

Pentecost – 2024

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Acts 2:1-21

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Dry bones; this world can be an arid and spiritually desolate place. Can your bones live? Sinful man traffics in lies, lust, and laziness. Can man's bones live? Not figurative bones; real bones; can your bones live? Dust is dry. Remember, O man, that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return (Genesis 3:19 KJV). Ashes are dry. A coffin is an arid box. "Son of man, can these bones live?" (Ezekiel 37:3). "O Lord God, you know" (Ezekiel 37:3). God does indeed know. It is God's absolute intent that your bones should live. God crucified His Son that your bones should live. God breathed into you His Spirit that your bones should live. God feeds you with holy food to ensure that your bones should live. A great army – that's what Christ's church is. A vast multitude from every language, tribe and nation – that's what Christ's church is (Revelation 7:9). Ezekiel saw Israel resurrected. Ezekiel saw Christ's church. Ezekiel saw Good Friday and Easter. "Our hope is lost" (Ezekiel 37:11). That was Israel's lament. A dry soul, hopeless and arid and dry; I know that feeling. Aimless, selfish, empty, lame, narcissistic, arid and dry; have you ever encountered that desert in your soul? Can these dry bones live?

The glory of God is a crucified Son. Grace streams from Jesus' wounds as He cries: "I thirst" (John 20:28). Man's sin had dried the soul of Christ to the bone. He bore it all; yours, mine, and the world's over. The sin of every human in every era from every continent and every village; "Christ died for sins, once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18 NIV). And here you are, in this holy house. You are so clearly a part of that vast army, that multitude of believers which God has assembled out of dry bones. God has ever thirsted for you, to redeem you, to reclaim you, to draw you back to Himself, back to paradise. The blood of Christ redeemed your soul, purchased and won you from sin, from death, and from hell. No commodity can accomplish this except the blood of the holy and omnipotent Savior. And Jesus spilled it because God thirsts for you, thirsts for you to live with His life, to love with His love, to forgive others as He has forgiven you. Can these bones live?

The Roman soldiers hoisted up a sponge with sour wine for Jesus to drink as He died. That's what unbelief offers the Savior, sour wine. Living like a toad, putting yourself above others, loving only those who love you, judgmental and deceptive and indulgent and doing good in order to be seen and congratulated – such a life is hoisting sour wine to the Lord on His cross. Such a life dries the soul, dries the bones. Can these bones live? Not without God's Spirit. Dry bones like ours can never become full of life apart from the Holy Spirit. "Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live" (Ezekiel 37:5). God's breath is God's Spirit. God breathed into Adam the breath of life and Adam became a living being (Genesis 2:7). The Lord and Giver of life invaded the clay of Adam's body. Adam was a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Today, in this era, the Holy Spirit is at work. God's Word carries God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit attends God's Word and life is breathed into the lifeless. The wonder of Christ's life invades the barren soul of man and man becomes a living being.

We preach the Gospel here. Here we baptize sinners into Jesus' death and resurrection. And dry bones live. This is a verdant spiritual meadow, a pasture buzzing with grace, a congregation

aromatic with forgiveness and hope because the Spirit is at work, through the Word, to make us holy. Christ's Word is truth and the Spirit of truth leads us to discover what is holy, what it divinely beautiful, what is eternal and heavenly. Faith springs from this Word (Romans 10:17). Christ's life waters your soul and you know it (Isaiah 55). Gone are the hopeless and dry days of self and unbelief and the dread of judgment. The Gospel is proclaimed here and life is the product (John 10:10). Dry bones live. Every sin of yours is forgiven. Every sin has been atoned for by the Lord of the cross (1 John 2:1-2). He loves you. He thirsts for you. He knows you thoroughly and He wants to be known by you thoroughly (1 Corinthians 13:12). The Spirit leads us. The Spirit of truth guides us into all truth (John 16:13). God's Word is deep and applicable and enduring and instructive and reliable and it will strengthen you.

Levi and Viviana – their bones live. God's Spirit has been breathed into them. They are a part of that vast army, the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church. Faith is defining for them. Here's what our faith says: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalm 42:1-2 NIV). Because you are a Christian, because you have been baptized, because the Spirit of God has been breathed into you and you have passed from death to life (John 5:24), you thirst for God. You love Him. Gratitude springs from your heart. His holiness is your treasure and you thirst for His grace, His love, His presence. And that thirst brings you here. Can these bones live? Oh, yes! All of these bones will live!