The Valley of Dry Bones

1. Intro
   1. Bible Stories
      1. We will make our way through many stories from the Holy Text.
      2. New Testament, and Old Testament, familiar and less familiar, stories that teach us something about God and His plan, power, and ability.
   2. Structure:
      1. Every few weeks I’ll teach through stories that demonstrate a specific aspect of God’s character, plan, or attribute.
      2. The first section is going to be “Death to Life” stories.
   3. Today we start with Ezekiel 37, The Valley of Dry Bones.
   4. Ezekiel:
      1. Name means: God is strong
      2. Written between 596 BC and 560 BC
      3. Summary: This book records the activity of the prophet Ezekiel during the exile in Babylon. His message was directed to fellow captives and to Jews still present in the land of Judah. Both groups refuse to listen and remain unwilling to accept the rule of Babylon. Ezekiel proclaimed good news to the exiles that Israel, after being chastened, would be restored and God’s Kingdom would rise. This future Kingdom will last forever and God’s people will never again be cast out.
2. Text
   1. Ezekiel 37:1-6
      1. The hand of the Lord was upon me: The selection of the prophet
      2. Brought me in the Spirit: the vision
      3. Breath: ruah: breathe of God, wind, spirit
   2. Ezekiel 37:7-10
      1. Rattling: raash: quacking, shaking, rattling, earthquake
      2. Translated 6 times as earthquake,
      3. Not a quiet event in the vision, not a quiet event in the life change of a believer
   3. Ezekiel 37: 11-14
      1. Verse 11: The whole house of Israel: remember, Israel literally means “contends with God”
      2. The whole house, references all those called God’s people
         1. The bloodline of Israel
         2. Those grafted to the vine
         3. Hosea 2:23 23 and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are my people’; and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’”
      3. So be careful in the OT as you look upon Israel:
         1. This prophecy was not written ‘TO’ us, but was written ‘FOR’ us.
         2. Don’t get caught up in “replacement theology: replacing “god’s chosen people” with the church today.
         3. This is FULFILLMENT THEOLOGY:
            1. What God promised He will fulfill
            2. What God said regarding HIS people, He fulfills
            3. What God said regarding the gentiles, or “not my people” he fulfills…we are MADE HIS PEOPLE as fulfillment.
3. Point
   1. **Can these bones live?**
      1. Be clear: This passage speaks of Resurrection:
         1. That which was dead can be made alive by the POWER OF GOD.
         2. Ezekiel’s answer: You know, God.
         3. God then brought life to that which was dead, opened graves, raised from the dead. Verse 12
      2. Resurrection: 2 types
         1. Could be prophecy of resurrection at the return of Christ
         2. Could be prophecy of a resurrected spiritual life that can occur to the most dry of relationships with God
            1. They represented spiritual dryness…a people with no spiritual passion in their lives
            2. A people disconnected from God and living life just making it from one day to the next doing the same old things…the same old job…the same old routines.
            3. No adventure…no miracles…no life changes…no influence on society
            4. Dry bones = spiritual deadness = disconnected from God
            5. If you have been experiencing a spiritual dryness there is a reason…only one of two things going on…either……
            6. You “are” spiritually disconnected or you “feel” spiritually disconnected
            7. You may have a relationship with God, but you may be out of fellowship with God.
      3. Who can be made alive?
         1. By faith, “Believers”
         2. Specific reference: “Oh my people.” Verse 13
      4. Who are these people that is the subject of the prophecy?
         1. 2 Cor 6:14-18, quoting Leviticus 26:12
         2. REMEMBER: Not replacement theology (Israel replaced with the church in the NT)
         3. REMEMBER: Fulfillment theology: We are the fulfillment of this prophecy
         4. available not by a physical blood line, but by the BLOOD OF JESUS
   2. **The Breath of God:**
      1. Spurgeon: ‘we are nothing without the Holy Spirit!’
      2. Humanity: dirt+breath of God=God’s highest creation
      3. We are filled with that which gives us life, but apart from that, we are dead.
      4. God BREATHED on:
         1. Adam: Genesis 2:7 7then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.
         2. Disciples: John 20:19-22 19On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,c Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” 22And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.
      5. The breathe of God does its work:
         1. It fills
         2. It also ignites: kindle a fire with a gentle breath.

Illustration: starting a fire, survivalists, friction fire, smoke leads to ember, ember then becomes a flame.

* + - 1. It stirs us up
      2. It gives us life
      3. It gives us purpose
    1. 2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17that the man of Godb may be complete, equipped for every good work.
  1. **I will put my Spirit within you:**
     1. This changes everything...dead things become alive!
     2. This is directly referring to the Spirit abiding in the believer.
     3. Refreshing comes with the Holy Spirit
     4. This is not a reference to God’s work from afar, this is intimate and personal.
     5. God is personally doing this work in us:
        1. Empowering
        2. Encouraging
        3. In Filling
        4. Fanning the flame
        5. Stirring us up
        6. Setting our face like flint
        7. Sending us on mission
        8. Awakening us
     6. Ephesians 2 1And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

1. Close
   1. Romans 5
   2. 6For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.
   3. Death in Adam, Life in Christ
   4. 12Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all mene because all sinned— 13for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. 14Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.
   5. 15But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. 16And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.