



Message: **Powerful Words of Life** | March 22, 2026 | Speaker: **Pastor Eddie Eddy**

Ezekiel 37:1-14 New International Version

The Valley of Dry Bones

37 *The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³ He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”*

I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.”

⁴ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! ⁵ This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath^[a] enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶ I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them, and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

¹¹ Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ ¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.’”

L: This is the word of God for the people of God.

P: Thanks be to God

Powerful Words of Life:

This is what God tells Ezekiel:

Prophesy...talk to these bones. Prophesy to these bones and say to them, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!”

Can you recall a time in your life when you longed to hear God speak? Was there a specific season of your life when things seemed hopeless and you needed powerful words of life that came directly from God to restore your hope—whatever that lost hope might be?

It might be hope in your family...your children...your spouse...or your parents. Maybe hope in your church.

Have you ever needed to hear a voice that could restore your hope in a broken relationship...or in the middle of a difficult health diagnosis?

That's where we find Ezekiel in our scripture today.

For the nation of Israel, the diagnosis is clear, and it looks as if all hope is gone. The relationship seems irreparably damaged. From a human perspective, there is no hope.

Yet today's scripture reminds us that even in the most hopeless of cases, **God is still at work.**

Short pause

You see, Israel is in a deep funk. Over a hundred years earlier the Assyrians had conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, and now the Babylonians had ransacked and destroyed the southern kingdom of Judah, the place where the temple stood—what they believed was God's home on earth.

The surviving refugees have lived for ten years now as prisoners in a foreign land.

No home.

No temple.

No freedom.

No hope.

And then God gives Ezekiel a vision.

Ezekiel is transported to a valley where a great battle must have taken place because bodies had once been scattered everywhere. But now all that remained were dried-up skeletons. These remains had been there for a long time. Everything had been picked clean. The sun had bleached the bones and drained them of every trace of life.

Nothing but dust and dry bones as far as the eye could see.

No sign of life anywhere.

And where there is no life...there is not much hope either.

Illustration

You know, living here in southwest Wisconsin, most of us have seen something that looks a lot like Ezekiel's valley.

Maybe it's a pasture after a long, hard winter. The grass is brown, the ground is hard, and everything looks dead. Or maybe it's a cornfield in March before planting season. Nothing but dry stalks, bare soil, and wind blowing across an empty field.

If someone from the city drove by, they might look at that field and say, "Nothing is ever going to grow there."

But the farmer knows better.

Because the farmer knows something about the power of new life. Beneath that cold ground there is still good soil. When the rain comes...when the seed goes in...when the warmth of the sun returns...life begins again.

What looked dead in March becomes green in May and full of harvest by September.

That's the kind of power God is showing Ezekiel.

Where we see dry bones...

God sees a future.

Where we see emptiness...
God sees the beginning of new life.

Short Pause

In verse 11 God explains that these bones represent Israel, who in their captivity cried out,

“Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.”

They never expected to see their sacred homeland again.

But that is not how God sees it.

Just like in Genesis when creation began with God’s word, God gives Ezekiel powerful words of life to speak over those bones.

Ezekiel obeys.

He speaks the words God gives him, and suddenly he hears a noise—a rattling sound. Bones begin to come together.

Bone to bone.

God restores structure to what had fallen apart. Then God breathes life—His Spirit—into them.

And life returns.

Not only life...

but hope.

Short Pause

I’ve learned this about apocalyptic writings and prophecy: God’s powerful words often carry multiple levels of meaning.

Ezekiel’s prophecy was certainly meant for the nation of Israel.

But these powerful words of life are also meant for us today.

Every one of us has experienced seasons when hope seemed lost.

We’ve all had moments when we felt like giving up...throwing in the towel...lying down and letting life dry us out like bones in the sun.

And yet, somehow...some way...God sends someone into our lives with powerful words of life.

Words that rejuvenate us.

Words that restore hope.

Short pause

What do you hear God speaking to you during this wilderness journey of **Lent**?

Are you listening for God’s voice? Or...are you doing all the talking?

Are you sure you are not spiritually dried up...needing God’s breath to fill you again?

Or maybe you are on the other side of this story. Maybe **God is asking you to be an Ezekiel for someone else.**

God showed Ezekiel the audience and commanded him to speak to those dry bones.

Are you placing limits on how God might use you?

God even asked Ezekiel for his opinion:

“Son of man, can these bones live?”

What would your response be?

Honestly, I might laugh and say, “Yeah...right.” But Ezekiel responds with humility and faith: “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.”

Short Pause

What vision is God placing on your heart? What powerful words might God place on your tongue? And who are you being called to share those words with?

I have mentioned in the past how the lectionary follows the rhythm of the Christian year. This week I chose to focus on the Old Testament reading because this passage kept stirring in my heart.

But when I looked at the New Testament reading for the week, I saw the same message again...God restoring life where hope had been lost.

Listen to this moment from John’s Gospel about Jesus’ friend Lazarus. This is John 11

Martha says to Jesus:

“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

You can hear the disappointment, the grief, and the fading hope in her voice. Mary says the same thing and then the crowd begins to ask questions and **Jesus weeps**.

Then Jesus walks to the tomb and with powerful words of life calls out:

“**Lazarus, come out!**” And suddenly life returns where death had taken hold.

Hope is restored.

Short Pause

Friends, Martha, Mary, the disciples, and the crowd had resigned themselves to the fact that Lazarus was gone forever. But through powerful words of life, Jesus called him back.

Ezekiel knew only God could bring life to dry bones. Jesus looked to the Father before calling Lazarus from the grave. And in just a few weeks we will celebrate something even greater.

We will stand before an **empty tomb**. His resurrection is our restored hope and the promise that **death is not the end...but the beginning**.

Because of Christ we do not need to fear death. Our sins have been atoned for. When we confess our sins and receive the forgiveness won for us on the cross, we are given eternal life through the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ.

That is the powerful word of life we call **the Gospel**.

A field of dry bones. A dead man named Lazarus. And an empty tomb...All pointing to the power and grace of our God.

In just a few weeks we will gather again on Good Friday and hear the most powerful words ever spoken:

“It is finished.”

To God be the glory.

Amen.

Closing Prayer with Dedication

Gracious and life-giving God,

You are the God who speaks life into dry bones and hope into weary hearts. When our faith feels empty and our spirits feel worn, you Lord, breathe your Spirit into us and remind us that nothing is beyond your power.

Lord, teach us to listen for your voice. Give us courage to speak your words of life to others who feel hopeless or forgotten. Use us, as you used Ezekiel, to remind this world that you are still bringing life out of what seems dead.

Today we offer you these gifts and offerings. Receive them as signs of our gratitude and trust. Use them to bring hope to the hurting, help to the needy, and the good news of Jesus Christ to those who are longing for words of life.

May our lives, our service, and our generosity become instruments through which your Spirit breathes life into this community and into your church.

We pray this in the name of our risen Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Benediction

Go now in the confidence that the God who raised dry bones to life and called Lazarus from the grave is still breathing life into His people today.

May the Spirit of God renew your strength,
May the hope of Christ fill your hearts,
And may the words of life you have heard today guide you in the days ahead.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Next Steps:

- I will read Ezekiel 37:1-14
- I will invite someone to Easter Sunday Worship