

Bones Can Live

by Michael Ngubane

The sermon 'Bones Can Live' explores the story of Ezekiel 37, where God takes the prophet to the valley of dry bones to show him the state of His people and to give him a message to prophesy to the bones and bring them to life, representing the power of God to revive and restore His people.

Duration: 55:07

Scripture: Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 59:1, Ezekiel 37:1-5, Matthew 6:33, John 11:38-44

Topics: "Divine Restoration", "Gods Power"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by inviting God to be present and bless his word. The main message of the sermon is that God is able to revive and restore what seems impossible or useless. The preacher uses the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead as an example of God's power to bring life to hopeless situations. The sermon also emphasizes that God seeks and loves every individual, regardless of their current condition, and desires them to be part of His great army.

Transcript

Let's open our Bibles, the book of Ezekiel, chapter 37, that's the 37th chapter of Ezekiel. And we read here about the valley of dry bones. Verse 1. The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the midst of the valley and it was full of bones.

Then he caused me to pass by them all around and behold there were very many in the open valley and indeed they were very dry. And he said to me, son of man, can these bones live? So I answered, oh Lord God, you know. Again he said to me, prophesy to these bones and say to them, oh dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus says the Lord God to these bones, surely I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

So I prophesied as I was commanded and as I prophesied there was a noise and a sudden rattling and the bones came together bone to bone. Indeed as I looked the sinews and the flesh came upon them and the skin covered them over but there was no breath in them. Also he said to me, prophesy to the breath, prophesy son of man and say to the Lord God, come from the four winds of breath and breathe on these slain that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me and breath came into them and they lived and stood upon their feet in an exceedingly great army. Let's pray. Lord Jesus says your people, if we do not have your spirit, we too are dead.

And we invite your living God, you have conquered death and you have conquered evil, we invite you to be present with us at this time. We ask you to bless your word. Amen.

What came to my heart about this text is this. God doesn't fail. And his pity, his mercy is revealed to all flesh.

This story shows us yet again that nothing is too difficult for God, nothing is impossible with him. That which we discard and cast aside as utterly useless, God is able to revive it. Remember Jesus raised up Lazarus from the dead after four days in the grave where there was absolutely no hope for resurrection.

The mind of man says, well, his corpse is putrid and he has no hope for resurrection. The mind of man says, well, his corpse is putrid and he has no hope for resurrection. The mind of man says, well, his corpse is putrid and he has no hope for resurrection.

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The third exercise is taking the line between the fear of God and the man of God being taken to one side by the Lord, revealing to him what he has on his heart regarding his people. So God speaks to his prophet and shows him this valley of dry bones. Then the prophet relates to us how he was then brought into the valley and as he walked through the sight he beheld, there were many bones, it was full of dry bones and they were very dry.

We should ask the question, what brought these bones here, that there should be such a large quantity of dry bones, why so? Are these people who have died in battle and weren't buried? What has happened, is there a mass grave, have people just died there and nobody bothered to bury them and then there was a drought and that's why the bones are all dry? What brought about this situation? I want us to quickly realize who these people were who are here symbolized as the dry bones. This is Israel, the nation of God, the chosen people, these are the ones who have become the many dry bones in the valley and it says they were very dry and in huge quantity. It is self-evident that there was absolutely no life in them, it was a hopeless situation, it was something just to be left outside in the wilds and there was rotteness, there was no possibility of a reversal of the situation.

But nevertheless, despite the rotteness that had happened, these were still the bones of the elect of God, God's chosen. Those who had followed the Lord previously and through whom the Lord had worked, they were a people at one time through whom God could obtain glory. They had not been removed out of God's

heart.

God still has hope that he can collect them together as his chosen people and wash them and cleanse them. But let's make this more applicable to ourselves. Dry bones, dry bones without flesh upon them, no sinews, not even a hint of life.

Take your own life Christian, put yourself into this position, death, the absence of life, the falling into hopelessness where others even say well is there anything that can come out of this person anymore? The children of Israel by this time, they had gone through many different things. They no longer worshipped God. They had drifted into idolatry, learning from the surrounding pagan nations about their religions.

They had forgotten about their God. And they began to even think well, even God doesn't see us anymore. He doesn't truly care about us.

And so they began to do whatever they felt like doing. Remember the children of Israel when they were in Babylon. There in Babylon they were also under great oppression.

They were not able to meet together. They were also like dead people. Under the oppressive hand of the dictator of that day and they were incapable of doing what they should be doing as the people of God.

In fact even their being in Babylon was a consequence of the life that they lived. As a consequence of their sin, they had been made captive and carried off to a foreign land. In a land where there is no unity with God.

There was no life among them. There was no fellowship with the Lord. After all they were the ones who had deserted God.

They were the ones who had been worshipping their idols. They had fallen into their own habits, evil habits. And thus they find themselves in the land of captivity.

Child of God, a similar experience may have befallen you. You might come indeed to services, but in actual fact you are a captive. Maybe in the sight of God you too are dry bones.

There is no life. The evidence of God being in your life is just not there. And so God took Ezekiel on a tour through these piles of dry bones and after the tour Ezekiel said, well I saw no life, only dry bones.

It might be that we are a large crowd, but in actual fact we are dead. It might be that we are many in a service, but in actual fact there is an absence of life. May the Lord help us in that.

Examining our own state as to whether the Lord is alive and whether his life is in me. God then asked him a question. Son of man.

These piles of dry bones which you have observed, can they live again? And so he answered, oh Lord God, I don't know. You know. You have the knowledge whether these dry bones can come to life again.

Your understanding surpasses mine. You have the knowledge and the insight as to whether these dead dry bones can come to life again. It was easy for the prophet to hastily answer, Lord, it is absolutely a hopeless case.

There is nothing that can be done. Humanly speaking, that was the automatic response that there was just no indication or any sign of life. However, he looked at it in relationship to God and saw it with God's point of view saying, well Lord, I don't know whether this can happen, but you do.

You know alone whether these bones can become living people again or child of God. This scenario can happen so easily. And it's very easy for us to judge it by saying it's hopeless, that person is useless, there is no chance of them coming back to life.

And we might write a person off and say they'll never experience the grace of God again. Their sin is just too far gone. They've reached the point of no return.

And you judge the matter without true understanding. But he, the prophet says, Lord, I don't know, but you know whether these bones can be revived to be alive again. He left it over to the Spirit of God as to what he would do, for after all, all life resides in him.

And now as the prophet hands over the matter back to God, the Lord then reveals to him what he says about the matter. And here is God's answer. He says, son of man, prophesy now.

Go to work and tell these bones, this is what the Lord says. Now the onus is on the prophet. It is now the responsibility of the preacher of the gospel.

Go about your work, speak, and speak to that which is dead. Speak to these things which are as dead as planks. For this is what the Lord God says.

Now he didn't fight against God's suggestion. He did not contradict what the Lord had said. He didn't enter into a debate and say, Lord, I can never do this.

These things are really dead. But he did exactly what God had said and obediently fulfilled God's command. And he spoke to these dead bones.

Let's look again at our lives, brethren. What are they like before the Lord? Is there still life towards God? A zeal for the Lord? Or maybe you've got to the point of being astonished at what's happening to you. You might enter into spiritual confusion and you don't know what direction you're going in.

You don't know whether you're Arthur or Martha, whether you're heading north or south. There is such a condition. So the question is aimed at you.

Are you that which the Lord has called you originally to be? Another indication of death may be this. You're tired and you don't know what to do. Even if others come to a service and they sing enthusiastically.

Or a person says, I can't sing because I can't learn. And even if there's a song written up for you on the screen, there are others singing around you and they are praising God with real worship. But you just keep quiet.

Now I excuse you if you're just incapable of singing. After all, we're not all the same. Maybe you're really genuinely afraid of missing the key to the point that you confuse those around you.

But if there is true worship in song, if there's genuine singing and you just don't participate, it is a sign, an indication of spiritual death. Maybe you are aware of the heavy load of sin that is weighing down strongly upon you. That's an indication also of death.

There are many dry bones and they're really dry. The indication here of these dry bones is that they've been dry for a long time. This indicates a long absence of the presence of God.

Is that perhaps depicting your condition of child of God? Maybe you who no longer experience any sweetness in being in the house of God. You no longer hear God's voice speaking to you at all. And you find that there's no relationship between you and God anymore.

Instead, there is pride. There is haughtiness. There is the response, I know.

And you obey your own instincts now even when you know that they are against the Lord and in conflict with Him. It doesn't help to continue in a land of deception when you understand your condition. The Lord says, Ezekiel, God's prophet, he said, Ezekiel, you prophesy to these bones.

Let something happen. He said, prophesy to these bones and say to them, hear the word of the Lord, O dry bones. And indeed, he prophesied to these dry bones.

Amazing, as he spoke the word, things happened simultaneously. There was a shaking. There was a working of the word in these bones.

There was a moving and a shaking of these bones. A rattling and a coming together. One bone came from there and joined with another from over here.

People who had looked at this scene might have run away. They might have said, these are spooks or ghosts arising from the dead. One bone coming from here, another from there, coming together.

And they jumped together. There was a stirring and a shaking among the bones. But take note, the word says, even as the bones were rattling and coming together, there was not yet any life in these bones.

It was just a stirring. Be careful, dear Christian. There are many possibilities of stirrings and movements, but there's a continuation of death.

You might be stirred up by things which happen and you think it's life, but it's still death. You might also think that any movement, any rattling of bones indicates life, but it might just be further deception and death. There is an absence of life.

There was just a noise and a rattling. There were no sinews or flesh upon them. The Lord said, now, son of man, continue prophesying to these bones and call upon the breath, call upon the Spirit of God to breathe.

That the Spirit of God would bring about life in these bones. Child of God, never stop until it's the Spirit of God Himself who is operational in your life. Don't be satisfied or console yourself by saying, well, at least I'm around, at least I'm present.

Maybe the Spirit of God is gone from your life. You need to have that consciousness of the Lord by His Spirit being with you. Here is this great work happening in a Christian.

God says, prophesy to these bones. Speak to them. Speak to the one who doesn't yet believe.

Maybe the person sitting close to you. You know them well. You know that they haven't yet met with the Lord.

Do you have an urge and feel the need to share with them, to bring them to the Lord? Maybe instead you're criticizing them. Maybe gossiping about them. Maybe slandering them.

But you don't have a heart to share with that person that they too would get to know the Lord. This also teaches us that should you go and share with the person about the things of the Lord, what type of person you ought to be. If you want to try and help somebody in suffering, a lost soul, it is important that you need to be in prayer.

You need to seek God's grace to be present with you as you go to that person. But when you go to them, that you are conscious of the Lord's presence, for only He can work in that person's life. In our preaching, in our witnessing, we need to be assured of the Lord being there Himself.

For a rattling and a stirring is simply not enough. There is something else that is necessary. There needs to be flesh upon these naked bones.

There needs to be sinews upon these bones before there is life. There needs to be skin upon the flesh, then that it is made into a person. But when the prophet of the Lord was speaking and the Lord God was at work, miracles happened.

Those who were absolutely dead as we've read, they stood to their feet an exceedingly great army. This is what moves me, that when this work of God was complete, when the dry bones in the valley had got together and stood up as an army, stood up as people alive, standing to their feet, then they became a great army. Are you aware that God is not satisfied with the condition in which you find yourself? God is expecting much more of you.

He wants you to be part of His great army. Why is it then that when you hear the word of the Lord being prophesied, the spoken word comes to you, that you don't stand up together with God's people and be a soldier in the Lord's army. And as they came together and stood up united as an exceedingly great army, the Lord was well pleased and He was able to use them as His instruments again.

Don't remain in a condition of spiritual sickness. If you're aware that things are not right, when you hear the word of the Lord, stand up, take action. When the Lord speaks to you about your life, when the Lord Jesus reveals to you that there is life for you, then it is so important that you believe what Jesus says.

Believing and obeying what Jesus says. As Jesus said on the cross, it is finished, it is complete. He had perfected and completed His task in coming to this world.

So the one who does not have that completion and that fulfillment of all things, he now has to come to the Lord for that. For Jesus has done His work. He has completed His work.

He has spoken. No matter how dead you might be, you must hear Him. And since He has spoken, we must all hear Him.

And in hearing His word, we ought to stand to our feet, being His great army, through whom He can be proud of His army, through whom He can work, and His task and His commission can be fulfilled. The plans of God can come into fulfillment through our lives. If that has not yet happened in your life, you owe a debt to God.

Maybe the Lord is saying of your life, what else do I need to do? I have done all these different things. I have dug around this person. I have done this and that for them.

What else needs to be done for them to rise up? The word of God spoken to us is alive. And what is spoken to us ought to bring us life. No matter how dead we've been, we ought to experience the life-giving power of His word.

What is of crucial importance is, are you being obedient to what His word says? So, how are these bones with regards to us? Are we dry bones that do not hear the word of God? But these bones that God speaks of here heard His voice. Having heard, there was a rattling and a stirring, showing that a new life was coming about, bringing life to these bones. So, child of God, never rest until you know that the Lord's work has been brought about, has been completed and is being done in your life.

Maybe you know that you have not done what you ought to do. There are still gaps in your life and there are still things that are wrong in you. Identify then with this life from God.

Identify with the life which we receive from Jesus Christ, He who denied His life for us, who denied everything to save us from our sins. Is that work which He did still important to you? Or has it not been satisfactory to you? What then is holding you back? That you should not be in this great army of God. What I know is this, a soldier of God, each soldier of the Lord is known by Him.

And each soldier has his particular commission which he ought to fulfill from his Lord. And no one else is going to do your work unless you do it. So rise up, O child of God, hear the word of the Lord, stand up in obedience to Him, for He wants to fulfill His plans and His task.

Maybe your problem is you don't bow. You don't agree to humble yourself. And you say, I have these reasons and according to me, this is my opinion.

And the way I know the story is this, rather hear what does God have to say, and do what the Lord says to you. Forget what is your own. Forget your own opinions and ideas, and your own way of seeing things.

Humble yourself before the Lord and say, Lord, you speak to my life. Lord, raise me up. Lord, work in my life.

If that isn't our cry to the Lord, in its stead will be, in its place, the devil will pour in all manner of filth and rubbish into our lives. But you have the opportunity to be obedient to the Lord and to say, Lord, I do hear your call. I want to stand up, rise up and be a soldier in your army.

And so this great army of God stood up. And then it was ready for action, for service in the Lord's work. Where are you? How is your life? What is it like? Maybe you're a young person.

The Lord is speaking to you. You understand the condition that you're in. You know you're just white bones.

You know you're dry. But the Lord intends to bring you back. Maybe in your youth, as a young person, you are influenced by the noise and rattling of bones.

And you are not satisfied with your condition. Or you're not satisfied with what the Lord has taught you. And you decide just to go your own ways.

And so you sideline yourself from God. But God seeks you. He loves you.

He has a special, unique place just for you. Maybe you say, oh, nobody cares for me. Nobody loves me.

If they do, they just scold me. Or anybody who sees me, they just criticize me. So it just proves that I'm a condemned person.

Satan is only deceiving you and bluffing you, oh child of God. It's Satan who tries to condemn you and to widen the gap between you and God. But the Lord seeks you.

He wants you to come to that exact place, that calling, that specific, unique place that he has for you. Therefore, come to Jesus. Do not try and escape from God.

Don't try and run away from life. Don't try and name lists of things that sidetrack you. Just do the one thing.

Say, Lord, I hear your word. And Lord, from now on, I want to rise up. I want to do your will.

I want to be one who's trustworthy in the unique position and place where you've called me to be. For God has called you. He has work that is just for you.

And as you are seated here, you have a debt towards God. And you need to pay this debt and be in God's place, that God can use you. The Lord used this prophet and gave hope that these children of Israel could be returned and could be revived again.

He's able to change the condition of your heart. He can take this heart of stone in you and he can give you a heart of flesh. And so the Lord says that these bones can be my people again.

They can return to me. So the Lord gives a message of hope for he loves his people. He has elected them for himself.

And he loves you too. Chosen you. Even though you might feel condemned.

And you feel utterly useless. But the Lord has a specific intention for your life and it's not for somebody else, it's just for you. Maybe you don't even pray.

Maybe in the past you used to be free to pray and others would be blessed. But now you don't do it. In a service you can't lead sons.

Even though in the past you might have been a help in that life. But now you've deserted your post. The Lord calls you.

Return to your place. Return to your position. The Lord desires to give you life.

That there might be something that happens in truth in your life. That there might be a real relationship between you and God and that you know it. So that when you pray you are conscious of the fact that there's communion with him and he hears you.

That you're one with him. And that there's nothing that divides you. The word of the Lord says, Behold, the hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot serve you.

And his ear is not too heavy that it cannot hear. So in your deceived state, God wants to stretch forth his arm, his saving arm. He listens with his ear.

He wants to restore you to life. So what will you do about it? Will you leave here and just go your way again? Will you leave here and just go your way again? Knowing that there is sin that is pressing against you, when will you ever confess this sin which troubles you? For how long are you going to go in and out of services with it? Even though you know that your present condition brings no satisfaction to you? So why do you go out of the service in the same troubled condition instead of saying, Lord I come to you and I bring to you this burden? Tell the Lord, tell Him your problems, tell Him your sorrows, tell Him all that you have done. For He does intend to help you today and He wants you in that place.

You need to know it. There is a place which God wants you to be at. And remember He cannot use you until you have been sanctified.

You need to receive a new heart. Let it be the end of this heart of stone. And receive this heart of flesh, a soft heart in other words, that is receptive to the Word of God.

That the Word of God can work in you and that the Lord can glorify Himself through you. The Lord calls you. He wants to send you.

When will you stand up? When will you be part of God's army? May the Lord help us. Let's bow and pray. Lord we thank you that with your Word is the power of life.

Thank you Lord that when you said, let there be light, there was light. And when you say to the one who is crippled, rise up Lord, you give him the power to rise up. Lord help us therefore to obey your Word and to trust you to provide that miraculous power.

That miracle of dry bones becoming human life, God filled life again. Lord to the one who is in this hopeless condition of not ever thinking that they can be restored and revived again. Stir them up Lord with hope.

Help them Lord to respond in obedience to your Word. To cast off their sins. Trusting in you Lord to enable them to do it.

Lord you have proved you can do it by dying and rising again. Grant Lord that in this audience there would be those who obey immediately your Word. That you might build for yourself Lord a mighty army.

Through whom you can work. Be with each one of us Lord as we part. Grant Lord that we won't just be stirred and shaken and rattled.

But that we might move into life and receive that breath from above. We ask it Lord Jesus so that you would be glorified. Amen.

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