



## Sunday 25th September 2016

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Ezekiel 37 – Hope Restored

This passage occurs in a period of Israel's history where they are in exile. They've witnessed the invasion of Jerusalem, destruction of the temple and their removal from the promised land. God's chosen people have lost their hope and vision. They are feeling lost and forgotten by God.

Take a moment to read Ezekiel 37: 1-14

1. What about this passage stands out to you as you read it now?

In verse three, God asks a question of Ezekiel: "Son of man, can these bones live?" and Ezekiel replies: "Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

2. What does Ezekiel's response tell us about his understanding of God's power?

In some ways, the question God is asking Ezekiel is much bigger: "What kind of world do you think you're living in?" A world where dry bones are signs of death and destruction, or a world where God's power is real and able to breathe life into brokenness?

As Ezekiel prophesies to the bones, two things occur. The first is an act of flesh: Ezekiel speaks to the dry bones. The second is an act of the spirit: God breathes into the bones bringing them back to life. As the bones spring to life, Ezekiel witnesses God's power before his very eyes. In verse 11, God explains to Ezekiel that the dry bones are God's people. Although God's people feel forgotten and broken, God has not forgotten them, His power is real and He will restore them to life.

3. How would you describe the kind of world you are living in? How is it like the dry bones Ezekiel encountered?
4. Do you see God's power at work in this world?
5. Where else in the Bible do we see God's power powerfully at work?





(These passages are just a starting point!)

Exodus 14: 10-22

1 Kings 17: 12-16

1 Kings 18: 32

Matthew 9:18-26

Matthew 14: 13-21

John 2: 1-12

This passage challenges us not only to look at the world we live in, but to consider our place in it.

6. Ezekiel speaks God's words of power to the dry bones and life is restored. How might you be able to speak God's words into the world around you?
7. When is it difficult to speak God's words?  
Our creative, imaginative, powerful God leans in to our world in this day and age. We have the opportunity to speak God's words into our world and to become co-workers in God's field: bringing life where there is death.
8. Where do you need to speak up for Godly justice and mercy this week?

For example: Have you signed the Asylum Seeker petition at church?

When did you last call or write to your MP about a justice issue you care passionately about?

How might you call out a practice or policy that is unjust in the world around you?

9. Imagine you are standing in front of the 'dry bones' in your world. What would it look like to see them return to life?

