

Sunday Morning Message

September 10, 2023

Title – “Can These Bones Live?”

Topic – Revival

Text – Ezekiel 37

Congregational Reading – Ezekiel 37:1 - 3

Introduction

Read all of Ezekiel 37:1 – 14

The proper explanation or interpretation of this strange story is very easy for us to understand as God explains it to us within the text. The dry bones that are scattered in the valley represent the Nation of Israel, the people of God. Ezekiel was a prophet during the time of the Babylonian Captivity. A century prior to Ezekiel’s ministry, the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians. God allowed this to happen because His people had forsaken Him and had become idolatrous and immoral. In Ezekiel’s day, the southern kingdom of Judah was going down, this time at the hands of the Babylonians, for the same reasons. They had rejected and forsaken God.

Still today, Israel is divided and scattered, and spiritually they are dead. They have no life today because they have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, their Messiah.

The Apostle John wrote:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11)

But, God tells us that the day is coming when all Israel will be saved, because they will realize that Jesus is in fact their Messiah, and they will turn to Him in faith:

"10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." (Zechariah 12:10)

"26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:" (Romans 11:26)

At that time, God will gather Israel back together, much like these dry bones, from the dry valleys that they are scattered in throughout the world, and he will breathe new life into them; and they will go forth in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as a great army.

Ezekiel brings more light to this great revival in vs. 15 – 28.

Israel, who is now dead in their trespasses and sins, will have the new life of Christ in them, and God will save them from their enemies, and will bring them back into their land from the dry places that they are now scattered.

Transition

Though there can only be one interpretation of this passage, which is all about Israel, I believe we can make many spiritual applications. This Old Testament story of dry bones paints a picture for us how God can breathe new life into our dead Christianity.

I. To the Lost Sinner

If you have not yet received Christ as your Saviour, the Bible very plainly teaches that you are spiritually dead:

Read Ephesians 2:1 – 10

Those of us who are saved, were also once dead spiritually. God saved us and breathed new life in us through the gospel. Now we live spiritually. We have eternal life. When our earthly bodies die, our souls will live eternally with the Lord in Heaven.

The Word of God is living and brings life to all who read it with an open heart.

"12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

II. To the Languishing but Saved

Those of us who are saved often go through periods of spiritual dryness and near deadness. We still have the life within us that God gave us at salvation, but we sometimes neglect our relationship with the Lord. We are not exactly dead, but there is very little life in our usefulness for the Lord, and in our ability to impact this world with the gospel.

How do you know that you are near dead spiritually?

- Do you enjoy spending time with God daily?
 - Do you read His word?
 - Do you pray?
- When was the last time that you shared your faith with a lost sinner? When you can interact with lost people regularly and their fallen spiritual condition and their destiny of Hell if they do not get saved does not bother you at all.
- Do you enjoy going to church or is it a chore for you, an obligation, like going to work?
 - Do you have to go to church, or do you get to go to church?
- Do you like being with God's people, discussing spiritual things?
 - Not discussing sports or talking about what the rest of the world talks about, but about God.
- Are you a cheerful giver, or do you grudgingly give to the work of God?
- Can you sin against God continuously without it bothering you?
- Does it bother you at all to see Christianity in the state that it is in. It grieves me to see Christians who were once sold out for the Lord now out in the world, participating in things that they once were staunchly opposed to. It scares me to see how quickly I can slip away from positions I once held firm.

If you answered negatively to these questions, you are dead, or at least very sick, spiritually. You are in good company. We all get there at times. But you need God to breathe new spiritual life into you. You need to ask God, through His Holy Spirit, to bring you back to the place where you once were, or just to the place where you know you should be.

III. To the Lackadaisical Saints (To the Church Corporately)

The church is made up of individual saints, and if most of the individual saints are languishing, then the church will be dead also. When God begins to breathe life into individual believers, they will come together. (See v. 7)

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour

with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:44-47)

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;" (Philippians 1:27)

Individual Christians cannot completely die because the Holy Spirit indwells them; but churches do die.

Read Revelation 2:1 – 5

The candlestick represents the Holy Spirit's influence on a church, and once the Holy Spirit is no longer influencing the church, He will leave.

I don't want to see that happen here, and it won't if we as individuals allow God to continuously breathe new life into us, and then corporately, we come together to fulfill God's purpose of influencing this world with the gospel and doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Brother Jim Powderly at Brigantine Bible Church.

He took a tired church, made up of mostly senior saints of God who have been in the battle a long time. Their former pastor was a great warrior for the Lord, but he was sick for many years, and got to the place where he was physically unable to continue pastoring. Brother Jim was a layman in the church, a police officer in Brigantine who attended there because he worked in the community, but he loved the Lord and was excited about serving God. The pastor recognized God's hand upon Jim, and he asked him to take over the church. He is young, and full of energy, and He's just dumb enough to believe that God can still do something great. He is on fire. The dead bones of the church are now coming together, and they are beginning to move, and I believe that someday God will bring forth a great army of Spirit-filled saints from there that will greatly influence our area with the gospel.

But, what about Galloway Township? Will God have a living, breathing, moving, and vibrant church here to fulfill His will?

I guess that's up to you and me - Can these dry bones live? They can and will if we allow God to do what he wants to do in our lives, and in this church. We need revival.