

Day of Pentecost

[Ezekiel 37:1-14](#)

[Psalm 104:25-35, 37](#)

[Acts 2:1-21](#)

[John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15](#)

Toe bone connected to the foot bone

Foot bone connected to the heel bone...

Now hear the word of the Lord.

Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around

Dem bones, dem bones gonna rise again.

Now hear the word of the Lord....

It's a catchy ear worm that pops in our heads when we think of The Valley of the Dry Bones and Ezekiel's prophet vision. Its catchiness can paint a pretty picture, though, over the grim and ghastly vision of Ezekiel. In his vision, God takes Ezekiel and guides him to a valley. Not just to the rim of the valley, where we can imagine movie scenes that we've watched in which mass destruction has happened and they come to the edge and look down in horror- no God places Ezekiel right in the middle of the valley. And these bones aren't freshly gone- no, they've been dead for a while- brittleness is rampant, the dust of the dry valley and bones drifts up around him. This vision depicted the very real desperation for the people of Israel. Ezekiel served as a prophet in the Babylonian Exile. As Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, their temple and deported them, Israel was quite literally a people without a home. This was a moment which spoke to ultimate lows but also the redemption and restoration brought about by God.

The breath of God, the Spirit of God, put those bones back together piece by piece. Bone to bone. Sinew to tendons to muscles to flesh to skin. But, there was

something missing. These people were still shells of their former selves. It's an interesting but purposeful detail. With our culture of immediacy, when we want the Spirit to move, when we cry out with sighs too deep for words, we want God to put those pieces back together immediately. And sometimes that's the way the Spirit works- like a great gush of wind it breathes life back into the parts we need healing and comfort. But, a lot of the times, when our bones become so brittle, the Spirit works gently and lovingly piece by piece to make it happen.

When I'm run-down and ragged, I like to put myself with the dry bones. I feel like I fit right in. These are my people- we are weary by the movement of the world- battling what comes before us each minute of the day. Speaking hope and having hope every day, day in and day out can sometimes be exhausting. Once settled in with the bones, a vicious cycle of doubt takes hold, can these bones of mine really live again? Will the breath of God breathe life into me? Ezekiel and the people had the same doubts, the same questions. And to those questions, God responds, 'why yes, of course!' The very same breath of God that breathed into those bones is the very same breath of God which breathed into Creation and the very same breath of God that came to the disciples after Jesus left them. Thank God for prophets who help us hear how the Spirit is moving within us. Ezekiel could have very easily turned away from the horror, from the great sadness and hopelessness, but he stood firm and he heard God say that God will always bring up God's people from the grave.

Just like our spiritual ancestors, God will redeem us from being cut off and disconnected. God will open us up, breathe into those places weighed down by other things and we can live into God's promises. And God does it step by step- placing our souls on that firm foundation, making sure that no one gets left in the grave.

On this Pentecost, hear the word of the Lord. Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around. Dem bones, dem bones gonna rise again. Hear the word of the Lord. In hearing we know how God has acted. Take a deep breath right now, right this moment, in the presence of God's loving community. Receive God's spirit anew within you. Unlike Easter or Christmas, this isn't the easiest feast day to celebrate. Because the Spirit is unpredictable. Wild. Dangerous. Sometimes she feels reckless and no matter how hard we pray or talk or try we can't figure out what she wants us to do. And yet, the Spirit, by her very nature- is a comforter- a helper- an advocate or an assistant and when called upon, comes to our aid and walks along side of us.

Where in your life do you need an infusion of the Holy Spirit? Where in your relationships could God's Spirit speak into? How can your heart be opened without fear or trembling to the movement of the Spirit? Or maybe you relate to Ezekiel and find yourself speaking that sacred breath into those who need it. Standing in the midst of the hopeless and proclaiming life. For in the Valley of the Dry Bones, God's Spirit is one that not only initiates but also leads and sends (cf. [Isa. 61:1](#)). Prophets remind us about God's unwavering love for us, but they also challenge us. We can do things we never thought or imagined we could do. Whatever the status of our bones is at any given time, God does not leave us to the grave. God shows us how great our potential is, because, God created us, and God knows exactly what's within us and of what we're capable. Bone by bone. Piece by piece. Inside and out. God's Spirit, the breath of God, inhabits you. So keep breathing. Breathe long and deep because every breath you take is the spirit of God. And God desires you to live.