

Hallelujah
Part 4 – Fully Alive
Ezekiel 37

Intro

Have you ever had those moments and seasons in life where everything seemed to be going your way? Everything was working just as you had planned. Life was clicking along. Relationships were good. Job status was solid. And life, in general, just seemed perfect. And then, out of nowhere, your entire world turned upside down. Instead of carrying a sense of being alive and free, hopelessness and despair moved in.

It happens to all of us at some point in life. The Israelite people experienced it several times over the course of their early history.

The people of God had been living in exile for some time. Because of their disobedience and rebellion against God, they were currently under the rule of the nation of Babylon, with no hope of return. Their city had been destroyed, temple in ruins, and their lives turned upside down.

But in the midst of their hopelessness, God said this.

36:28

You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

When God made this promise it seemed impossible, absurd even. There seemed to be no hope of life being restored. Honestly, at some point in our lives [maybe right now], we have all been there.

Hopeless. Everything we have tried to fix our situation only leads to more chaos, confusion, and hurt. Nothing we attempted worked. Things were desperate – at home, at work, in our marriage, emotionally – and we simply lost all hope that life could be any different.

God then takes Ezekiel [a prophet] out to a valley to visually show him how desperate Israel's situation truly was.

37:1-2

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry.

Sometimes we don't really see the gravity of our mistakes and situation. We like to fool ourselves into thinking we have it all together, even when life is falling apart all around us – even when the graveyard of bodies is endless.

The prophet uses 3 phrases to indicate the gravity of the death and destruction that has occurred:

full of bones / very many / very dry

The entire valley was full of death. Death to the point that all the life had been sucked out of the bones. The thought of life coming from these former bodies again was beyond hopeless.

Consequence of Sin

Unfortunately, this was not just a scene where one army was defeated by another and the bones piled up together. What God displayed to him was the result of Israel's disobedience toward God. It was the judgment that God had promised [in ch 6] would one day come if the people continued to remain in their sin against Him.

These deaths were not an unfortunate event as a by-product of circumstance. Instead, they were a direct consequence of continual sin and rebellion against God. Rebellion [sin] against a holy, perfect God causes a separation that [ultimately] leads to death.

It wasn't just Israel's problem. It's part of the human condition.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Ephesians 2:1-3

Everyone who continues down the path of rebellion against God, unfortunately will experience the same end as the bones in the valley Ezekiel witnessed.

37:3

And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, you know.”

Ezekiel's response – *I have no idea how it is possible. The situation seems utterly hopeless. It is humanly inconceivable. But this I do know – God, you know. You know how a life that is dead beyond repair can be resuscitated. You know how a person who is too far gone can be brought to life again.*

God then told Ezekiel to speak life over these bones – that He would begin to restore them to life piece by piece, step by step. He would cause sinews [ligaments] to form that would hold the separated bones back together again. He would then grow flesh over top of the muscles, ligaments, and bones. Biologically and supernaturally resurrecting a body [a life] one step at a time.

37:7-8

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them.

Right in front of Ezekiel's eyes, the unimaginable was happening. Dead, bleached, dry bones – the evidence of the lifeless remains of death – began moving again. There were signs of life; but no breath, no spirit inside this body.

37:9-10

Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Life, fully alive – strong, powerful, victorious – where death had once reigned.

It seems unfathomable. Physically, emotionally, biologically impossible. There is no way that anyone who is this dead, this far gone, this messed up, could ever experience life again. That’s exactly how the people of Israel felt.

***Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.
Ezekiel 37:11***

It’s possibly how some of us feel in this room right now. *I am too messed up. I have ruined everything; hurt too many; sinned too much. I am too far gone for God to do anything with this body and life that I have destroyed.*

***But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us ALIVE together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.
Ephesians 2:4-5***

In God’s amazing grace, even in our hopelessness, made it possible for you and I to experience our broken selves being brought back to life – through death and resurrection of His Son.

The only way for us to experience this resurrection of life is through the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We celebrate Easter because Jesus died so we could have life. But when His broken body, like the bones in the valley, lay in that grave everything seemed hopeless. The thought of a resurrected life was a laughable proposition.

Maybe you feel the same way about your own life - hopeless and helpless. *God could never resurrect me.* That’s exactly how the entire world felt when Jesus lay dead in the tomb.

But 3 days later, the stone in front of the grave was moved – and Jesus wasn’t there. God had raised Him from the grave – resurrected, fully alive.

37:13-14

You shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live.

The same resurrection power that lives in Jesus is available for ANYONE who would believe and trust in Him. We don’t have the ability or the power to change, fix, or restore our dead, dry bones. Just as Ezekiel confessed – *only God knows, only God can.*

God resurrected the bones in the valley just as they were – dead, without hope. The greatest part is that God chose to love us just as He finds us. Will you love Him in return? If so, He will pull your broken life up out of the grave and make you FULLY ALIVE in Him!