

# Bones Bones Bones

by Ian Paisley

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*Ian Paisley's sermon emphasizes God's power to revive spiritually dead congregations through the preaching of His Word and the work of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 26:45

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:17, Ezekiel 37:1-14, Joel 3:14, Matthew 3:2, Luke 10:2, John 3:16, Acts 2:37-38

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for a vision of the multitudes in the valley of decision. He highlights the vast number of souls in need of Jesus Christ and urges the congregation to expand their vision beyond their limited perspective. The preacher shares a personal experience of witnessing to a dying man and emphasizes the importance of reaching out to those around us who need the helping hand of Jesus. He calls for revival and the fire and power of God in the church, reminding the congregation that God's power is not diminished in the face of a worsening world.

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## Transcript

I want to preach to you this morning, as the Spirit of God would help me, upon this 37th chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy. If you have your Bible, I trust that you will follow me. I might say that this passage has a prophetic content, as you shall see in its application, verses 11 to 14.

But I want to deal with it in its spiritual content this morning. This is a most interesting, a most intriguing, and a most instructive passage of the Word of God. No preacher was ever sent to a more unlikely congregation than Old Ezekiel.

I always think of my good friend, Mr. Bone, when I come to preach on this subject, because this was a congregation of bones. I've been in dead churches and dry churches, but there weren't bones. There was still some flesh and some sinew on the congregation.

But here was poor Old Ezekiel sent to preach to a congregation of dry bones. Don't you see that valley? There were leg bones and thigh bones and finger bones and arm bones and back bones and toe bones and all the other bones. And here was Old Ezekiel called upon to have a revival in a humanly impossible situation.

I want to tell you, friend, there's nothing impossible with our God. Let's get this into our heart this morning. Let's get this into our soul this morning, that there's nothing impossible with God.

And when you face the obstacles of this week, and when you see those rivers that seemingly are uncrossable, and those mountains you can't tunnel through on your own, remember, God is a specialist, and God can do just what no other can do. Let us encourage ourselves this morning in the Lord. I want you to have a look at the preacher, because God uses preachers.

God's methods are men, and women set apart to His glory. The trouble today, that men make much of the methods, but God makes much of the men. And God is looking for you and looking for me to be a fitted and blessedly consecrated instrument, what to do to solve impossibilities in the name of the Lord.

God wants to use you this morning. He wants to take you. He wants to make you an instrument of revival.

He wants to make you a channel of His blessing. Now, the first thing that's essential for blessing and the servant of God is to have God's hand upon you. It's a great thing when the Lord's hand is upon you.

Do you remember the day when, as a poor lost sinner, you felt upon you the kneel-pierced hand of Jesus? What a thrill it was! With a heart broken and stained with sin! With a burden upon your soul unbearable! With trouble and distress of heart! Like the psalmist with the pains of hell's conviction upon you! God laid His kneel-pierced hand upon you! And you heard His words, Son, daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee. But the Lord wants to put His hand not only on us for salvation, but He wants to put His hand upon us for service. The Lord wants to use you today! You know, the trouble with God's people is they're inclined to leave everything to the preacher and to say that's his job, let him get on with it.

No, sir, every believer is a servant of Jesus Christ. God wants to put His hand on you this morning. You say to me, what can I do? I just do my daily round, my common task.

My friend, in that daily round and common task, there is a sphere of service unlimited! And there are souls to reach and souls to be won for Jesus Christ. I pray this morning that the Lord will put His hand upon us. May the Lord's hand be upon us as a people.

Then look at secondly, the Lord led them in the Spirit. Great thing to be in the Spirit. My, I think you're in the Spirit, you'll not be miserable.

Some people, when it's Sunday morning, they turn over and they give a great big yaw. And they say, it's Sunday, I'd better go to church or Pearsley will be after me. I'd better get out.

But that's not the Spirit. My, I'm glad when the Lord's day morning comes. I'm glad to get up and go all the way up to the prison and meet my fellow jailbirds and preach the Word to them.

My, there's something happy about being in the Spirit on the Lord's day. This morning after jail I went to visit the hospitals to see Mrs. Armstrong. She's near the end of the journey.

But I don't go to comfort her, she comforts me. She was repeating over that little verse this morning, leaning on the everlasting arms. What have I to fear? What have I to dread? Leaning on the everlasting arms.

I have perfect peace with my Lord so near. Leaning on the everlasting arms. My, thank God for the Lord's day.

When we can come into His house and fellowship the one with the other. He was carried in the Spirit of the Lord. Where did the Lord carry him? He carried him to a valley.

If you want a good subject, young Christian, for Bible study, read about the valleys of the Word of God. My, there are great places. You know, David fought a great battle in the valley.

You know, there was a valley, and God said, fill it full of ditches. And when they dug into the valley and prepared the ditches, God sent rivers of blessing. God never takes you into a tunnel.

God takes you into a valley. And it's always an open valley. There's always a way out.

You look with me at verse 2, and it says there were very many in the open valley. Thank God there's a light in the valley for every Christian. And He set them down among the valley which was full of bones.

You'll never reach man for Jesus Christ until you come. We have to be separated from the world. We have to be like the Lord.

But yet, we have not to be isolated. There's a great difference between separation and isolation. Isolation is monasticism.

Build your convent walls and hide yourself from the world. But the world climbs over the walls, and the sins of monasticism are as great as the sins of the worldling. But I have to be separated from the world, and yet I have to be in the world and not off it.

And I have to go and contact man for Christ. And the preacher was sent down in the valley of bones. And there was one preacher and a valley full of bones.

Poor old Ezekiel. I want you to have a look at this congregation now. First of all, you'll notice it was a very large congregation.

There were very many. Oh, the largeness of the field of service for Jesus Christ that baffled you. One hundred thousand souls a day are passing one by one away in Christless guilt and gloom.

Oh, that God would give us a vision of the multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision. We're only scratching the surface. We're only seeing a trickle of blessing.

Our vision is so limited. Our vision is so parochial. Our vision is so barricaded up with barriers that are self-erected.

Old John Wesley had the vision of the world, hadn't he? And he sat down and he said, Oh, that the world might taste and see the wonders of His grace. The arms of love that compass me would all mankind embrace. What we need is a vision of the very many in the valley.

There are souls that need Jesus Christ. Souls that you never thought of. I walked into the upper Abercorn Ward this morning to see another man, a member of this church.

He came to Christ some weeks ago here. And there in the bed was a man I knew. He was down in the valley with a very severe heart attack.

Thank God I was able to witness to him. Thank God I was able to point him the way to Jesus Christ. And to hold his hand and commend him to the great Savior who alone can give peace and comfort.

There are souls all around us that just need the helping hand to come to Jesus. May God give us a vision this morning. May this church have a vision for souls.

There are very many. Have another look at them. They are very dry.

Oh, there is a deadness, isn't there, in the church? There is a dryness abroad today. The enemy has come in like a flood. The world is full of deadness.

And the church is full of dryness. The deadness and dryness of the church. There is not that sweet, refreshing dew of heaven.

There is not the wilderness blossoming as a rose. Instead, the wilderness with all its blight and deadness and dryness is all around us. Here we have the congregation.

Can God do anything? You know what God did the first thing He did? He challenged the prophet. You know what we need this morning? We need a challenge from heaven. That is what we need.

We need God to speak to us. We need the Lord to challenge every one of us as believers and to say to us, Can these bones live? I want to ask you, can God save your family? Can God save your neighbors? Can God save your workmates? Can God reach out across the world and send a mighty, almighty Revival? Hallelujah, He can. Oh, we need to be challenged.

God's people go to sleep today. God's people become lazy. God's people get captivated with the ear of the world and get taken up with materialism.

God, help us to see that we need to be challenged. God's saying to us this morning, Can I send Revival to the Ravenhill Road? Can I reach down into the Short Strand with its luminous and to Rosetta with its convents and move with mighty Revival? Praise God, He can. The trouble with God's people is we have no vision.

We are a visionless people. We don't realize that God can do the impossible. My, what would you think of all those nuns we're queuing up tonight to get in here to come to Christ? It would shake the living daylights out of you, wouldn't it? You would nearly say Paisley had backslidden.

You wouldn't, do you? That's right. You know the trouble with us this morning is we have no vision. I was reading the life story of William Farrell.

He was a great preacher of Switzerland. My, what a man of power William Farrell was. You know what he did? He went into the chapel and when the priest was offering the Mass, he went up and interrupted him.

And he preached with such power that the priest stripped off his Mass vestments and fell down and received Christ as the Savior. And the whole congregation turned in sobs of repentance to Jesus. Has God lost His power? I want to ask you today, how much power do you believe the Lord can exercise today? You know we live in a day when people say, well, things are going to get worse and worse.

That's true. But that doesn't mean that God's going to get weaker and weaker. Things will get worse.

This whole world's headed for destruction. It has always been headed for destruction. But God has a plan and a purpose and a miracle to do it every generation.

And God can do it in this generation. And if ever there was a generation who needed to see the power of God, we need to see the power of God today. And he said to old Ezekiel, he said, prophecy.

I want you to preach this earth. If Ezekiel had been an old compromising unbeliever, he would have said, what's the good of preaching to those people? They're only bones. What good would a sermon do? You know, this is the trouble with the twentieth century, isn't it? We have lost faith in the preaching of the Word.

God has ordained means to the salvation of souls. And it is not the great machinery, well-financed and made respectable by leading men. It's not this machinery that's going to bring revival.

It's the preaching of God's Word and the power of the Holy Ghost that's going to do it. Preach. And this is what he said, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.

And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live. And ye shall know that Ezekiel's a good preacher. He never read that in the book.

And ye shall know that Ezekiel did a great job. He never read that in the book. Ye shall know.

What will you know? Ye shall know that I am the Lord. Revival comes when God's people are only interested in the glory of the Lord. That's when revival comes.

If you're praying for revival to fill your church, God will never send you revival. If you're praying for revival so that people will say, He's a revival preacher, you'll never have it. But when I'm only interested in the glory of the Lord, and I'm saying, Lord, your name's blasphemed, your word is reviled, Lord, people have turned their back on your truth, and they've done death's fight to your spirit, O God, for your great name's sake, do something.

My, then, God will do something. Do we believe the promise? Do I believe this morning that by the simple, faithful preaching of the gospel, manners, I was down, as you know, in Kells and Connor, and I was looking at the Presbyterian church. Of course, it has been rebuilt since those days.

But I was thinking of those great days of revival. And I was thinking of Dr. John Moore and what he said. He said, I never preached more simple sermons than in the days of revival.

It was flee from the wrath to come and redemption in the bleeding land. And he says, as I preached, the congregation swayed as under the wind of heaven, and hundreds and hundreds of souls pressed into the kingdom. And as he preached, the sobs could be heard from the pews.

Men and women fell upon their knees in the aisles of the old Connor meeting house and said, God, be merciful to me, the sinner. Oh, for revival days like that again. God can do it.

He'll do it for the honor and for the glory of His great name. Let's look a little bit farther. You notice when this man preached, something happened.

I do like this, you know. There was a noise. Some people are scared of the noise, aren't they? They say we like a nice, quiet service.

You've come to the wrong church, brother. We want nice, solemn meetings. We want to sit down and close our eyes and think that there's great stillness.

Well, brother, you've come to the wrong place, if that's what you want. I want to tell you when revival comes, there'll be a noise. There will.

There'll be a noise from heaven. You'll not sit like lumps of putty in the pew when God comes a-breathing among the people of God. No, sir.

There'll be a stirring in the souls of men. There'll be a noise. God send us a noise of revival in our churches that shouts of newborn thieves and the sobs of sinners seeking Christ.

There was a noise. I like this second part. Look at it.

There was a shaking. Hallelujah. My, when God shakes.

I was standing outside Stormont on Tuesday and a woman said to me, she says, you know, they're all Quakers in there now. Well, may the Lord give us a quaking and a shaking for His glory. This is what we need, don't we? We need to be shaken to the very depths of our souls.

Why, the church is so proper, isn't it? And orthodox. And we go through the motions. And we just carry on as we have always carried on.

God, blast into the church with blessing. I was reading that great prayer of Mr. Nicholson the other day. And he said, Lord, I'm ready for revival.

He says, if it blows the ostrich feathers from the woman's hat into the eyes, Lord, I'm ready. Lord, if it disturbs every old Pharisee in the pew, Lord, I'm ready for it. Lord, if it causes the greatest religious hubbub of our day, Lord, I'm ready for revival.

And I would say, bless God, I'm ready for it too. My, we need a real shaking, don't we? We come to the prayer meetings. We don't expect God to do anything.

We come to the morning service, and we expect to have the hymns and the singing and the reading and the preaching. But all God wants to do, far above what we can ask or think. And then I want you to notice there was a joining.

The bones came together. I want to tell you, when God starts working, one of the proofs of God's working is spiritual unity. People will come together.

You'll not need to go and ask them to shake hands. They'll be happy in the love of Jesus. There's a unity when God starts breathing.

And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them. But there was no breath in there. You know, he started off with bones, and now he had corpses.

The bones had come together all right. The skin and the flesh and the sinews were there. But, but my friend, there were only corpses.

There was no life in them. And then he said, Prophecy unto the wind. Prophecy and say to the wind, Come from the four winds, O breath and breathe upon these slain, that they might live.

My friend, you can have the shaking. You can have the coming together. But there's only one thing that can make a corpse live.

And that's the blessed breath of heaven, the Spirit of God. Oh, that we could prophecy unto the winds this morning and say, Come, mighty Holy Spirit of God. Come in all thy mighty power.

Thou who didst come at tempest cost with tongues of fire and as of a rushing mighty wind. Thou that didst breathe in the days of the reformers, in the days of Wesley and Whitfield and the great evangelists. Thou that didst breathe in 1859.

Thou that didst breathe in days that are past. Oh, breathe again. Oh, that he might come this morning.

Mighty Spirit of God. Oh, that he might come. And you know what happened? And as I prophesied, as he commanded me, the breath came into them.

And they lived. How do you know that the Spirit of God is at work when people start living? How do you know? I'm sure the people that did that television program, they never intended anybody to be seen. I'm sure they thought when they had finished it, it would be a good smear in the empire's lips.

But there was a woman sitting in England. I would never have reached her. She would never have heard my voice.

She would never have heard. And there she was sitting in her television, and she was watching that program. And as I preached, the Spirit of God came down upon her.

And at the end of the program, she was on her knees receiving Christ and then getting down to write to the preacher and to say, Thank God I've come to Jesus. That's the work of the Spirit of God. And what we have seen in ones and twos, God shows it in thousands and tens of thousands.

That does not limit the power of God. They lived. And I want you to notice something else that didn't keep still, that didn't sit down in a rocking chair.

They got on their feet. When God really works, He puts the young converts on their feet. Great to hear these young converts pray in the prayer meetings, isn't it? The sweetest thing in a prayer meeting is to hear a young man or a young woman just see Him talking to the Lord.

I want you to notice something else. They all joined the army, every one of them. There wasn't a noncombatant among them.

A whole lot of people that can't fight, you know, don't believe in fighting. They believe in looping and sleeping. But look at it.

And they stood upon their feet an exceeding great army. I want to tell you when God really does a work in a man's heart, He becomes a soldier of Christ. He becomes a follower of the Lamb.

May the Lord bless us this morning. And as a people may we get vision. May we go in for revival.

May this church go in for the fire and power of God. And may we never get far more dead or dry. May the Lord give us the blessing of heaven for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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