I looked for somebody who'd stand up and fight, not for anything they could gain, but because there's a cause. I looked. And would it be to God that eternity could say, God could look down and say, I looked and I found you.

And I found you. And I found you. And I put my spirit upon you.

And I put my words in your mouth. And you began to speak into the lives of people around you. And you went in the prayer closet and called on me.

And I began to do the miraculous all around you. I began to raise people from the dead. And I gave them life.

I gave them life because you asked me to. You stood up and said, God, count me in. God, count me in to this end time war for souls.

God, count me in. Now, Lord, tonight you have seen. You have seen, God, those that have stood.

I stand tonight. I'm the first at the altar. I stand among them, O God.

I want you to use my life for your glory. God, I can be so negative sometimes. I'm asking you, Lord.

I'm asking you, God, to put your words in my mouth. I'm asking you for a spirit of intercession. I want twice the heart that I've ever known in my life to seek you, God.

And to believe you, Lord, for this generation. I want to speak for heaven, not for man. I don't want an idea about God.

I want to know the power of God. I want to see the power of God in my generation. My God, raise up the bones around me.

God, there are bones around me. Raise them up. Breathe on them, O God.

Give them life. Take them out of the grave, O God. Open the graves and bring them out.

That they may know there is a God who sits in the right hand of all authority and power. God, do it. Holy Spirit, I call on you tonight.

I call on you, Holy Spirit. I call on you to do what only you can do. I call on you, God, to come and empower this church.

I call on you, Holy Spirit. Come from the four winds and breathe on us, O God. Breathe on us, Spirit of the living God.

Breathe on us. Breathe on us, O God. Breathe on us, Lord, that we may make a difference.

You pray now. You pray. You call out to God.

You call. Let it come from your heart. Ask Him.

Ask Him to come. Ask Him to use you. Ask Him now.

Ask Him. You've not asked for anything. Ask now.

Ask that your joy might be full. Ask Him. Hallelujah.

And they stood on their feet, an exceeding great army. Times Square Church, I commission you tonight as one of the pastors of this church, I commission you to stand up for Jesus Christ. I commission you to throw off your spirit of cowardice and self-seeking.

In the tenderness of God, stand up for the truth. In the wisdom of God, speak into people's lives. But speak words of life and not death.

Be tender, because remember, the measure you meet will come back on you again. Be tender. Go to the closet of prayer and start to ask God.

Call out to the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit. Call out to the Holy Spirit to do what only He can do. Let it begin in your home.

Let it begin tonight. If you need to ask forgiveness, ask forgiveness. If you've not lived right before your children, your wife, your husband, ask forgiveness.

And say, God has reproved me. This is what He's going to do for you. This is what your life is going to be in Him.

And don't say more than you have to. Once you've said it, go to the prayer closet. Leave the rest to the Holy Spirit.

Live right before Him. Father, thank you. Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you from the depths of our heart tonight. God, you have broken through. You have spoken to us.

You're speaking to us. You're drawing us all day, Lord. You're saying, ask me.

Ask me for mighty things. Ask me. You've asked for nothing.

Ask me for the impossible. Lord God, we come to ask you. This is a perishing city of millions of people.

But Lord, we ask that through our lives you make a difference. Make a difference where we go, where we live, where we walk. Make a difference.

Give us compassionate hearts. Give us the power of the Holy Ghost and the wisdom to know how to speak. Father, we thank you.

We thank you that you are the author and giver of life. All we can do is speak what you put in our hearts. But you have to come and you will come.

And you will raise people from the dead all around us. You'll raise them out of their graves and give them life. And in this last hour of time, they will stand an exceeding great army of God.

We believe it. We believe it in Jesus' mighty name.

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