

The Valley of Dry Bones

Ezekiel 37:1-14

1. By the Holy Spirit Ezekiel was shown a vision. A valley filled with dry and lifeless bones.
2. The bones represent "the whole house of Israel. (v.11.) Both Israel and Judah in exile, whose hope had died when they were dispersed among foreigners.
3. God instructed Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones, (vv.4-6)
4. The bones are raised to life in two stages (1) a political *restoration* to the land (vv.7-8) and (2) a spiritual *restoration* to faith (vv.9-10)
5. The vision of the dry bones was given to assure the exiles that they would be *restored* by God's power and would once again become a living community in the Promised Land, in spite of their overwhelming and hopeless circumstances. (Vv.11-14)
6. What an illustration of **powerlessness**, **helplessness** and **hopelessness** and how the Spirit of God provided new life and *restoration* to those dry bones.
7. Active addiction is killing us. Our losses, our failures and the consequences of them are coming to pass but with God's help we can, in like manner as Israel, be restored and God will give us His breath of life.
8. But, first we must admit to ourselves that we are lying in the valley of dry bones. We must admit to ourselves, as we lay dead or dying that we can't stand this way of life any longer.
9. We must cry out to God "I Quit!" "Please help me Lord!" "Please release me from this devastating death of active addiction!" And: *It is the Spirit of God who will lift us to our feet.* His Spirit will lift us up from spiritual slavery and death into a new spiritual life and walk into freedom!

BREATH Air drawn into the body to sustain life. Since breathing is the most obvious sign of life, the phrase breath of life is used frequently in the Bible to mean "alive" or "living" (Gen 2:7; 6:17). Breath is recognized as the gift of God to His creatures (Job 12:10). But since breath is usually invisible, it also may symbolize something without substance or a temporary state of existence (Ps 144:4). In a different sense, the "breath of God" (Job 37:10) signifies God's power. This stands in striking contrast to heathen gods, which have neither power nor life. The word breath may be used figuratively, as when Jesus "breathed" the Holy Spirit upon His disciples (John 20:22). Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary (*Take the time to read these scriptures for yourself*)

Ezek 37:9 –10 *Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*

Israel's restoration to life should remind us of the creation of man

Gen 2:7 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

1. It was by the special act of God that resulted in the giving of life to humans who were created in the image and likeness of God.
2. Adam was formed physically, after which God breathed into him the "breath of life."
3. This indicates that human life stands higher and in a different category from all other forms of life and there is a unique relationship of divine life to human life.
4. But, even after God blew the breath of life into Adam and Eve (who was created out of man) they were disobedient to God's plan that He had revealed to them.
5. Their sin separated them from God and each other, just as our sin of active addiction and its lifestyle separates us from God, our families and loved ones.

Just as Adam and Eve fell into sin we too are like them. God will use the hard times we experience in life to teach us very important lessons. The way we managed our life brought us down a dark and winding path and into our own personal *valley of dry bones*. We have possibly "*hit our bottom*" because our every effort to maintain sobriety or clean time has failed us and hope is apparently lost. *We're unable to arise and stand to our feet.*

1. Our addictions and compulsions are like Israel's foreign gods.
2. We find our self-lying in the valley of dry bones because God has turned us over to the shameful, painful and destructive consequences of our addiction.
3. The foreign gods of drugs, alcohol, sex, food, riotous living, etc. we thought would bring us life, enjoyment and pleasure have brought us only lose of control, death, separation and destruction.
4. God is saying, "See what your "*foreign gods*" have given and done for you?" "You have become a slave to your dependency on foreign idols and you have been rendered powerless on your own strength to pull yourselves back together and truly live."
5. But: Be confident that if you want the God breath of life breathed into your nostrils and if you are willing to put your life into His hands: He can even use even the pain of your past to bring hope and healing to a new and rewarding future.
6. First: We need to call upon God, surrender our will and determine the areas in our life that need His restructuring and His restoration power.
7. Remember: Recovery from the valley of dry bones is going to be a long-term or lifetime process. If we fail to persevere in the recovery process, chances are we may end up worse than before.
8. When God calls us to arise from the valley of dry bones, he calls to arise permanently. Relapse should not be an option. *But, than again the choice is always yours.*

Ezek 37:11-14 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.12Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.13And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

1. When addiction has beaten you down, stolen all and you feel that there is no power great enough to deliver you from the deep and dark grave you are lying in, God our faithful and loving Deliverer wants you to know that ***He can*** and ***He will*** open your grave and cause you to come forth out of the living death of active addiction.
2. He will raise us from the dead. He will put His Spirit within us and He will deliver us from those forces too powerful to handle alone.
3. We can be confident that He will stand with us and protect us from the people, places and things that may want to do us harm.
4. We can count on Him to encourage us when this road of recovery becomes too difficult or painful.
5. Remember: Always *take heed* and *never forget* how active addiction and the compulsion to use once controlled your life. It caused you to ultimately loose control and fall into sin. *Fall into the grave* and if you take your guard down it can and will ultimately happen again.

1 Cor 15:55-57 O' death, where is thy sting? O' grave, where is thy victory? 56The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.57But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Is your life different from what you had hoped it would be? After all, we certainly never planned on becoming addicted to some mind or mood altering substance.
2. Did you walk down the wrong path that led you into this deep valley and into bad places with devastating consequences and losses?
3. We never planned that we would be lying in the valley of dry bones, all hope lost and cut off from everyone and everything in life that is or once was important to us.
4. Even though we may have failed in the past to fulfill our youthful dreams do not give up hope that they can come to pass *if we trust in the Lord with all of our heart.*
5. Our God is a God of restoration so: Humbly go before Him, admit that you have a problem, turn your will and your life over to Him, ask Him to blow that breath of life upon your dry and lifeless bones, get up and walk out of that valley... *God is waiting. **Do it today!***