

God's Spirit Within Ezekiel 37: 1-14

In Ezekiel's vision we are drawn into a pit of dry, sunbaked, lifeless bones. There is no flesh, no skin, no particle of tissue left. The bones scrape against one another, brittle and hollow. And there are so many of them – hundreds, thousands, a multitude. What could feel emptier? What could be more desolate – more hopeless?

Into this disturbing image of dismembered bones strewn across a valley comes the power of God to do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves.

"Mortal, can these bones live?" God only knows.

Ezekiel's pit of bones is the 23rd Psalm's valley of the shadow of death which we looked at last week – a place of fear and despair. A place in which we find ourselves from time to time – our relationships go there, our society, our youth, our very being. We get up in the morning feeling as tired as we did the day before when our head hit the pillow. We look at a calendar filled with tasks to be accomplished – bones rattling uncomfortably all around. We hear the news of pandemic and those infected – those who have died. There are so many. We wonder what new restrictions may come into effect or who within our circle will suffer financial hardship. We think about economic and physical recovery somewhere in the future and we try to hope. We are tired – worn out – dry bones.

"Mortal, can these bones live?" God only knows.

And God says – get up and announce my promises! I will breathe... I will make... I will cover... I will put. The initiative and the power are with God. God calls forth creation out of nothing – life out of death – possibility where there is nothing. The very essence of God is to take that which is dead and make it alive again. Today, there is so much pessimism – so much cynicism – so much disbelief and despair that we sometimes forget that God can take that which is dead and make it live. Even now God can make our lives dance. Today, in this scripture, we are forced to speak of a God who does not wait until we are ready to provide newness. Whenever and wherever God blows in, life breaks forth.

We are all physical beings comprised of many components that usually work and mostly move as needed. Physical beings called to restrict that part of our connection to one another in these days.

We are all intellectual creatures – we have a brain. We have smarts, intelligence, gray cellular matter in the cranium. Human beings are the most intelligent of all the species here on earth – although I'm pretty sure human beings are the only species ever polled on the subject. It is said that we are different from other species because we understand hope.

We are all filled with emotions – we have sentiments and passions – even if some are more reluctant to express them than others. We have feelings that sing to the heights and spiral away to the depths. Perhaps your feelings are overwhelming. Embrace what you feel – it is okay.

We are all imbued with spirit – it permeates us individually and as a society. All cultures of the world have religions and temples that symbolize the spiritual realm of life. We are created to be spirit-filled beings.

We pray, *“Breath of God, come into my spirit.”*

When the Spirit of God enters our mind, our thinking is inspired – calmed. When the Spirit infuses our emotions, it affects the way we feel – we can come to peace. When the Spirit fills our body, our physical desires – our actions, are influenced – enhanced. When God’s Spirit joins our spirit, things really begin to happen – we are transformed – not by trying harder or doing better but because the divine spirit is reshaping and enlivening us.

The Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Divine Spirit permeates all aspects of our life – our way of thinking, our way of feeling, our way of acting, our way of being. Step back – sit down – take a deep restoring breath – invite the Spirit of God to fill you.

We have seen the dry bones, perhaps we know ourselves to be the dry bones. We taste the dust in our throats, hear the rattle, feel the weight of the multitude. And the breath of God breathes into us – pulling us together – reshaping and renewing us.

The breath of God asks, *“Mortal, can these bones live?”* And I believe they can. Let us pray...

*O Lord God, you know...
You know what’s up with us
– our doubt, our fatigue, our desire to ignore, our carefree forgetfulness –
O God, you know.*

*Breathe your life into us.
Encourage and uplift us – surprise us again with your powerful spirit.
You know, O God how dry we are – how thirsty our souls are for your breath of life.*

*Work in us and through us, O God, to fill the world with your spirit.
We believe these bones can live by your power.
Put your breath within us O Lord, we pray. **Amen***