

Title: Can Dead Sinners Live?

Scripture: Ezekiel 37: 1-14

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Place: SGBC, PNJ

Ezekiel 37: 1: The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, 2: And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

I. The work of saving a sinners begins with the LORD sending his messenger.

A. The hand of the LORD was upon me.

Ezekiel 37: 1: The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD...

Romans 10: 14: How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15: And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

Jeremiah 3:15: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

B. The LORD set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.

Ezekiel did not go searching for this valley. Think of how many valleys there were. But the LORD set Ezekiel down in the midst of *this* valley.

C. The LORD caused me to pass by them round about.

1. The LORD caused Ezekiel to see what manner, what condition, these bones were in. Notice the condition of those to whom Ezekiel was sent. **Ezekiel 37: 1: a valley which was full of bones 2:...and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.**

2. This is a picture of the condition of every individual sinner who God saves.

- Lifeless bones...
- Every unregenerate sinner is out in the open valley, dead, under the condemnation of God.
- Very dry—been dead a long time, since Adam died in the garden.
- Every sinner by nature is spiritually dead, spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and in sins.

Romans 5: 12: Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

- Every sinner here who is in your natural born condition is:
 - Separated from God
 - Separated from Christ
 - Without any ability whatsoever to give yourselves life
 - You can hear with your head but not with a new heart
 - **YOU ARE DEAD IN TRESSPASSES AND IN SINS!**

B. The Lord asks a question.

Ezekiel 37: 3: And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live?

1. What is the point of this? Ezekiel is being made to know that what he is called to do, he has absolutely no sufficiency to bring to pass.

2 Corinthians 2: 14: Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15: For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? [Why is the gospel a sweet savor unto God of Christ? And why is the

gospel not life to everyone? One answer....] 17: For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ [dry bones hate God, hate his Christ, hate his ambassadors, hate his gospel—who is sufficient for this]....3: 5...but our sufficiency is of God.

That is what Ezekiel is being taught in the valley of dry bones

C. Listen to Ezekiel's answer.

Ezekiel 37: 3:...And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

The Excellency of the Power is not of us but of God.

- God the Father purposed who he would save
- God the Son purchased those given him
- God the Holy Spirit gives life

Salvation is of the Lord.

Application: It became abundantly clear to me early on that I did not want to go unless the LORD carried me out.

Ex 33:16: For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? *is it* not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

What a mistake to run without being carried out in the spirit of the LORD, without being taught our utter insufficiency and the power of God to create new, living, creatures within dead carcasses of flesh.

II. A TWO-FOLD CHARGE

The LORD gives his servant a two-fold charge.

Ezekiel 37: 4: Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

A. First, “Prophecy”—preach the word of the LORD—

1. Tell them what they are, “O ye dry bones.”
2. Tell them to do only one thing--and that being something they are utterly incapabale of doing, “Hear the word of the LORD.”
3. These bones are dead, dry bones. Why preach to them? They have no ears to hear. Why say unto them, “O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.” Do it because the LORD said to: “Prophecy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.”

Application: That is what I do in this place and every time I speak to you. I tell you what you are: dry bones. I say to you, "Hear." How will that accomplish anything for dead, dry bones, who can't even hear? Listen to the message Ezekiel was sent to preach:

Ezekiel 37: 5: Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6: 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 I am the LORD.

The message of the gospel is declaring God's works, not men's.

Joh 6:44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 3: 5: Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6: That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The word of the LORD made Ezekiel respond one way.

Ezekiel 37: 7: So I prophesied as I was commanded:

I see three reasons here that men will not preach the word:

- 1) They have not been sent of the LORD.
 - 2) They do not think sinners are as dead as these dry bones
 - 3) They do not think God is able to fulfill his word.
- Is the LORD faithful to his word? Is the LORD able to fulfill his word?

Ezekiel 37: 7: So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8: And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

- The LORD God shook the bones.
- The LORD God drew the bones together.
- The LORD God brought sinews and flesh upon them.
- But there was no breath in them.

Now what is Ezekiel to do? Sinners become rattled by the preaching of the gospel. They fall under conviction. Is the preacher supposed to start persuading them? Is he to coerce them to do something? No! He is to cast himself upon the mercy of God in behalf of the bones.

B. The second charge God gives to his preachers is to pray.

Ezekiel 37: 9: 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.

1. The LORD promises to give his people a new heart:

Ezekiel 36: 26: A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27: And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them....37** Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them;**

Peter said, “We will give ourselves to the word and prayer.” Brethren, ask the Spirit of God to give life.

2. Point to Consider: We see the importance of prayer, and we see also the LORD bringing about that which he requires. He will have Ezekiel pray to him therefore he effectually commands Ezekiel and what is the result?

Ezekiel 37: 10: So I prophesied as he commanded me,

III. THE EFFECTUAL RESULT OF GOD'S GRACE.

- The LORD God shook the bones.
- The LORD God drew the bones together.
- The LORD God brought sinews and flesh upon them.
- The LORD God made them to do 4 things:
Ezekiel 37: 10:...and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

Illustration: Lazarus come forth!

4. What is the fourth thing? Someone asked "why did the LORD allow sin to enter and death by sin?" When he overcomes death by his power and glory you shall know the great I AM!

Ezekiel 37: 13: And 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.

Romans 5: 20: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;

Application:

Psalm 127: 1: Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. 2: It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep. 3: Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

God commands us to do three things:

1. Preach the Gospel!
2. Pray for His Blessing Upon It!
3. Be content to wait for God to build his house in his time, not ours.

Amen!